Final Evaluation of the UN Development Account, 10th Tranche Project 1617A, the Programme on Statistics and Data

Beth Osborne DaPonte, Ph.D.
Senior Evaluation Consultant
SOCIAL SCIENCE CONSULTANTS, LLC

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is the terminal evaluation of the UN Development Account[1] Project T10 1617A, the 10th tranche "Programme on Statistics and Data" which operated from August 2016 through April 2021 (hereafter "the Programme"). All Development Account-funded projects up through the 10th tranche are mandated to have a terminal evaluation.[2] The Programme's design, expected accomplishments, and indicators of achievement were specified in a Programme Document (hereafter ProDoc) that the Development Account's (DA) Steering Committee endorsed in August 2016. The evaluation focused on the relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the Programme.

Methodology

The evaluation, conducted between April and July 2022 by an independent senior evaluation consultant contracted by the DESA Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO) was at the strategic level. Inputs to the evaluation included the data and reports of the mid-term evaluation and three prior evaluations conducted on aspects of the Programme—the global level and the work on gender statistics and environmental statistics. The evaluator also conducted original document review and analysis of DESA data. Beyond incorporating internal and external stakeholder feedback on the initiative, the evaluation used linear regression analysis to estimate the Programme's impact on the reporting of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators by Member States.

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[1] The Development Account (DA) is a mechanism to fund capacity development projects of the 10 economic and social entities of the United Nations Secretariat, namely: the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
[2] Starting with the 11th tranche, the DA mandates the evaluation of all projects with budgets in excess of USD 1 million and a sample of those with lower budgets below USD 1 million.

Findings

Relevance. The Programme was highly relevant—not only did it respond to the needs of National Statistical Offices (NSOs), but it built on prior capacity-building work. It addressed capacity-building to produce SDG indicators, including cross-cutting gender statistics.

Sustainability. The Programme created the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians which received positive feedback from NSOs and Key Informants. The existence of an engaged international network of experts speaks well to the sustainability of the impacts of the initiative, since statisticians and data officers have a venue to reinforce and share the capacities developed. Positive feedback was gathered on the likely sustainability of the initiative from key informant interviews and a survey of NSOs.

Impact. Regression results showed that developing countries, as opposed to countries with developed or transitional economies, showed lower growth in the number of SDG indicators reported in the four-year period. However, receiving five national-level activities from the Programme would likely compensate for the disadvantage a developing country had with respect to growth in SDG indicator reporting.

Efficiency. The Programme struggled with getting accurate and comprehensive reports of activities and harmonized financial reports from the ten implementing entities. Some of this struggle is inherent in joint programmes implemented in the Secretariat, where software systems reinforce the primacy of entities rather than cross-cutting programmes and projects in financial reporting. Coordination, monitoring, and evaluation arrangements were not clear at the start of the Programme but evolved over its course.

Recommendations

Based on the Programme Description and Findings, the evaluation makes to the DA Steering Committee, in its role of advising the DA Programme Manager on strategic and policy issues, the following important recommendations to improve the structure of future programmes/projects supported by Development Account tranches of funding.

1. THE DA SHOULD ESTABLISH MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAMME/PROJECT DOCUMENTS (PRODOCS) ARE CLEAR, INTERNALLY CONSISTENT, REALISTIC, AND CONCISE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGETING OF COUNTRIES, THE DA SHOULD PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT PRODOCS ARE CLEAR AND CONSISTENT. ANY MODIFICATIONS FROM THE INITIAL PLANS ON TARGETING SHOULD BE DULY APPROVED BY THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT STRUCTURES (E.G., TAG) AND DOCUMENTED.

3. THE DA SHOULD MANDATE, AS PART OF THE PROJECT DESIGN PHASE, AN ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH MEMBER STATES WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE INITIATIVE. THOSE COUNTRIES THAT WOULD STAND TO BENEFIT THE MOST SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REQUEST SERVICES FROM THE DA INITIATIVE.

4. **THE DA SHOULD REQUIRE THAT A PRODOC FOR ALL LARGE-SCALE (BUDGET IN EXCESS OF USD 1 MILLION) INITIATIVES JOINTLY IMPLEMENTED BY MULTIPLE ENTITIES INCLUDE A TENTATIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN.**

    a. **THE TEAM CREATING THE PRODOC SHOULD INCLUDE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEAD ENTITY'S EVALUATION UNIT (EVALUATION OFFICER).**

    b. **THE EVALUATION OFFICER SHOULD DEVELOP, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE EVALUATION UNITS OF ALL PARTICIPATING ENTITIES, AN APPROPRIATE EVALUATION PLAN THAT SPECIFIES WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE EVALUATION, THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PARTICIPATING ENTITIES IN SUPPORTING THE EVALUATION AND ITS FOLLOW-UP, A DATA COLLECTION AND DATA ANALYSIS PLAN, THE AUDIENCE FOR THE EVALUATION REPORT, AND HOW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE TRACKED.**

    c. **EVALUATION UNITS OF ALL IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES MUST COMMIT TO THE PRODOC'S EVALUATION PLAN PRIOR TO THE START OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT.**

    d. **THE LEAD IMPLEMENTER/MANAGER OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT (E.G., PROGRAMME COORDINATION TEAM) SHOULD DEVELOP, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEAD ENTITY'S EVALUATION UNIT AND OTHER IMPLEMENTERS (E.G., FOCAL POINTS), A DETAILED TENTATIVE MONITORING PLAN, WHICH SPECIFIES THE INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT TO MONITOR DURING THE COURSE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTING THE MONITORING DATA, AND THE FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION.**

    e. **AT THE START OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT, THE LEAD IMPLEMENTER/MANAGER OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT (E.G., PROGRAMME COORDINATION TEAM) SHOULD MAKE OTHER IMPLEMENTERS (E.G., FOCAL POINTS) AWARE OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT'S MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN AND ENSURE THAT THERE IS COOPERATION FROM THE IMPLEMENTERS IN PRODUCING AND COLLECTING MONITORING AND EVALUATION-RELEVANT DATA. IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS AND CRITERIA ALLOW FOR HIGH QUALITY DATA TO BE COLLECTED AND SHARED ON A TIMELY AND ONGOING BASIS. THE LEAD ENTITY MUST HAVE THE ROLE AND AUTHORITY TO ENSURE THAT HIGH-QUALITY DATA IS PRODUCED BY AND COLLECTED FROM ALL PARTICIPATING ENTITIES.**

List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

CDO	Capacity Development Office of DESA
CDPMO	Capacity Development Programme Management Office of DESA (formerly the CDO)
CSO	Chief Statistics Officers
DA	Development Account
DESA	Department of Economic and Social Affairs
EA	Expected Accomplishment
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECE	Economic Commission for Europe
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
GLE	Global-Level Evaluation
GTA	General Technical Assistance
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interview
LDC	Least Developed Country(ies)
MS	Member State
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
NLA	National-Level Activity
NSO	National Statistical Office
PCT	Programme Coordination Team
PMG	Programme Management Group
ProDoc	Programme Document
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TORs	Terms of Reference
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division of DESA
WHO	World Health Organization

I.   Introduction

1. This report is the terminal evaluation of the UN Development Account[1] Project T10 1617A, the 10th tranche "Programme on Statistics and Data" which operated from August 2016 through April 2021. All Development Account (hereafter DA) funded projects up through the 10th tranche are mandated to have a terminal evaluation.[2] In August 2016, the DA Steering Committee endorsed the Programme's design, expected accomplishments, and indicators of achievement which were specified in a Programme Document (hereafter ProDoc).[3] Documents referring to the 10th tranche of funding inconsistently refer to the initiative as a programme or project. This evaluation refers to the initiative as "the Programme."

2. The Programme responded to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets 17.18[4] and 17.19.[5] "The Project by definition and design a) aimed to strengthen national statistical systems to respond to the data challenges of the 2030 Agenda,[6] b) aimed to refine existing methodologies, tools and indicators and commence analysis that would inform the development of new statistical methodologies within the environmental, social and economic domains, and c) orchestrated the roll-out of a vigorous capacity development programme to support countries in improving statistical capacities to monitor indicators and targets in all data areas.[7]

3. In response to the Secretary General's call for enhanced collaboration across Secretariat entities, the Programme's design combined the unique skills of the ten UN entities the DA targets- five substantive entities (DESA, UNCTAD, UNEP, UN-Habitat, and UNODC) and five regional commissions (ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, and ESCWA). The Programme's joint implementation and focus were novel features of a DA initiative.

4. The ProDoc envisioned that other UN-system entities-- UNDP (including UNDP country offices and country teams), ILO, WHO, and UN Women—would cooperate with the Programme.[8] The ProDoc

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[1] The Development Account (DA) is a mechanism to fund capacity development projects of the 10 economic and social entities of the United Nations Secretariat.

[2] Starting with the 11th tranche, the DA mandates the evaluation of all projects with budgets above USD 1 million and a sample of those with lower budgets below USD 1 million.

[3] Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data, Programme Document.

[4] Target 17.18 is that by 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts (Source: ProDoc, p. 16).

[5] Target 17.19 is that by 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries (Source: ProDoc, p. 16).

[6] ProDoc, p. 16.

[7] *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[8] *Ibid.,* p. 1.

envisioned having partnerships with regional technical organisations and having counterparts in National Statistical Offices (NSOs), Line Ministries, and Central Banks.

5. The Programme's duration, originally to be from January 2016 to December 2019, was delayed to August 2016. Its original budget was USD 10 million. In March 2019, the DA Steering Committee extended the Programme to December 2020 and increased the budget to USD 11.4 million. In response to the challenges associated with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Programme's duration was further extended to April 2021.

6. The remainder of this report is structured as followed. First, the report further describes the Programme and evaluation arrangements and questions. The methodology for the evaluation is then discussed, along with a discussion of the Programme's bounds in light of the normal activities of SDG custodian entities. Findings follow. The report includes a conclusion and recommendations.

II. Programme Description

7. The ProDoc describes the Programme's design, pillars, and components. The Programme's objective was "to strengthen the statistical capacity of developing countries to measure, monitor, and report on the SDGs in an accurate, reliable and timely manner for evidence-based policymaking." The clearly written objective shows that the Programme would only consider developing countries as candidates for its support. At its inception, the Programme would consider measurement, monitoring, and reporting only on SDG phenomena.

A. Programme Pillars and Components

8. The Programme was structured with four pillars:
    I.   Means of Implementation,
    II. Environment statistics and indicators,
    III. Social and demographic statistics and indicators, and
    IV. Economic statistics and indicators.

    Pillars I, II, and IV each had one component. Pillar III, Social and Demographic Statistics, had four components-- population and demographic statistics and indicators, gender statistics and indicators, poverty and inequality statistics and indicators, and peaceful and inclusive societies statistics and indicator.

9. Each component was assigned a lead and co-lead entity and had a specified budget (Table 1). Entities' Programme budgets were determined by considering their anticipated contribution to Programme implementation.

Pillar	Component	Title	Lead/ co-lead	Other participating implementing entities	Budget (USD)
1	1	Means of implementation	UNSD/ ESCAP	ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCWA	3,585,500
2	2	Environment statistics and indicators	UNEP/ UNSD	ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA	2,070,000
3		Social and demographic statistics and indicators			
3.1	3	Population and demographic statistics and indicators	UNSD/ UN-Habitat	ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA	1,290,000
3.2	4	Gender statistics and indicators	UNSD/ ECE	ECA, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA, UNEP, UNODC	1,099,500
3.3	5	Poverty and inequality statistics and indicators	ECLAC/ ESCWA	ECA, ECE, ESCAP, UN-Habitat	735,000
3.4	6	Peaceful and inclusive societies statistics and indicators	UNODC/ ECA		470,000
4	7	Economic statistics and indicators	UNSD/ UNCTAD	UNEP, ECA, ECE, ECLAC, ESCAP, ESCWA	1,650,000
Total budget (excluding USD 500K of central support costs)					**10,900,000**

Source: TORs for Global Evaluation Consultant for the Global Assessment and Final Evaluation Report Preparation as part of the Terminal Evaluation of the 10th tranche "Programme on Statistics and Data"

10. The ProDoc included a results framework that specified for each component Expected Accomplishments (EAs) and Indicators of Achievement (IAs). Table 2 shows the Programme-level EAs and IAs. The IAs were designed to contribute to the Programme's overall objective and Programme-level EAs.[9]

TABLE 2: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK AT PROGRAMME LEVEL

Expected Accomplishments (EA)	Indicators of Achievement (IA)
(EA1) Enhanced capacity of developing countries to strengthen statistical institutional environments to measure, monitor and report on the sustainable development goals. *Relates to Component 1*	(IA1.1) Number of target countries that have adopted revised national strategies for the development of statistics based on inputs from the Programme. (IA1.2) Number of country participants trained who confirm increased understanding of the institutional arrangements required for measuring the sustainable development goals. (IA1.3) Number of countries that establish institutional mechanisms to foster dialogue between users and producers of statistics in the context of the sustainable development goals

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[9] The pillar-level results frameworks are presented in the Annex II of the ToRs for the Global Evaluation Consultant.

Expected Accomplishments (EA)	Indicators of Achievement (IA)
(EA 2) Strengthened capacity in developing countries to improve statistical production processes to address increased data needs across multiple statistical domains *Relates to Component 1*	(IA2.1) Number of improved statistical production processes in countries to measure specific sustainable development goals indicators and targets based on inputs from the Programme.
(EA 3) Strengthened capacity in developing countries to measure and monitor indicators and targets in new statistical and data areas *Relates to Components 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7*	(IA3.1) Number of countries that started reporting in new areas where the Programme provided support
(EA 4) Enhanced leveraging, partnerships and collaboration by United Nations system and other partners to help countries strengthen their national statistical systems for measuring the sustainable development goals *Relates to all components*	(IA4.1) Number of partnerships created within the United Nations system to provide support for statistical strengthening at the national level in the context of the sustainable development goals with the input of the Programme. (IA4.2) Number of partnerships created with external partners to provide support for statistical strengthening at the local, national, regional and international levels. (IA4.3) Number of countries that are supported by the Programme in mobilizing financial resources for strengthening national statistical systems.

Source: Prodoc

B. Programme Target Population

11. The ProDoc inconsistently described the Programme's target population, vacillating as to whether the Programme would serve all developing countries or only "target countries." For example, EA1 refers to "developing countries" while its associated IA1.1 refers to "target countries." EA2 and EA3 refer to developing (and not target) countries."

12. The meaning of "target countries" differed between the Programme and component levels. Pillar 1 (Means of Implementation) was to contribute to Programme-level EAs 1, 2, and 4, which all refer to *developing countries*. Yet the ProDoc also refers to providing strengthened capacity to target countries. At the component level, the objective was "To enhance capacity of developing countries…" while the three EAs for the component's objective all refer to target countries, not developing countries. Other components similarly inconsistently used the terms "developing countries" and "target countries."

13. The ProDoc nominated 72 possible "target countries,"[10] most of which were developing countries. Though none had "developed economies,"[11] sixteen had "Economies in Transition." Twenty-three were classified as Least Developed Countries (LDCs),[12] while the remaining 33 were developing countries. Of the 45 countries in the world classified as LDCs, half (23) were considered as candidates for being targeted by the Programme while the remaining 22 were not.

14. The ProDoc explains that the Programme would operate by providing interventions to approximately 35 target countries which would be determined by discussions with each country and a national needs assessment. "While some countries may request support in one of the Programme's areas, it is possible that some countries would be supported by all four pillars."[13]

15. Further, "While the Programme has outlined a plan of work to address on-going gaps as previously communicated by Member States, there is sufficient flexibility to adjust activities at national and local level based on the current priorities of the target countries, and the outcome of the national needs assessments."[14] The ProDoc explains that in addition to working at the regional and sub-regional level, the Programme would

> "work directly in a number of target countries, initially estimated at 35, across all regions…. The specific focus in each target country [would] be based on discussions with the NSOs and other government officials on national priorities in the context of the SDGs, as well as national assessments which identify capacity assets and capacity gaps within their priority areas. The Programme will establish clear criteria for selecting the target countries, and in order to

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[10]The ProDoc (p. 16) refers to "target countries where the interventions will be carried out." A footnote on p. 20-21 specifies the Programme's possible target countries:
- ECA region: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Ghana, Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zimbabwe; ([N]=22)
- ECE region: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan; ([N]=16)
- ECLAC region: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Venezuela; ([N]=13)
- ESCAP region: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, Vanuatu, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Indonesia, Philippines; ([N]=10)
- ESCWA region: Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Tunisia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen. ([N]=11)

[11] Country classification source: United Nations. 2022. *World Economic Situation and Prospects, 2022.* Appendix and United Nations. 2021. *World Economic Situation and Prospects*. Appendix.
[12] Source of LDC classification: UN Committee for Development Policy, 24 November 2021. "List of Least Developed Countries (as of 24 November 2021)" https://www.un.org/development/desa/dpad/wp-content/uploads/sites/45/publication/ldc_list.pdf.
[13] ProDoc, p. 30.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 17.

leverage funding opportunities and existing partners, will also consider countries where the 10 entities have past experience and/or ongoing activities."[15]

The Programme was to work with the UN Resident Coordinator in each target country to ensure that the Programme complemented other in-country initiatives.[16]

16. Based on the ProDoc, one would have expected that a set of countries would have been targeted to receive the Programme's interventions,[17] with the particular support provided at the country-level tailored to a country's needs and priorities,[18] but including on any (or all) of the Programme's components.

17. The ProDoc lacked clarity and consistency about the target population at the Programme level and for each component. While Pillar 2/Component 2 guidelines on the selection of target countries concurred with how Programme-level target countries would be selected, the ProDoc lists 56 possible Pillar 2 target countries. These 56 are not a subset of the 72 countries identified at the Programme level, though there is some overlap. The ProDoc identifies nine countries as possible Pillar 2 target countries that are not Programme-level target countries. At the Programme level, there are 24 countries that appear on the list of possible target countries that are not on the list for Pillar 2.

18. Perhaps because the ProDoc reportedly had multiple authors, within the document some (though not all) components independently define how target countries might be identified. One of the "key guiding principles" of the Programme was that it "be demand driven and country-owned." This principle, as the ProDoc explains, was to be applied in determining which activities to provide to a target country, not in the selection of target countries.[19]

C. Structure of Programme Operations

19. Each component had a designated **lead and co-lead entity**. The ProDoc specified the roles of leads[20] but not co-leads. The following criteria were used to select leads:

"The global entities will primarily assume the lead role in the strengthening of existing standards and development of new statistical standards and methodologies in distinct sectorial areas…. In specific areas where the Regional Commissions have a strong comparative advantage or interest… they will

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[15] *Ibid.,* p. 20-21.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[17] "The Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of countries, in particular the target countries…by following a systematic approach." ProDoc, p. 22.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 25.

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[20] The leads were to provide "continuous oversight over the implementation of that component and propose adjustments to the work plan in response to unforeseen events, or to address country demand. The lead will call for virtual meetings of the involved entities on a monthly basis or more frequently if needed, to review deliverables and to address implementation problems that may arise." ProDoc, Section 11.5.

take the lead role in developing new data areas….The five Regional Commissions will have, for the most part, the primary responsibility of disseminating new methodologies and statistical standards to the countries in their region…."[21]

20. While leads had responsibilities, they did not technically have authority outside of their entity to oversee their component's implementation—the authority for implementation and budget expenditures rest within each entity. The Programme assumed that there would be cooperation between staff in different entities during implementation. There were no reports that this assumption was violated.

21. A **Programme Management Group (PMG)** consisting of focal points from the 10 participating entities was to be formed and chaired by the head of the Capacity Development Office (CDO) (now Capacity Development Programme Management Office (CDPMO)) of DESA. The PMG was to meet semi-annually to:
   - Provide feedback on the ProDoc;
   - Review the Programme's semi-annual progress reports;
   - Ensure that senior officials of respective entities were informed of the Programme's progress;
   - Oversee the implementation of funds allocated to entities;
   - Address implementation problems, particularly those of an administrative nature or related to UMOJA;
   - Consult on programmatic changes; and
   - Address recommendations emanating from evaluations.[22]

22. The **CDO** was to support the Under-Secretary General (USG) of DESA (who is the DA manager and responsible for reporting on the Account's progress) in programme management. The CDO was to provide administrative guidance on financial matters, review Programme progress reports, and keep DESA's USG, the DA Steering Committee, and PMG informed on the Programme's progress. It was also to address recommendations that emerged from evaluations that were administrative or management in nature.[23]

23. A **Technical Advisory Group** (TAG), headed by the Director of DESA's Statistical Division (UNSD) and composed of the Chief Statistics Officers (CSOs) of the 10 implementing entities was to be formed and consult at least monthly on the Programme's more technical aspects.

24. The **Development Account Steering Committee** (DASC) was to be briefed quarterly on programme progress and implementation and rectify emergent operational challenges the PMG brought to its attention. It was to receive copies of the annual progress reports on the Programme's

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[21] ProDoc, p. 30.
[22] *Ibid.*, Section 11.2.
[23] *Ibid.*, Section 11.4.

implementation and play key oversight role in the implementation of recommendations that emerged from the Programme's mid-term and final evaluations.[24]

25. Perhaps because the anticipated responsibilities of the PMG overlapped to some extent with the CDO and TAG, the PMG was never formed, lessening the structural capacity to perform financial oversight and rectify shortcomings in financial and activities reporting.

26. The DA limits the proportion of the DA project budgets that can be used for General Temporary Assistance (GTA) to employ short-term staff to deliver activities to five percent. The DA does not cover programme support costs or the indirect costs implementing entities incur in providing administrative and other support functions. Thus, although this complex and large programme required considerable coordination, there was limited funding to support it.

27. Though not included in the ProDoc, a P-5 level staff member at UNSD, whose post was supported by the Regular Programme of Technical Cooperation (RPTC) and who already had work responsibilities in accordance with a full-time position, was appointed in December 2016 to be the Programme Coordinator. Being the Programme Coordinator was not the staff member's primary job responsibility. A Terms of Reference (TOR) was never created for the position, though the mid-term evaluation (MTE) recommended the creation of such a TOR (the recommendation was not implemented). The understanding was that the Programme Coordinator would bring overall consistency and coherence to the Programme by organizing meetings with leads and co-leads to exchange good practices and challenges in programme implementation, review the workplan and progress, and to collectively prepare mid-year and annual programme performance reports.[25] This workload was added to the staff member's other responsibilities.

28. A P-3 level statistician supported and reported to the Programme Coordinator. The statistician started with the Programme in June 2018 and was funded with the Programme budget allocated for central coordination for years two to four.[26] These two staff members comprised the **Programme Coordination Team** (PCT) and reported to the Director of UNSD in the Director's capacity as Chair of the TAG. In addition to executing the Programme Coordinator's expected duties, the PCT harmonized the financial reports received from entities.

D. Monitoring and Evaluation Arrangements, Criteria, and Questions

29. According to the ProDoc, the Programme was to be
    monitored on a continuous basis at the level of its 4 main pillars and 4 sub-components to assess which activities are progressing in line with the programme document…. The CSO [Chief Statistical Office] within

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[24] *Ibid.*, Section 11.1.
[25] 2018 End-Year Progress Report.
[26] GLE, Para 54.

each entity is expected to play a central role in monitoring the entity's implementation across all pillars and being fully aware of activities to be conducted during the upcoming quarter…. An annual progress report at the level of the overall Programme is required by 15 February of the subsequent year…. In addition, the Programme will be subject to both a mid-term external evaluation and end of cycle external evaluation.[27]

30. The MTE was to be conducted sometime between October 2017 and March 2018 and would inform senior management on any changes needed in the Programme's design and/or implementation strategy.[28] Because of implementation delays, the MTE was conducted from July-October 2018 by an external evaluator the Programme Coordinator supervised.

31. The final evaluation was to be initiated during the last six months of the Programme and would be "carried out at the regional level drawing on experts from each region in order to assess the effectiveness of the programme at local, national, sub-regional and regional level."[29] Beyond that, the ProDoc did not specify who would carry out the evaluation or what questions the evaluation would address. In October 2019, the DA issued project evaluation guidelines[30] and in 2020 issued a guidance note on planning and conducting evaluations of the remaining 10th Tranche Projects.[31]

32. During the final evaluation's planning period, all but one regional commission indicated they lacked capacity to carry out any Programme-related evaluations. Consequently, the CDPMO (the unit that oversaw the final evaluation process) decided to approach the final evaluation process differently than envisioned. It requested that each lead entity assess their respective component(s). DESA, which led four components, decided to evaluate one component, as did UNEP. Two lead entities indicated that they lacked capacity to evaluation/assess. Thus, three evaluations/assessments were conducted at the working level on aspects of the programme (Component 2, Component 4, and a global assessment) after the Programme's completion (the final evaluation synthesizes results from those reports while also conducting primary analysis).

33. By endorsing this evaluation's TOR, the DA Steering Committee endorsed the approach of having the final evaluation draw on the MTE and three evaluations/assessments. The TOR included the evaluation's main questions:
- **Relevance:** To what extent was the Programme designed to target the priorities and most pressing needs of developing country Member States in relation to measuring, monitoring and reporting on SDGs?

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[27] ProDoc, pp. 41-42.
[28] *Ibid.*, p. 43.
[29] *Ibid.*
[30] http://www.un.org/development/desa/da/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/da-project-management-documents/2253_1571321382_UN%20DA%20Evaluation%20Guidelines%20(Final).pdf
[31] The Guidance Note suggested that each 10th tranche project evaluation also examine the impact of Covid-19 on the Programme in terms of adjustments that were made and the impact of the adjustments.

- **Coherence:** To what extent was the Programme complementary to and coordinated with the other relevant capacity development work undertaken by the participating entities, as well as other UN and non-UN actors?
- **Efficiency:** To what extent did the Programme deliver its planned activities and outputs according to its timelines?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent have contributions been made towards the Programme-level Expected Accomplishments (EAs)?
- **Gender And Human Rights Mainstreaming:** To what extent, and how, were gender and human rights perspectives mainstreamed into the design, implementation and monitoring of the Programme?
- **Sustainability:** To what extent are the Programme's outcomes (achievement towards its expected accomplishments) sustainable?
- **Efficiency/Effectiveness Of The DA Programme On Statistics And Data Model:** To what extent was the DA "programme" model effective/efficient for the implementation of the Programme?

III. Methodological Considerations

A. Methodology

34. This evaluation draws from the data collected and findings from four evaluation reports and processes that were conducted by four different evaluators/evaluation teams:
    - C. de Barros Marcondes. 2022. "Terminal Evaluation of the DA (10th Tranche), Programme on Statistics and Data, 2016-2021, Global Assessment Report." Conducted by independent consultants and managed by CDPMO, hereafter referred to as "Global-level Evaluation or GLE;"
    - H. Snorrason. 2018. "Mid-term External Evaluation of the 10th Tranche Development Account Programme on Statistics and Data." Conducted by independent consultant, managed by the Programme Coordinator, hereafter referred to as "MTE;"
    - D. Annandale and D. Annandale. 2022. "Terminal Evaluation of Project T10 1617A, In-depth assessment of Component 2 (Environment Statistics and Indicators)." Conducted by independent consultants, managed by the Evaluation Office of UNEP, hereafter referred to as "Component 2 Evaluation"; and
    - H. Louis and L. Bersales. 2022. "Terminal Evaluation of Project, 1617A Programme on Statistics and Data, 2016-2021, In-depth assessment of Component 4 (Gender indicators and statistics)." Conducted by independent consultants managed by CDPMO, hereafter referred to as "Component 4 Evaluation."

35. Those evaluations collected data via a desk review of documents (including activity reports), key informant interviews (KIIs), quantitative database analyses, and surveys. Except for the global assessment, the evaluations/assessments arrived at conclusions and made evidence-based recommendations at the working level.

36. Between April and July 2022, a senior evaluator carried out this terminal evaluation according to the UNEG ethical principles and standards.[32] The evaluator reviewed evidence and relied on evidence and analyses that were unbiased, credible, and reliable. While the evaluations of the environmental and gender statistics evaluations were informative at the granular level, data collected for the GLE were the most unbiased and reliable.[33]

37. The GLE conducted 32 KIIs (13 of which were with women) and two surveys-- one of 43 Focal points/Co-leads and another of a sample of 60 of the 162 NSOs that participated in Component 1 activities. For the Focal point/Co-lead survey, 35 persons responded (81% response rate), 46% of whom identified as female. The survey's Margin of Error is +/- 7.2%. The NSO survey yielded responses from 38 countries-- response rate of 63%. Of the 38, 10 were NSOs of LDCs.

38. This final evaluation critically examined programme documents (including the ProDoc, annual reports, and meeting minutes) and used contribution analysis[34] to re-examine the Programme's coherence and likely effectiveness. Financial data were excerpted from the End of Programme Report the Programme Coordinator compiled[35] and not further verified.

39. Statistical analyses on the number and patterns of activities (e.g., a meeting, a conference, a form of technical assistance) rely on a database of factsheet information. A limitation of analyses on activities includes a lack of a set definition of an activity. Activities ranged in intensity and duration. When an activity occurred, the implementing entity was to complete an activity "factsheet" and enter it into an on-line portal.

40. The factsheets included data fields on details of an activity (e.g., component and associated EAs) so information would be concisely collected and consistently entered into the portal. "It should be noted that the factsheets vary considerably in both content and quality."[36] The factsheets did not contain some important information (e.g., the rationale for the activities, information on cancelled

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[32] UNEG (2020), Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation; UNEG (2008), Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system
[33] The Component 2 evaluation interviewed 15 persons who were high level implementers of the component (e.g., lead, focal point). There is the potential of implementers being positively biased. The evaluation also relied on survey results. Respondents represented only eight unique countries (skewed towards those who participated in many activities), meaning that there were insufficient numbers to reliably generalize results to the Component.
    The Component 4 evaluation's survey sampled 39 countries that included NSOs that participated in at least three Component 4 activities and at least two Component 4 activities at the national or regional level. Twenty-four persons representing 16 countries responded. By surveying only countries that were highly engaged with the Programme, results may have been positively biased. Thus, this those survey results were not relied upon. Similar criteria screened Key Informants.
[34] See Mayne, J. 2011. "Contribution Analysis: Addressing Cause and Effect." In K. Forss, M. Marra, & R. Schwartz (eds), *Evaluating the Complex: Attribution, Contribution and Beyond*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
[35] Progress Report- End of Programme, May 26, 2021.
[36] Component 2 Evaluation, Para. 95.

activities, and target countries). Because factsheets included only one country field, when an activity had participants from more than one country, the field had the entry of "multiple," "global" or "regional." This aggregation disallowed one to determine the total number and types of activities in which a country participated. National-level activities (NLAs) included only one country thus one can determine the number of NLAs each country received.

41. Sometimes, factsheets had missing fields and information (e.g., missing participants or attendance lists, a lack of detailed information on the exact type of target stakeholders). The missing information made establishing an accurate list of direct beneficiary institutions impossible. The database required cleaning (activity factsheets had to be revisited) for it to become credible and reliable. The Findings Section on Reporting, below (Section V.C.) addresses in more detail the factsheets and the database that resulted from it.

42. Because the outcome of progress on SDG 17.18 (capacity-building support to developing countries) and 17.19 (develop measurements of progress on sustainable development)[37] is increased reporting of SDG indicators, an analysis was done to determine whether Member States (MS) that received a greater number of NLAs from this Programme had a higher increase in the number of SDG indicators they report than those that received fewer national-level activities. To conduct this analysis, upon the evaluator's request, DESA created a dataset of all MS that included the SDG indicators that MS reported in 2017 (most recent available data) and 2021. The evaluator used linear regression to determine whether there was a correlation between the number of NLAs the Programme provided to an MS and change in the number of SDG indicators the MS reported in the 2017-2021 period. More about the methodology used is presented the Findings Section that relates to Programme Effectiveness (Section V.H.)

B. Limitations

43. In conducting an evaluation, one conceptualizes the bounds of what is being evaluated. In this case, the Programme's bounds overlap conceptually with aspects of the non-DA funded work of implementing entities. Thus, one cannot conceptually isolate the Programme from the activities of SDG custodian statistical agencies.

44. The Programme was designed to buttress the work of UN entities around regional and national capacity-building to inform on the progress made toward the SDGs. But "as custodian agencies, international and supranational statistical agencies have accountability for the quality and accuracy of global reporting on progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals."[38] Custodian agencies are to provide complete and detailed methodological guidance to national statistical systems, provide technical assistance to MS upon request to improve reporting on SDG indicators, and "support developing countries, in particular African countries, least developed countries, small

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[37] A/Res/71/313; E/CN.3/2022/2.
[38] E/CN.3/2019/2, p. 11.

island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems."[39]

45. Entities' statistical departments, even without the Programme, are responsible for focusing on SDG measurement and capacity-building. For example, even without the Programme, UNSD a) helps MS build sound national statistical systems, b) develops manuals essential for compiling reliable and comparable statistics and methodological guidelines for the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of data, and c) is responsible for developing international statistical standards, methods, and guidelines. Further, "capacity development activities are the main channels through which DESA translates its normative and analytic work into operational activities to assist developing countries in meeting the challenges of the internationally-agreed goals."[40] The Programme also provides such activities. Similarly, UNCTAD's Division on Globalization and Development Strategies, even without the Programme, provides technical assistance at national and regional levels to support countries' statistical capacity in the areas of trade and development. While DA funds would buttress the work of entities but focus on developing countries, the issue of demarcation between the Programme versus the typical work becomes salient when evaluating.[41]

46. Another limitation was the issue of potential bias of both interviewees and survey respondents who were implementers. To triangulate, this evaluation relied in part on quantitative evidence—it created a dataset of countries that includes the number of NLAs received and calculated the change in the number of SDGs each country reported over time.

47. There were limitations in the information available on activities at the country level, where specific countries were identified only for NLAs. Data was not collected that would allow one to distinguish which countries received activities that were multi-country, regional, or global in nature.

IV. Findings

A. Coherence

48. The ProDoc at 174 pages is exceedingly long, with repetition and at times lacks clarity and internal consistency. The ProDoc did not include a Theory of Change and did not adequately illustrate the mechanisms by which the Programme's activities would result in the EAs.

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[39] *Ibid*., p. 12.
[40] UN, Office of Internal Oversight Services. 2014. "Audit of the management of capacity development activities in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs." OIOS Report 2014/004, Assignment No. AN2012/540/01.
[41] In the Secretariat, often non-assessed resources "are used to complement the assessed contributions for implementing its programme of work." Source: UN-OIOS 2021 "Evaluation of the Accountability System of the UN Secretariat: Programme Planning and Budgeting Advisory Report", p. 4,

49. Despite the ProDoc's weaknesses, the Programme structure that evolved was generally considered to have enabled the effective and efficient delivery of a coherent Programme. Most internal Programme stakeholders interviewed (GLE) believed that the management, governance and coordination structures and processes, including the roles of the Programme Coordinator, the PCT, the TAG, the component leads, co-leads and focal points largely enabled effective and efficient Programme delivery and worked well. All of these roles were needed to support the flow of authority and decision-making processes at both the component and Programme levels.

50. In reviewing the Programme's organization, this senior evaluator concluded that the structure used to implement this large and complex Programme was appropriate and efficient. Similar structures have been used in other large successful initiatives that this evaluator has examined (e.g. America's Second Harvest's Hunger in America initiative).

51. According to internal stakeholders, the Programme's activities had a high degree of alignment with the broader Programmes of Work of the implementing entities and complemented the work of other actors in the regions.[42] Further, internal stakeholders believed that the Programme's design built on earlier DA projects focused on statistics. The Programme was implemented in a flexible manner, allowing implementing entities to complement and expand their work in priority areas, tailor assistance at regional and sub-regional levels, and take advantage of other initiatives occurring in a region or country.

B. Relevance

52. The Programme was highly relevant as evidenced by feedback from stakeholders, a high level of activity in the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians which the Programme created, contribution analysis, and funds leveraged.

53. The Programme's design and implementation were informed by MS' needs identified through previous and on-going statistical work, including that of the UN Statistical Commission and the Statistical Committees of the Regional Commissions. The latter helped identify challenges their regions' MS faced, which allowed for Programme activities to be tailored and responsive to regional and national needs. Further, with respect to Component 4, the ProDoc was informed by a regional analysis of country capacities for producing and using gender statistics.[43]

54. GLE Focal Point/Co-lead survey results indicated that nearly 90% of respondents believed that the Programme's design took into account to a *considerable extent* the priorities and most pressing needs of MS and particularly those of developing countries. According to the GLE NSO survey, 41% of respondents believed that the Component 1 activities they participated in *mainly met* the most

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[42] GLE, Finding 6.
[43] Component 4 evaluation, p. 35.

pressing needs of their NSO/country, while 59% believed that the most pressing needs were *partly met*. No respondents indicated that their needs were not met.

55. Further evidence of the Programme's relevance is the success of the Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians, developed under Component 1. This network received positive feedback from countries in the End of Programme Report, as well as by several Key Informants. The network operates on Yammer and was reported to have over 1,500 members worldwide, including NSSs, NGOs, academia, private sector, RCOs, UNCTs and UN system entities. It was reported to have facilitated informal engagement among members. The Statistical Commission in its 52nd session (March 2021) welcomed the Network's launch. Google Analytics data indicated that between October 2020 and October 2021, an average of 9,900 weekly visits and 139,000 messages exchanged and read over the year. The network's high level of engagement speaks well not only to the Programme's relevance but to it having a sustainable impact.

TABLE 3: FUNDS LEVERAGED FOR THE PROGRAMME BY SOURCE OF FUNDS

Source of contribution	Components						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	7	
Regional organizations	$150,000	$2,600,000	$500,000				$3,250,000
Bilateral donors		$2,350,000	$150,000		$30,000	$67,000	$2,597,000
Regular Programme for Technical Cooperation (RPTC)	$40,000		$8,100	$16,000	$33,000		$97,100
UN agencies		$5,000	$28,500	$15,000			$48,500
Universities/academic institutions	$12,000						$12,000
Grand Total	$202,000	$4,955,000	$686,600	$31,000	$63,000	$67,000	$6,004,600

Source: Progress Report- End of Programme, May 26, 2021.

56. The Programme leveraged and mobilized additional resources, though the precise amount leveraged is unknown. The total value of the in-kind contributions, which included staff time and travel expenses provided by partners, could not be established as the estimated monetary value was not made available for all contributions. In addition, the End-of-Programme report suggests that the Programme leveraged approximately $6 million USD (Table 3), approximately $5 million of which was attributed to Component 2. However, the Component 2 evaluation found that persons reporting supplementary funding did not consistently apply the working definition of supplementary funding and that to an unknown degree, some of the $5 million includes funding for projects with similar objectives though the projects did not fall under the Programme's auspices.

57. Key informant interviewees (for the GLE) commented that one opportunity to improve Component 1 work would be to have greater participation from and targeting of policymakers so that they could improve their understanding of the links between statistical systems and policymaking. Policymakers comprised 3% of participants in Programme activities.

C. Reporting

58. In general, good programme management requires current monitoring information. The Programme struggled with accurate, comprehensive, and timely reporting. The ProDoc did not comprehensively address monitoring—the monitoring system evolved during the implementation period. It would have been more efficient for a monitoring plan to have been established prior to the Programme's start.

59. In terms of Programme operations, accurate and complete reporting on activities could not be incentivized. Entities were provided Programme funds prior to the delivery of activities, which put the responsibility of programmatic and financial accountability on the entities, not the focal points or central Programme level. There was no central mechanism to approve programmatic expenses. While the PCT could request high quality reporting, it had no authority to impose any repercussions for submitting low-quality monitoring information or reports.

60. The TAG's September 2017 meeting[44] considered the Project Coordinator's mid-year 2017 report which reiterated the importance of accurate reporting. Each entity struggled with reporting. Difficulties included accuracy, timeliness and appropriate disaggregation, both of activities and resources consumed. Emails between the coordinator and entity focal points stressed the importance of accurate and complete reporting. There were countless hours spent trying to improve the quality of reporting, rectifying inconsistencies in reports, cleaning data, and harmonizing entities' financial reports. Ultimately, the Programme could not provide with confidence detailed data on how monies were used (except at the aggregate level) or data on the number of activities received per country other than NLAs.

1. Programme Activities

61. Information about the Programme's activities is derived from the factsheets (discussed above). While the effort to create a database of activities was laudable, the Programme struggled with having the ten entities consistently collect and enter information with an acceptable degree of accuracy and specificity. The End of Programme Report noted that the factsheets, developed as an on-line reporting tool, were designed to systematize information-sharing within and across components.

62. KIIs found the factsheet portal useful for sharing information on activities, although they stated that developing the database of activities required substantial effort. Approximately 80% of respondents to the GLE's Focal point/Co-lead survey believed that the reporting process enabled the effective and efficient delivery of respondents' respective component. The portal allowed Programme personnel to view activities implemented by other Programme components and, to some extent, in which an NSO participated.

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[44] Executive 2017 mid-year report, DA10 Statistics and Data, DA10-TAG meeting, 26 September, Muscat, Oman. Unpublished document.

63. With respect to other reporting, quarterly, entities' CSOs were to submit briefs to the Pillar/Component lead and the TAG. These would be shared with the DA Steering Committee. The Pillar/Component lead was responsible for submitting semi-annual component progress and financial reports to the PCT and the CDO which would be shared with the TAG, PMG, and DA Steering Committee.

64. Annually, the UNSD was to provide to the CDO a Programme progress and financial report which would also be shared with the TAG, PMG, and Steering Committee. Table 4, sourced from the ProDoc, shows the anticipated reports that should have been submitted and considered.

TABLE 4: PLANNED REPORTING ON THE PROGRAMME

Report	Frequency	Prepared By:	Submitted To:
Entity briefs	Quarterly[45]	CSO/entity	▪ Pillar/component lead ▪ TAG ▪ Shared with DA Steering Committee
Pillar/Component Progress and Financial Report	Semi-annual	Pillar/component lead	▪ UNSD Programme Team, CDO ▪ Shared with: TAG, PMG, Steering Committee
Programme Progress and Financial Report	Annual	UNSD	▪ CDO ▪ Shared with: TAG, PMG, Steering Committee

Source: Evaluator's analysis of ProDoc.

65. In total, seven progress reports were submitted (Appendix A includes a summary of reports submitted), fewer than the number envisioned.

- 2017 End-year Progress Report, 2018 End-Year Progress Report, 2019 End-Year Progress Report,
- Executive Progress Report per 1 June 2018,
- Progress Report- 1 September 2019,
- Progress Report, October 2020, and
- Progress Report- End of Programme, May 26, 2021.

There were no entity briefs submitted. DA Steering Committee meeting minutes do not reflect that substantive discussions were held about the reports submitted (see Appendix B for summary of DA Steering Committee meetings).

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[45] In the August 2016 meeting of the DA Steering Committee (SC), the chair gave feedback on the draft ProDoc and stated that the "quarterly review by the SC does not need to be done in a report format but it is to give a possibility for the SC to check on progress" (Minutes of DA Steering Committee meeting of August 12, 2016). The endorsed ProDoc does not reflect this feedback.

2. Financial Reporting and Expenditures

66. The Programme struggled with accurate financial reporting, as would any jointly implemented initiative implemented in the Secretariat. The Programme started before the UN transitioned from IMIS (Integrated Management and Information System) to Umoja (current finance and programme management platform).

67. Information on expenditures versus budgeted amount were to be tracked at the component level.[46,47] However, during the Programme's implementation period, UN financial systems tracked financial transactions at the entity level.

68. Categories and patterns of expenditures are often examined to understand a programme's implementation and priorities. The 2017 mid-year report to the TAG[48] disaggregated the consumed budget (including pre-committed, committed, and actual expenditures) and showed that 41% was used for participant travel (which can appear as Grants and Contributions), 22% for staff travel, 26% for consultancies, and 10% for other items (contractual services, general operating expenditures and other furniture and equipment). Such disaggregation of expenditures was not produced for the end-of-programme.[49] There seemed to be insufficient capacity (or prioritization) to track expenditures beyond the consumption rate of resources at the component and entity level. This may have been a consequence of not having a PMG throughout the initiative and/or the emphasis that was put on in having the Programme simply consume budgeted resources.

D. Resources Consumed

69. The programme consumed nearly all (95%) of its budget. Component 5 had the lowest consumption rate (85%) while Component 7 had the highest (99%). Table 5 shows the budgeted amounts and the number of planned and implemented activities. The ProDoc did not include the number of Planned activities-- it was derived from ongoing annual plans.

70. Table 6 shows, by entity and component, budgeted and consumed resources. Figures in bold reflect that the entity led or co-led the component. For Components 1, 5, 6, (only the lead and co-lead had any budget allocated to it), and 7, the lead and co-lead are the entities with the highest level of

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[46] ProDoc, Section 13.5.

[47] According to the End-of-Programme Report, page 4, "In the initial stage, only scarce and aggregated financial information was available to monitor the programme. Thanks to the efforts of the CDPMO, it has been possible to eventually put in place a UMOJA protocol for a centralised extraction of financial data for the programme. As of the 3rd quarter of 2017, CDPMO has regularly issued informative status reports (or reports) on funding and spending status by component for the ten implementing entities. These reports have been crucial to assess the implementation rate of each component and entity and, eventually, for the coordination team at UNSD to take immediate programmatic measures to secure the successful delivery and impact of the entire Programme. However, a few entities have alerted about discrepancies between these reports and information recorded at the entity level…. It was decided to make manual corrections based on additional information obtained from business intelligence (BI) reports."

[48] Executive 2017 mid-year report, DA10 Statistics and Data, DA10-TAG meeting, 26 September, Muscat, Oman.

[49] Progress Report- End of Programme, May 26, 2021.

expenditures. However, for Components 2, 3, and 4, entities other than the lead and co-lead had higher levels of expenditures. For Component 6, though ECA was a co-lead, it was allocated only $12,000 dollars to fulfill its role. Component 5, which two regional commissions led, was the only component where a substantive entity was neither a lead nor co-lead.

TABLE 5: BUDGET AND CONSUMPTION BY NUMBER OF ACTIVITIES AND COMPONENT, END-OF-PROGRAMME (7/7/21)

Component	Budget	Number of Planned Activities	End-of-Programme			
			Consumed budget		Number of activities implemented	Activities Implemented/planned
1	$ 3,505,500	89	$ 3,323,987	95%	128	144%
2	$ 2,070,000	116	$ 1,901,186	92%	153	132%
3	$ 1,325,000	64	$ 1,297,391	98%	87	136%
4	$ 1,099,500	56	$ 1,021,077	93%	73	130%
5	$ 735,000	37	$ 628,384	85%	47	127%
6	$ 470,000	16	$ 460,766	98%	15	94%
7	$ 1,695,000	68	$ 1,675,115	99%	100	147%
CC	$ 500, 000	NA	$ 514,519	103%	NA	NA
Total	$ 11,400,000	446	$ 10,822,423	95%	603	135%

Source: **End of Programme** Report, August **2021.**

E. Targeting of Countries

71. The Programme did not target a set of approximately 35 countries as the ProDoc envisioned. Instead, rather than cap the number of countries, the Programme expanded the number of countries by seeking opportunities to capitalize and deepen working relationships where countries had expressed a desire and commitment to strengthen their statistical systems and improve the capacities of the statistical communities. Also, when resources could be leveraged to provide additional activities, the Programme would provide activities even if that meant providing activities to countries that were not initially nominated to be targeted by the Programme. The ProDoc was not revised to reflect the modification in the targeting of countries and the DA Steering Committee did not explicitly endorse this change in modus operandi.

72. Over the Programme's implementation, the countries targeted for national level interventions changed. For example, the Component 4 (Gender Statistics) evaluation found that while the list of 25 countries to receive Component 4 NLAs was consistent between Programme's launch and the 2018 MTE, from 2018 to the Programme's end, seven of the countries that had received NLAs did not receive any (perhaps because the goal had been accomplished) while 20 new countries received NLAs. From 2016-2021, 45 countries had received at least one gender-related NLA.[50]

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[50] Analysis of Table 14 of Component 4 Evaluation.

TABLE 6: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES BY ENTITY AND COMPONENT AT END-OF-PROGRAMME (7/7/21)

Entity	1 Means of Implementation	2 Environment	3 Demographic	4 Gender	5 Poverty and Inequality	6 Peaceful and Inclusive	7 Economic	CENTRAL COSTS	TOTAL (Consumption Rate)
BUDGETED									
ECA	$771,900	$219,000	$245,000	$180,000	$90,000	**$12,000**	$195,000	$6,000	$1,718,900
ECE	$76,600	$296,500	$85,000	**$120,000**	$113,000		$150,000	$4,000	$845,100
ECLAC	$535,500	$236,500	$159,000	$65,000	**$193,000**		$150,000	$4,000	$1,343,000
ESCAP	**$652,100**	$340,500	$234,000	$180,000	$115,000		$175,000	$6,000	$1,702,600
ESCWA	$220,600	$217,000	$182,000	$140,000	**$172,000**		$150,000	$6,000	$1,087,600
HABITAT			**$275,000**		$52,000			$6,000	$333,000
UNSD	**$1,248,800**	**$154,500**	**$145,000**	**$209,500**			**$240,000**	$456,000	$2,453,800
UNEP		**$606,000**		$150,000				$4,000	$760,000
UNODC				$55,000		**$458,000**		$4,000	$517,000
UNCTAD							**$635,000**	$4,000	$639,000
TOTAL	$ 3,505,500	$ 2,070,000	$ 1,325,000	$ 1,099,500	$ 735,000	$ 470,000	$ 1,695,000	$ 500,000	$ 11,400,000
CONSUMED									
ECA	$803,679	$206,862	$213,428	$166,026	$59,000	**$11,137**	$116,216	$0	$1,576,348 (100%)
ECE	$70,619	$289,507	$86,372	**$96,618**	$106,068		$116,936	$2,437	$768,557 (100%)
ECLAC	$539,552	$236,233	$156,637	$65,234	**$189,531**		$149,844	$3,748	$1,340,778 (99.8%)
ESCAP	**$655,160**	$308,734	$223,671	$195,453	$85,378		$202,809	$1,824	$1,673,030 (97.9%)
ESCWA	$243,376	$168,178	$182,135	$132,144	**$150,568**		$192,615	$197	$1,069,213 (98.3%)
HABITAT			**$289,705**		$37,839			$0	$327,544 (98.4%)
UNSD	**$1,011,602**	**$126,556**	**$145,442**	**$164,198**			**$259,436**	$500,389	$2,207,622 (91.0%)
UNEP		**$565,115**		$146,388				$3,973	$715,475 (94.1%)
UNODC				$55,016		**$449,629**		$1,951	$506,596 (97.0%)
UNCTAD							**$637,259**	$0	$637,259 (99.7%)
TOTAL	$ 3,323,988	$ 1,901,185	$ 1,297,390	$ 1,021,077	$ 628,384	$ 460,766	$ 1,675,115	$ 514,519	$ 10,822,422 (96.9%)

Source: End of Programme Report, August 2021.

73. Similarly, the Component 2 evaluation found that through the end of 2017, 43 countries received at least one NLA on environmental statistics. In 2018, 10 countries had been added and six removed, yielding 47 countries that the Programme was providing NLAs, and these countries remained unchanged for the remainder of the Programme. Throughout the course of the Programme, 56 countries had received at least one Component 2-related NLA.

74. Activities were distributed based on MS requests and not on a rigorous analysis of needs and gaps. One could posit that countries with the weakest statistical systems may not have requested activities.

75. The Programme Coordinator had difficulties receiving from all focal points a list of target countries (national workshops and country missions).[53] The working definition of a "target country" became a country that was provided at least one NLA of any type. According to the GLE and this evaluator's analysis of the Factsheet database, there were 74 countries that the Programme provided at least one NLA.[54] In practice, the set of countries that the Programme worked with was fluid. The key principle of being demand-driven and country-owned was followed. The Programme took advantage of opportunities that emerged for engagement with MS.

76. In addition to countries that received NLAs, the Programme described "beneficiary countries" as those that received or participated in activities at the global, regional, and/or sub-regional level.[55] Though the programme reached more than the 74 countries that received NLAs, the Programme's database on activities does not allow one to discern exactly which countries received/participated in global, regional, or sub-regional activities. The PCT compiled a list of 193 MS that received or participated in some type of activity, though the number of activities per country remains unknown.[56] To arrive at 193, a very broad view of receiving an activity was taken. The table was compiled using multiple sources, including the country of national officer contacts that focal points had, examining the source of the computer for the visits of websites that the Programme had created, country of participant in e-learning activity, etc.

F. Activities

77. Because the ProDoc did not articulate a number of specific activities that would occur, one cannot determine the extent to which the activities provided complied with the vision. The number of planned activities was derived on an ongoing basis from annual plans for the Programme. Based on

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[53] Executive 2017 mid-year report, DA10 Statistics and Data, DA10-TAG meeting, 26 September, Muscat, Oman
[54] Global Level Evaluation, Table 6.
[55] Beneficiary countries were defined as those that received activities other than national-level activities, and target countries as those that received national-level activities, forming 2 mutually exclusive groups of countries (Source: Component 2 evaluation, Para. 22).
[56] GLE, Appendix 11.

this, the Programme implemented 35% more activities than planned. The number of "planned" activities increased between the MTE and the end of programme from 299[57] to 446.

78. At a gross level, given the description of activities, most supported the Programme's objectives. Table 7 displays the number of activities by component and targeted participants. Table 8 shows activities by the scope and type of activity.

TABLE 7: TARGET PARTICIPANTS BY ACTIVITIES AND COMPONENT

Target Participants	Component							Total	Percent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
NSOs & Ministries	86	118	61	57	41	15	40	418	69%
NSO & Ministries	39	93	26	14	9		6	187	31%
NSOs	47	21	26	10	14		18	136	23%
NSO & others		4	9	33	18	15	16	95	16%
Statisticians, Experts and/or Practitioners	30	18	18	9	7		39	121	20%
Policy makers	3	1		1			15	20	3%
Others[1]	9		8	4			1	22	4%
DA Implementing Agencies		5		1			5	11	2%
Environmental Stakeholders		6						6	1%
Ministries/National Agencies		5						5	1%
Grand Total	128	153	87	72	48	15	100	603	100%

Source: Global-Level Evaluation, Table 7. Based on analysis of factsheets database.

79. Among the 74 countries that received NLAs, the number of activities delivered ranged from 1 to 10 with a median of 2, mean of 2.5, and mode of 1 activity. Fifty-six identified countries received activities categorized as direct advisory services/ country missions. The number of advisory services/ country missions provided to the 56 countries ranged from 1 to 7, with a mean of 1.8 and a median (and mode) of 1. There were 18 countries that received NLAs that did not have a single direct advisory service/country mission, perhaps due to the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

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[57] MTE, Table 2, P. 11.

Scope & activities	Component							# Of activities	Percent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Global	17	24	18	13	11	3	46	131	22%
Expert group / technical group meeting	2	4	6	5			2	19	
Guidelines / methodology / tools	8	10	7	3	3	2	11	44	
Participation in third party meeting / advocacy	3	1	2	3			3	12	
Training material / case study / best practice		6	2	1	5		14	28	
Website/Portal	2						2	4	
Workshop / seminar / training	2	3		1	3	1	14	24	
National	45	82	31	25	9	11	10	213	35%
Advisory services / country mission	24	33	25	5	8	3	8	106*	
Expert group / technical group meeting		1						1	
Guidelines / methodology / tools	2	3	1			2		8	
Participation in third party meeting / advocacy			1				1	2	
Training material / case study / best practice		4			1	2		7	
Workshop / seminar / training	19	41	4	20		4	1	89	
Regional	51	38	39	34	26	1	43	232	38%
Advisory services / country mission		3	5					8	
Expert group / technical group meeting	5	12	3	4	4		8	36	
Guidelines / methodology / tools	6	3	1	7	4		7	28	
Participation in third party meeting / advocacy	6	1	2	3			1	13	
Training material / case study / best practice	5	4	5	3	7		5	29	
Website/Portal	1	1		2				4	
Workshop / seminar / training	28	14	23	15	11	1	22	114	
Sub-regional	15	9		1		1	1	27	4%
Expert group / technical group meeting	1							1	
Guidelines / methodology / tools		2						2	
Participation in third party meeting / advocacy	1	1						2	
Training material / case study / best practice		2				1	1	4	
Workshop / seminar / training	13	4		1				18	
Grand Total	128	153	87	73	46	16	100	603	100%

Source: Analysis of factsheets. End of Programme Report. August 2021.

* This figure includes 1 advisory service/country mission where the country name was not identified and 4 where the country name was identified as "multiple."

1. Impact of Covid-19 on Activities

80. Some activities related to the measurement of the impact of Covid-19 and building capacities to respond specifically to Covid-related challenges did not directly relate to the Programme's initial objectives. Covid-related activities were provided in response to the Secretary General's directive that the UN would pivot to respond to the pandemic. That directive was reinforced by a March 28,

2020 memo from CDPMO leadership to focal points of the 10 DA-affiliated entities directing that all ongoing 10th, 11th, and 12th tranche projects be reoriented when possible to include Covid-19 related components. The Programme widened its mission and included specific activities aimed at developing a better understanding of the pandemic's impact—e.g., techniques or methodologies for the handling of non-traditional data sources to respond to the need for Covid-19 monitoring and mitigation. The TAG requested and was granted a 4-month extension of the Programme to adjust for Covid-19 challenges. In May 2020, the TAG endorsed a revised list of planned activities--the list was further updated in October 2020 and again in February 2021.

81. COVID-19-related travel and gathering restrictions introduced by most countries in March 2020, the final year of the Programme, necessitated adjusting the 104 remaining planned Programme activities. Initially, activities that involved travel were delayed. As the pandemic's gravity grew, non-travel activities (e.g., webinars, the development and roll-out of e-learning courses, the translation of important guidelines and material) supplanted activities that required travel. Key informants thought that holding some meetings remotely may have helped the Programme expand its reach. Of the 104 remaining activities, 46 were replaced by Covid-19 resilient activities and 20 by Covid-19 response activities.

82. Covid-19 response activities included the Covid-19 Response Web portal (used to share guidance, actions, tools and best practices to ensure operational continuity of data programmes at the national level). Further, ECLAC developed the Repository on gender-oriented policies in the Covid-19 Observatory in Latin America and the Caribbean to track public policies implemented by LAC countries, mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and provide analyses of the economic and social impacts of these policies at the national and sectoral levels.

## G. Progress towards Programme-level Expected Accomplishments

83. Results from the GLE Focal Point/Co-Lead Survey (Figure 1) indicated that most (73%) respondents believed that considerable progress had been made towards each of the Programme-level EAs as a result of their respective components' activities.

84. With Programme support, entities created knowledge products—publications, websites, methodologies, case studies. The Factsheets reported a total of 25 guidelines, portals, training materials, and e-learning courses developed under Component 1.[58] One notable product, the update of the 2003 Handbook on Statistical Organization, renamed as *The Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems*[59] was influential as demonstrated by the 14,738 visits to

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[58] End-of-Programme Report
[59] https://unstats.un.org/wiki/display/HSO/Handbook+on+Management+and+Organization+of+National+Statistical+Systems.

its webpage between March 2021 and November 2021. According to Google Analytics, most of the website visitors were based in developing countries.

FIGURE 1: FEEDBACK FROM FOCAL POINTS/CO-LEADS ON PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS EXPECTED ACCOMPLISHMENTS
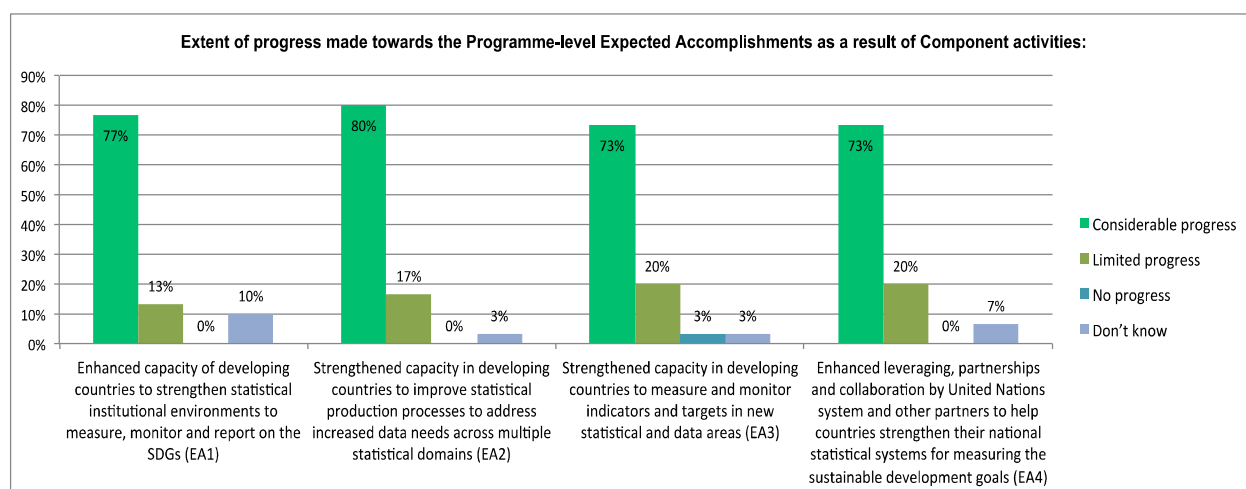
Source: Global-Level Evaluation Co-Leads/Focal points survey, 2021.

85. NSOs that participated in Component 1 activities reported progress towards EA1. Examples NSOs provided included the creation of a separate unit of SDG statistics and restructuring a household survey to allow for specific data collection for SDG indicators.

86. According to the GLE NSO survey, most (53%) NSOs believed that their knowledge of the compilation of SDG indicators had *significantly* increased, while 47% believed that the knowledge had *somewhat* increased. Survey feedback from NSOs on progress towards EA2 was less positive, with 29% indicating that capacity to complement data sources with new sources had significantly increased, and 57% indicating that such capacity had somewhat increased. With respect to EA3, 88% of NSOs responded that very useful (47%) or useful (41%) partnerships had been developed with respect to SDG issues. Most (91%) NSOs believed that sharing with or learning from other countries had contributed to their work on SDG indicators.

H. Programme Effectiveness: Reporting on SDG Indicators

87. To quantitatively determine the effectiveness of NLAs that the Programme delivered, linear regression analysis was performed on the 2017-2021 change in the number of SDG indicators that MS produced. DESA provided data on the reporting of SDG indicators by MS for 2017 (most recent year available) and 2021.

88. There are 231 SDG indicators in total.[60] Table 9 shows that the mean number of indicators that MS reported in 2017 was 96.8, a figure that grew by 2021 to 155.5. Between 2017 and 2021, the number of indicators reported on average grew by 58.7. In 2017, MS with developing versus

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[60] https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/indicators-list/.

developed economies showed little difference in terms of the average number of SDG indicators reported. By 2021, however, differences emerged with developed countries reporting on average 7.2 more SDG indicators than developing countries.

89. In 2017, MS that received NLAs reported an average of 106 SDG indicators, 15 more than the 91 average of MS that did not receive NLAs.[61] By 2021, MS that received at least one NLA were reporting on average 169 SDG indicators, whereas those that did not receive an NLA reported on average 147 SDG indicators, a difference of 22.

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF SDG INDICATORS THAT MS REPORTED ON BY TYPE OF ECONOMY AND WHETHER THE MS RECEIVED AT LEAST ONE NATIONAL-LEVEL ACTIVITY

Descriptive Statistic	All Member States			Developing Countries			Developed Countries			Received NLA			Did not receive NLA		
	2017	2021	2017-2021 Change	2017	2021	2017-2021 Change	2017	2021	2017-2021 Change	2017	2021	2017-2021 Change	2017	2021	2017-2021 Change
Mean	96.8	155.5	58.7	97.2	153.6	56.4	95.8	160.8	64.9	105.9	168.7	62.8	91.2	147.3	56.1
Standard Deviation	14.9	23.9	11.4	16.8	26.6	11.9	7.7	12.5	7.1	9.7	16.0	8.9	14.8	24.3	12.1
Median	98	159	60	101	159	57	95	159	66	109	172	64	94	154	57
Mode	93	159	64	110	175	64	94	158	69	110	183	64	96	158	66
Minimum	41	63	22	41	63	22	79	126	47	76	122	38	41	63	22
Maximum	122	196	81	122	196	81	112	190	81	122	196	80	116	190	81
Count	193	193	193	141	141	141	52	52	52	74	74	74	119	119	119

Source: Evaluator's analysis of database created for this evaluation.

90. Linear regression analysis was used to determine whether countries that received NLAs, based on the activities recorded among the 74 countries that received NLAs, had more positive changes in the number of SDGs they reported between 2017 and 2021.

91. The dependent variable was the change in the number of SDG indicators that a MS reported between 2017 and 2021. Two models were estimated. The first model uses as an independent variable the number of NLAs provided to the MS while the second model models Programme participation as a bivariate dummy (1, 0) variable (1 indicates that the MS received at least one NLA, 0 indicates that it did not receive any NLA). Both models include as control dummy variables whether the MS was a developing country and whether it was an LDC.

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[61] With respect to possible selection bias, one could make two opposing arguments. One is that the Programme provided NLAs to MSs that were already on track to increase the number of SDG indicators they reported, since the average number of SDG indicators in 2017 among NLA-receiving countries was higher than that of those that did not receive NLAs. That is, some aspect of the increase in NLAs reported is due to a selection effect. On the other hand, one might argue that countries that in 2017 were reporting more NLAs were already reporting the SDG indicators that were "easy" to report and increasing the number would be more difficult because their "floor" was higher. In this case, the selection bias would work in the opposite direction.

92. The models estimated were:

MODEL 1: $Change\ in\ \#\ of\ SDG\ indicators\ reported\ 2017\ to\ 2021 = B_0 +$
$B_1(number\ of\ national\ level\ activities) + B_n(country\ development\ level\ dummy\ variables)$

MODEL 2: $Change\ in\ \#\ of\ SDG\ indicators\ reported\ 2017\ to\ 2021 = B_0 +$
$B_1(whether\ a\ MS\ received\ any\ national\ level\ activity) +$
$B_n(country\ development\ level\ dummy\ variables)$

TABLE 10: LINEAR REGRESSION RESULTS

Variable	Model Coefficient (Standard error)	
	Model 1	**Model 2**
Intercept	64.10**	63.13**
	(1.45)	(1.44)
Number of National-Level Activities provided to Member State	2.26** (.47)	--
Whether the Member State received any National-Level Activity	--	9.44** (1.54)
Least Developed Country	2.38	2.34
	(1.88)	(1.82)
Developing Country	-11.32**	-11.98**
	(1.84)	(1.80)
R-Squared	.21	0.26
Adjusted R-Squared	.20	0.25
[N]	194	194

*=Significant at p<.05; **= Significant at p<.01
Source: Evaluator's analysis of database created for this evaluation.

93. In both models, having received NLAs had a positive (with statistical significance at the p<.01 level) effect on the change in the number of SDG indicators MS reported (Table 10). When the Programme is modeled as a continuous variable that reflects the number of activities received by each country, the number of NLAs delivered by the Programme to a MS has a positive and statistically significant effect on the change in the number of SDG indicators reported. The number of indicators is predicted to increase the change in SDG indicators by 2.3 per NLA provided.

94. According to Model 1, compared with countries that had transitional economies or were developed, developing countries had an increase in the number of SDG indicators reported that was 11.3 less. Having the Programme provide five activities to a developing country would likely compensate for the disadvantage that developing countries have. Model 1 has an adjusted R-squared of .2, meaning the model accounts for 20% of the variance in the change in number of SDG indicators reported.

The analysis suggests that a greater intensity of NLAs may have resulted in even more reporting on SDGs indicators.

95. Model 2 shows substantive results similar to Model 1's. In Model 2, if a country received at least one NLA as opposed to no NLAs, the predicted change in the number of SDG indicators reported would increase by approximately nine, after controlling for development status. Again, the Programme's NLAs nearly compensate for the disadvantage in the change in number of SDG indicators reported on by developing countries. Model 2 has an adjusted R-squared of .25.

I. Sustainability of the Programme's Effects

96. The Programme's effects are likely to be sustainable. In the GLE NSO survey, approximately two-thirds of responding NSOs believed that it is *very* likely that the increased capacities gained through the Programme will be sustainable and the other one-third thought that the sustainability of capacities was *somewhat* likely. The Global Network of Data Officers and Statisticians provides an ongoing venue for capacity development and sharing of good practices, contributing to the sustainability of the Programme's impacts. The high level of references to the website of *The Handbook on Management and Organization of National Statistical Systems* also speaks positively to the Programme's activities having a sustainable effect.

97. That the Programme is associated with an increase in the reporting of SDG indicators suggests that the impacts will be sustainable, since once a country starts reporting on an indicator, it is likely that collecting and reporting on the indicator will become part of the NSOs workplan. Given the positive results on the effect of national-level activities on the number of SDGs being reported, it is likely that the increase in the number of SDG indicators being reported on by the countries that received NLAs will not backslide.

J. Gender and Human Rights

98. Gender perspectives were integrated throughout the initiative through Component 4 which focused on enhancing national capacities to produce, analyse, disseminate/communicate and use timely and reliable gender statistics. GLE Focal point/Co-lead survey respondents indicated that other Programme components also addressed gender through specific work (e.g., case studies and guidelines on methods to produce gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators).[62]

99. Creating high quality SDG indicators correlates with Human Rights. According to High Commissioner of Human Rights, "The realization of human rights correlates with the availability of sound official statistics. Statisticians play a critical role in supporting evidence-based policy and measuring civil, economic, political and social rights. In accordance with internationally accepted standards, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the dissemination of relevant statistical information

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[62] GLE, Section 5.5.

is essential to meet peoples' right to information and delivering on related entitlements to participation and accountability."[63]

100. When asked about the degree to which gender had been integrated into their respective component's design, 30% of GLE Focal point/Co-lead survey respondents indicated that gender had been integrated to a considerable extent, while 67% indicated believed that it had been integrated to a limited extent. Only 3% responded "not at all." A similar question was posed about the integration of a human rights perspective—36% responded that human rights had been integrated to a considerable extent, while 33% responded "to a limited extent" and 30% responded "not at all."[64]

V. Conclusions

101. The initiative's ultimate goal was that developing countries would progress in their reporting of SDG indicators. This evaluation's analysis showed that the National-Level Activities the Programme provided was associated with an increase in the number of SDG indicators MS reported. The NLAs provided essentially compensated for challenges that developing countries have in reporting on SDGs. The Development Account's purpose is to provide funds to support initiatives that compensate for the challenges faced by developing countries.

102. The evaluation found challenges to monitoring the Programme's implementation. These challenges emerged in part from the financial reporting and accountability structures of the Secretariat which reinforce the primacy of entities and make monitoring and reporting on joint programmes difficult. At its start, the Programme did not have a clear monitoring framework. The Programme worked diligently to overcome these challenges and a reasonable structure to monitor activities emerged.

103. With respect to targeting countries, the Programme did not operate as envisioned. The *modus operandi* of providing activities to countries differed greatly from the ProDoc's vision of targeting 35 countries and providing them with activities tailored to their circumstances. The *modus operandi* that emerged was based on practicalities and opportunities, with the Programme a) providing activities to areas and statistical personnel who wanted the Programme's activities, b) working in areas where resources were mobilized, and c) working where Programme personnel believed the Programme could be impactful.

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[63] UN OHCHR, "Official Statistics and Human Rights."
https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/HRIndicators/StatisticsAndHumanRights.pdf#:~:text=Official%20Statistics%20and%20Human%20Rights%20Statistics%20matter%20for,and%20measuring%20civil%2C%20economic%2C%20political%20and%20social%20rights.
[64] GLE, Section 5.5.

104.   There is a fine line between being *ad hoc* versus being intentionally opportunistic. While at face value the Programme's effectiveness seemed at risk because of a possible dilution of the Programme (it provided NLAs to 74 rather than 35 countries), the regression results suggest that the the NLAs the Programme provided were effective in increasing the number of SDG indicators countries report. The results also suggest that providing a higher number of NLAs may have yielded even more progress on SDG reporting. The consideration of an approach of providing fewer countries with more NLAs would need to be counterbalanced by a possible decreased reach of the Programme's NLAs.

105.   If the Programme had adhered more closely to the ProDoc and had greater intensity for a smaller number of countries, it would have only reached 35 rather than 74 countries with NLAs. It seems that the decisions that resulted in a greater breadth of impact may have been appropriate. Certainly, though, a good practice would have been for the TAG and DA Steering Committee to endorse such a decision and for there to have documentation on the modification of the *modus operandi.*

106.   One cannot disentangle the effects of the Programme from the capacity-building activities that custodian entities of SDGs are responsible for undertaking, even in the absence of the Programme. While custodian entities are to build the statistical capacities of countries in their specific area of responsibility, without the considerable resources that the DA contributed the entities may not have had the resources to carry out their responsibilities as effectively as this evaluation showed. The regression analysis showed that the Programme's NLAs had an impact, above and beyond other capacity-building activities that NSOs may have received from outside of the Programme.

107.   Going forward, DA programmes/projects should ensure that countries with the weakest statistical systems are targeted so they are not further left behind in their monitoring and reporting of SDGs. The analysis showed that a priori, countries that received NLAs were reporting more SDG indicators than those that did not receive any NLAs.

108.   The ProDoc would have benefitted from having an editor and evaluators review and contribute to it. An editor may have made the ProDoc more concise and internally consistent. A review by evaluators should have ensured that the ProDoc included a Theory of Change and a tentative, sufficiently detailed monitoring plan and evaluation plan.

109.   The evaluation units of each of the entities that a DA initiative engages should be committed to a tentative evaluation plan specified in a ProDoc prior to the entity that they represent committing to implement an initiative. These reviews of a ProDoc should be done prior to the document coming before the DA Programme Management Team with CDPMO for a quality assurance review.

110. A tentative evaluation plan in a ProDoc should specify who will manage the terminal evaluation, to whom the evaluation report(s) will go, the budget for the evaluation, and how the implementation of recommendations will be tracked. The evaluation plan will in part rely on data collected during implementation. The monitoring plan should specify which IAs will be monitored, how data will be collected, and the frequency of data collection and analysis. The DA Evaluation Framework is silent on the issues of how the implementation of recommendations will be tracked and who has responsibility for evaluating jointly implemented programmes.

111. One structure to consider for the evaluation of joint programmes/projects is that a programme/project budget could contract with OIOS-IED to conduct the evaluation, make recommendations, and include the recommendations in the OIOS-IED recommendation tracking system. The DA Evaluation Framework should be clearer on the points of the evaluation of joint programmes/projects and the tracking of the implementation of recommendations that result from them.

VI.   Recommendations

112. Based on the Program Description and Findings above, the evaluation makes the following important recommendations to improve the structure of future programmes/projects supported by Development Account tranches of funding.

1. THE DA SHOULD ESTABLISH MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT PROGRAMME/PROJECT DOCUMENTS (PRODOCS) ARE CLEAR, INTERNALLY CONSISTENT, REALISTIC, AND CONCISE.

2. WITH RESPECT TO THE TARGETING OF COUNTRIES, THE DA SHOULD PUT IN PLACE MEASURES TO ENSURE THAT PRODOCS ARE CLEAR AND CONSISTENT. ANY MODIFICATIONS FROM THE INITIAL PLANS ON TARGETING SHOULD BE DULY APPROVED BY THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT STRUCTURES (E.G., TAG) AND DOCUMENTED.

3. THE DA SHOULD MANDATE, AS PART OF THE PROJECT DESIGN PHASE, AN ASSESSMENT TO DETERMINE THE DEGREE TO WHICH MEMBER STATES WOULD BENEFIT FROM THE INITIATIVE. THOSE COUNTRIES THAT WOULD STAND TO BENEFIT THE MOST SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO REQUEST SERVICES FROM THE DA INITIATIVE.

4. THE DA SHOULD REQUIRE THAT A PRODOC FOR ALL LARGE-SCALE (BUDGET IN EXCESS OF USD 1 MILLION) INITIATIVES JOINTLY IMPLEMENTED BY MULTIPLE ENTITIES INCLUDE A TENTATIVE MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN.
   a. THE TEAM CREATING THE PRODOC SHOULD INCLUDE A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEAD ENTITY'S EVALUATION UNIT (EVALUATION OFFICER).
   b. THE EVALUATION OFFICER SHOULD DEVELOP, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE EVALUATION UNITS OF ALL PARTICIPATING ENTITIES, AN APPROPRIATE EVALUATION PLAN THAT SPECIFIES WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGING THE EVALUATION, THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER PARTICIPATING ENTITIES IN SUPPORTING THE EVALUATION AND ITS FOLLOW-UP, A DATA COLLECTION AND DATA

ANALYSIS PLAN, THE AUDIENCE FOR THE EVALUATION REPORT, AND HOW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE TRACKED.

c. EVALUATION UNITS OF ALL IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES MUST COMMIT TO THE PRODOC'S EVALUATION PLAN PRIOR TO THE START OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT.

d. THE LEAD IMPLEMENTER/MANAGER OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT (E.G., PROGRAMME COORDINATION TEAM) SHOULD DEVELOP, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE LEAD ENTITY'S EVALUATION UNIT AND OTHER IMPLEMENTERS (E.G., FOCAL POINTS), A DETAILED TENTATIVE MONITORING PLAN, WHICH SPECIFIES THE INDICATORS OF ACHIEVEMENT TO MONITOR DURING THE COURSE OF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION, WHO WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR COLLECTING THE MONITORING DATA, AND THE FREQUENCY OF DATA COLLECTION.

e. AT THE START OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT, THE LEAD IMPLEMENTER/MANAGER OF A PROGRAMME/PROJECT (E.G., PROGRAMME COORDINATION TEAM) SHOULD MAKE OTHER IMPLEMENTERS (E.G., FOCAL POINTS) AWARE OF THE PROGRAMME/PROJECT'S MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN AND ENSURE THAT THERE IS COOPERATION FROM THE IMPLEMENTERS IN PRODUCING AND COLLECTING MONITORING AND EVALUATION-RELEVANT DATA. IMPLEMENTING ENTITIES SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS AND CRITERIA ALLOW FOR HIGH QUALITY DATA TO BE COLLECTED AND SHARED ON A TIMELY AND ONGOING BASIS. THE LEAD ENTITY MUST HAVE THE ROLE AND AUTHORITY TO ENSURE THAT HIGH-QUALITY DATA IS PRODUCED BY AND COLLECTED FROM ALL PARTICIPATING ENTITIES.

APPENDIX

Appendix A: Summary of Reports Submitted

Type of Report	Summary of Report
Executive Progress Report per 1 June 2018	Programme kicked off roughly 9 months later than expected, allowing the programme to adapt to various context "and to identify target countries." As of 1 June 2018, 48% of total budget consumed. "The Programme is specifically targeting 81 developing countries (out of which 21 LDCs) with national training workshops, and country advisory missions. The list of countries by component is presented in the 2017 end-year progress report." Meetings with (co-)leads of the 7 components are organized every quarter. Outcome of coordination meetings are discussed with TAF.
2018 End-Year Progress Report submitted by Programme Coordinator	Listed 79 "target countries" 18 of which are LDCs. As of end of 2018: 61% of budget consumed. 326 activities completed of the 397 for the entire Programme.
Progress Report- 1 September 2019	As of 1 September 2019, 378 activities complete, representing 85% of the total number of outputs for the entire programme, including the extension. 65% of total budget consumed.
2019 End-Year Progress Report	Listed 130 target countries, 37 of which are LDCs As of February 1, 2020, 75% of budget consumed, 463 activities completed.

October 2020	Progress Report and Decisions of the TAG
	
	 • As of Feb 1, 2020, 75% of budget consumed, 463 activities concluded.
	
	 • As of 30 September 2020, 84% of budget consumed, 507 activities complete, 92 activities to be completed.
	
	 • Replace 104 initially planned activities with 66 Covid-resilient activities. Among them:
	
	     o Covid-19 Response Web portal providing a space for the global statistical community to share guidance, actions, tools and best practices to ensure operational continuity of data programmes at national level;
	
	     o UN Covid-19 Data Hub making data relevant to Covid-19 response readily available and suitable for the production of maps and other data visualizations and analyses;
	
	     o 9 additional specific Covid-19 response activities.

May 26, 2021	Progress Report- End of Programme To DA Steering Committee

Appendix B: Summary of DA Steering Committee Meetings

Date	Summary of DA Steering Committee Meeting Minutes as They Pertain to The Programme
February 22, 2016,	Tentatively endorsed the ProDoc
August 5, 2016	"There is a strong sense that implementation has to begin as soon as possible, even if the smaller details cannot be solved at the moment. The review after 18 months (end 2017) will allow for further adjustments to the programme as relevant….The PMG is meeting on Thursday, 11 August… with a focus on governance, monitoring, and reporting aspects."
December 13, 2017	Discussed slow implementation of the Programme, with implementation operationalized only as budget consumed. There was no discussion of Programme activities.
June 6, 2018	DESA reported that 48% of budget has been implemented, 50% of outputs delivered. 81 developing countries and 21 LDCs have benefitted from the programme.
December 14, 2018	The committee endorsed the findings of the mid-term evaluation; tentatively extended the Programme until the end of 2020; tentatively increased budget by $1.4 million. Programme has utilized 2/3 of budget. "Of the 299 outputs foreseen for the complete programme, over 80% (250) have been completed."
March 4, 2019	The committee endorsed the addition of $1.4 million. 59% implementation as end of January 2019; 61% financial implementation as of end of 2018 (evaluator notes inconsistency in reporting). 82% activity/output implementation as of end of January 2019. Final list of activities includes 49 additional activities supported by the $1.4 million.
December 16, 2019	With the additional $1.4 million, the Programme was at 69% financial implementation and 85% activities implementation. "Altogether, the programme is expected to complete a total of 569 activities instead of the original 446 and, due to support from partners, will have spent approximately $15 million dollars including the original $11,4 million contribution from the DA." (Source: DA Steering Committee December 16, 2019 meeting minutes).
May 26, 2021	DESA reported that the Programme had, over 4.5 years, "achieved an implementation rate of 97%, delivering a total of 602 activities, which was 35% more than initially planned. This was due in part to cost savings from virtual methodologies used due to Covid-19, and in part because the programme leveraged funding from other sources. Over 100 activities had been adjusted due to Covid-19." (Source: Meeting Minutes of DA Steering Committee 26 May 2021, section 4.