



UNODC

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Handbook

Results-based
Management and
the 2030 Agenda
for Sustainable
Development



UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME
Vienna

Handbook

Results-based Management and the
2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



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Background

The main purpose of the Handbook is to provide staff of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with information that establishes a common ground and helps to ensure a consolidated approach to programme planning, monitoring and reporting, at the national, regional and global levels, based on best practices in results-based management, within the overall framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Handbook is intended to serve as a succinct, user-friendly resource that contains explanations of key concepts and tools that will facilitate operationalizing harmonized results-based management approaches within UNODC as a means of achieving:

- Higher quality UNODC programmes and projects
- Improved ease, clarity and quality of reporting
- Greater alignment between UNODC programmes and projects with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Strengthened organizational collaboration, accountability and learning

Within UNODC, the Strategic Planning and Inter-agency Affairs Unit is responsible for ensuring that a results-based management approach is mainstreamed into all of the global, regional and national programming efforts of the Office. The Unit coordinates the formulation of the strategic framework of UNODC¹ and develops institutional standards, methodologies and tools for results-based management for UNODC programmes and projects. The unit also provides advice and support to project and programme managers in meeting the standards in results-based management — for example, on defining results, identification of indicators (as well as their respective baselines and targets) and relevant means of verification. The Unit develops online planning and reporting processes and facilitates the development of standard indicators for all UNODC thematic areas in order to guide programming efforts. While the mandate of the Unit covers the planning, monitoring and reporting components of results-based management within UNODC, the Independent Evaluation Unit is responsible for the overall leadership of the UNODC evaluation component.

The first part of the Handbook includes a definition of results-based management and an overview of its use. Chapter II of the Handbook contains an exploration of the importance of results-based management against the backdrop of the 2030 Agenda; its role in improving the effectiveness of interventions of the United Nations system, the focus of which is on higher-level results that can only be attained through collective action; and, within that setting, the strategic approach of UNODC to programming (and associated guiding principles). Chapter III of the Handbook contains

¹ The strategic framework is itself being redesigned to demonstrate a closer link between the work of the Secretariat and the sustainable development agenda; this makes the issue of linking operational programmes and projects with the said agenda even more pressing.

definitions of key terms and concepts related to results-based management, which will be reviewed in greater detail and applied in practice throughout the following chapters.

The subsequent parts of the Handbook include discussions of the planning, monitoring, learning and reporting phases of programming, offering practical guidance on the various processes and tasks to be undertaken at each stage of the results-based management approach of UNODC. Chapter IV of the Handbook contains a step-by-step guide to assist implementers in developing a coherent programme vision. It also includes practical tools that help translate it into a results-based management framework that is consistent with priorities of the United Nations as well as global priorities, and which allows for effective monitoring and contribution to evaluations that are focused on utilization. Chapter V includes an exploration of issues related to performance monitoring, a critical element of results-based management, while chapter VI contains practical guidance on how to draft high-quality results-oriented reports. Chapter VII includes a brief overview of key aspects of evaluation and on how principles of results-based management are applied to support enhanced learning, adjusting and strategic decision-making within projects and programmes. Chapter VIII contains a summary of the main points and core competencies that readers should have acquired by the time they have finished reading the Handbook.

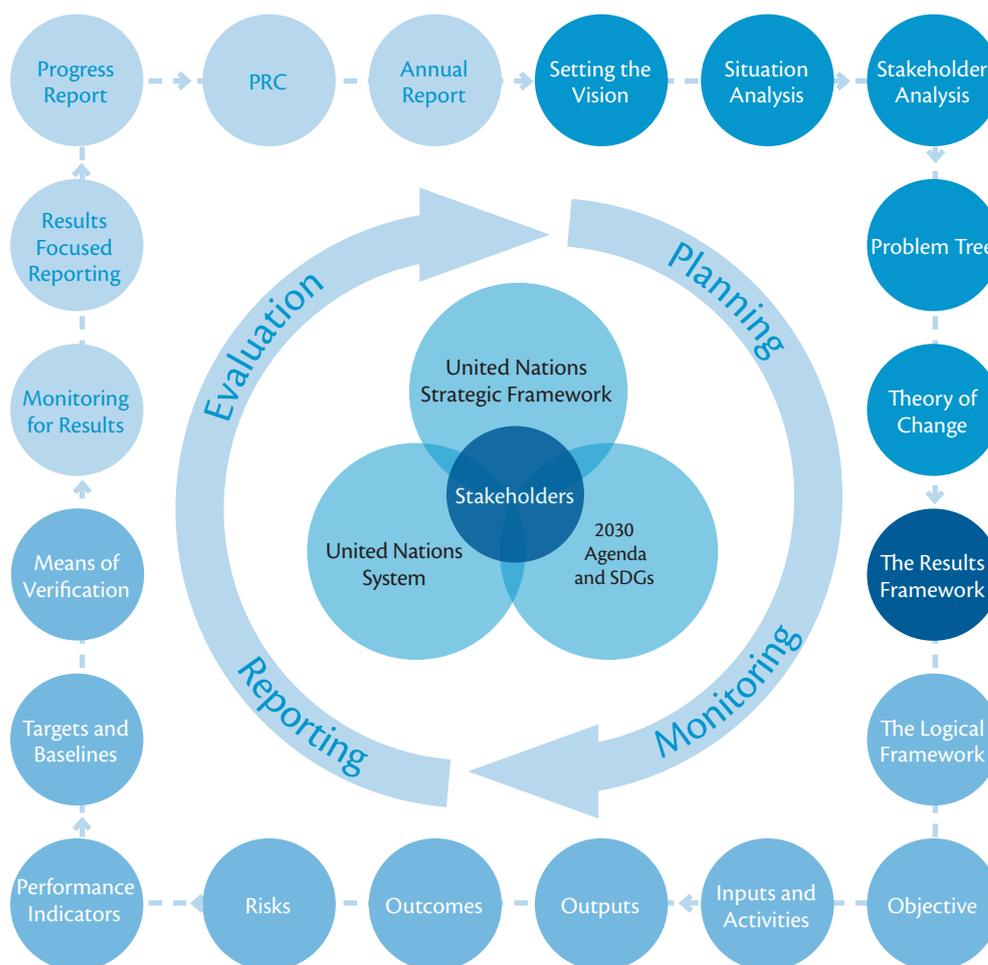
By the end of this Handbook, the reader should have a solid grasp on how UNODC implements its results-based management approach in the context of project and programme planning, monitoring and reporting (see figure 1). The reader should also understand how results-based management forms a key part of the Office's vision to support Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

After reading this Handbook, the reader should be able to:

- Incorporate the results-based management approach into UNODC projects and programmes, using systematic approaches to develop a project or programme, and prioritize actions in a way that is consistent with the strategic priorities of the Office and the Sustainable Development Goals, and that adds value to the context in which the Office is operating
- Use the theory of change to develop models based on sound logic for project and programme management and to develop clear logical frameworks that link inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and objective, and that take proper account of the underlying risks and assumptions
- Model the project or programme results framework into a robust logical framework that contains appropriate indicators, methods of verification, baselines, targets, risks and assumptions for each result
- Develop and implement a project or programme monitoring framework and/or plan that takes into account the information needs of the key stakeholders and the appropriateness of data collection tools, information management processes, data quality control measures and costs
- Use monitoring data to provide timely feedback, upon request, to decision makers, allowing for the assessment of projects and programmes and, ultimately, for adjustments to be made to strategy and implementation approaches whenever needed

- Identify, document and apply lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of a project or programme
- Understand the basic principles and process of evaluation and the role it plays in supporting learning and accountability within the results-based approach of UNODC
- Draft reports that: are succinct and focus on results; illustrate the achievements of the project or programme; highlight any contributions to meeting the UNODC strategic results and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; and shed light on lessons learned to improve the performance and delivery of future projects and programmes

FIGURE I. RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT APPROACH OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME



CHAPTER I

Introduction to results-based management

A. WHAT IS RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

Results-based management is a strategy that lays the foundations for an integrated approach to project and programme management, including planning, monitoring and evaluation. When adopting an approach, all actors contributing directly or indirectly to achieving a set of results must ensure that their processes, products and services contribute to the achievement of the desired results. The actors, in turn, use information and evidence from the actual results to inform decision-making on the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities as well as for issues related to accountability and reporting.²

It is important to note that results-based management is not a set of tools or instructions, nor is it an end in itself; rather, it is a way of thinking about projects and programmes that allows for improved management practices, greater organizational effectiveness and better development results. It requires implementers to constantly ask four fundamental questions about their projects or programmes:

- Are we doing the right thing?
- Are our interventions leading us to our objective?
- Are we doing things in the right manner?
- How do we know?

Box 1. Definition of results-based management

Results-based management is defined as follows: management strategies that are based on managing for the achievement of intended organizational results by integrating a philosophy and a set of principles that are focused on results in all aspects of management and, most significantly, by integrating evidence and lessons learned from past performance into management decision-making. Such strategies may be applied in individual organizations of the United Nations system.

Source: Results-Based Management in the United Nations System: High-Impact Model for Results-Based Management, JIU/NOTE/2017/1, p. iv

Drawing on the foundational principles of accountability, national ownership and inclusiveness, results-based management supports project and programme managers in their daily work by ensuring greater results orientation. It fosters improved performance, integration of lessons learned into management decisions and greater effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting of progress achieved in project and programme implementation.³ As such, it enables managers to develop sound projects and programmes and to continuously adapt them to the particular needs of the beneficiaries, in order to achieve better results. It entails defining realistic results expectations, based on appropriate analyses; identifying the beneficiaries and designing projects

² United Nations Development Group, Results-based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM Concepts and Approaches for Improved Development Results at Country Level (October, 2011), p. 2.

³ Ibid., p. 3.

and programmes that meet their needs; monitoring progress made and resources utilized by using appropriate indicators; identifying and managing risks; mainstreaming lessons learned and evidence, and using them as a base for making decisions; and reporting on results achieved.

Box 2. Philosophy and principles of results-based management

- Vision and clarity of desired impact with implications for focus on outcomes and long-term goals
- Causal linkages for change to happen defined in a hierarchy of results (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impact)
- System operations that go beyond causal linear logic and recognize that different actors and efforts can contribute to the same, shared result, address underlying risks and create conditions for success
- Performance measurement for objectivity in management and accountability, and for transparency and consensus among key stakeholders
- Monitoring and performance assessment for continuous improvement and adaptive management focused on progress towards outcomes
- Evaluation for strategic changes, direction-setting and innovation

Source: JIU/NOTE/2017/1, p. v.

B. WHY ADOPT RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT?

Results-based management has long been an accepted norm and in recent years has gained further traction in the face of economic austerity and growing pressure on governments for greater transparency and accountability in the use of public resources. Historically, considerable emphasis has been placed on accounting for inputs (what was spent), activities (what was done) and outputs (what was produced). Although important, those markers were not sufficient to identify whether or not progress was being achieved in tackling the challenges that programmes and projects were seeking to address.

Results-based management is therefore the desired approach to meeting that need and raising the standards of performance within the United Nations system, shifting focus away from producing and doing things, and towards actually fostering change. It defines success in terms of actual results achieved, as opposed to what was done (activities).⁴ As such, it requires organizations to stay focused on long-term results and on being able to demonstrate their contribution to achieving those results.

Results-based management was introduced in the United Nations system in the late 1990s. In 2010, its accelerated implementation was requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 69/259. Results-based management derives its significance from the demands, on the part of both the countries in which the programme is carried out (“programme countries”) and donor countries, for

⁴ Canada, Global Affairs Canada, *Results-based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada: A How to Guide*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa, 2016), p. 9.

the United Nations to demonstrate that it is achieving its objectives, that it is doing so coherently and efficiently, and that it is adding value and contributing to meeting the needs and priorities of programme countries and global priorities.⁵

Box 3. Aims of results-based management

By adopting a results-based management approach, UNODC aims to:

- Improve the quality of all ongoing and future UNODC programmes and projects
- Ensure compliance with agreed and defined quality standards that enable monitoring and evaluation by project and programme managers, donors and counterparts at the national, regional and international levels
- Facilitate reporting mechanisms that are easy to understand
- Align UNODC programmes and projects with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development
- Promote a constructive work environment

In that regard, the General Assembly, in its resolution 67/226, requested the Secretary-General to intensify efforts to strengthen and institutionalize results-based management in the United Nations development system. In addition, in its resolution 71/243, the Assembly underscored the importance of results-based management, within and across entities and at all levels of the United Nations development system. An effectively operating results-based management system is important for demonstrating that the United Nations system and its entities are achieving results beyond the level of activities and outputs, and hence making a valid contribution to global challenges and helping bring about transformative changes and with a lasting impact for the world's most vulnerable populations. A system-wide perspective of results-based management is critical for addressing results at the level of outcomes, which are generally of a conjoint nature and of collective value. As a result, such outcomes require all entities of the United Nations system to work together in interdependent and synergic ways in order to deliver a collective impact.⁶

⁵ See JIU/NOTE/2017/1, para. 20.

⁶ JIU/REP/2017/6, p. 6.

CHAPTER II

Results-based management strategy of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in the context of the United Nations strategic framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. MEETING THE PROGRAMME OUTCOMES OF THE UNITED NATIONS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

As part of the United Nations Secretariat, UNODC prepares a strategic document every two years which becomes the framework for the biennial programme budgets. That document contains a translation into action of the legislative mandates of the Secretariat, broken down into programmes and subprogrammes.

The General Assembly considers the biennial strategic framework in the light of inputs from various United Nations committees and decides to accept, curtail, reformulate or reject each of the programmes and subprogrammes proposed in the strategic plan. After its adoption by the General Assembly, the framework constitutes the principal policy directive of the United Nations and, once approved by the General Assembly, serves as the framework for the formulation of the biennial programme budget.

All UNODC projects and programmes must contribute to the strategic framework. In that regard, the adoption of a results-based management approach to programming strengthens such links and ensures that all UNODC projects and programmes clearly articulate, and are able to measure, how their results contribute to the achievement of corporate-level strategic results and priorities. Within the context of the 2030 Agenda, they must also demonstrate how they will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Results-based management is also essential in demonstrating how UNODC programmes and projects contribute to system-wide strategic and accountability frameworks of the United Nations. Those frameworks include the United Nations Development Assistance Framework at the country level, the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, and a future system-wide accountability framework for reporting on the contribution of the United Nations development system to achieving the Goals contained in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

B. RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT AND THE 2030 AGENDA FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In September 2015, the international community adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals contained therein. That adoption was the result of an inclusive process of negotiation and consultation among the 193 Member States of the United Nations, as well as members of the academic community, civil society and the general public, providing a comprehensive and universal framework for the United Nations in its work dedicated to development. The 2030 Agenda draws together various elements — namely peace, the rule of law, human rights and gender equality, development and equality — into a comprehensive and forward-looking framework and explicitly recognizes the interrelationship between sustainable development on the one hand, and the fight against drugs and crime

(including corruption and terrorism) on the other (see figure II). A complete list of the Sustainable Development Goals is contained in annex I to the present document, together with a breakdown of which Goals are most relevant to the mandate of UNODC.

FIGURE II. INTERLINKAGES BETWEEN THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME



The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development reflects a shift in global thinking on how cross-cutting issues — including the rule of law and fair, effective and humane justice systems, as well as health-oriented responses to drug use — are enablers for development, and how their absence impedes development in countries of all income levels. Efforts at all levels will need to be holistic and inclusive, backed by multi-stakeholder partnerships and supported by an increase in policy coherence and mainstreaming, and a decrease in addressing crime prevention and drug control issues in silos which are not fully integrated into development plans. The strong connections between the rule of law, security and sustainable development increasingly require greater coordination and cooperation among national agencies as well as among United Nations entities.

The provision of meaningful support by UNODC to Member States in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals can only be ensured through the application of a results-based approach in project and programme management. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its imperatives for integrated and interdependent ways of working for collective impact within a system-wide framework further highlights the significance of results-based management, for which a focus on outcomes requires such coordinated action.⁷ It is particularly important for UNODC managers to ensure that their projects and programmes are in alignment with the national Sustainable Development Goal targets of Member States, and that, wherever possible, global-level Goal indicators are considered when designing projects and programmes.

The Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations noted that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has the same imperatives as results-based management, namely a focus on long-term goals, which is key to achieving results. That approach places an emphasis on critical inquiry and evidence-based decision-making and strives for sustainability. To that end, the approach of the Agenda focuses on (a) strategic and adaptive management through system operation for outcome and impact; (b) integrated and interdependent ways of working through partnerships or collaborations for achieving outcomes that typically require more than one player; and (c) success in achieving goals and outcomes through evidence-based policymaking, continuous learning and adaptation with due regard to the complex contexts and fast pace of development in the world today.⁸

Box 4. IMPORTANT

In its resolution 71/243, the General Assembly underscored the importance of results-based management, within and across entities and at all levels of the United Nations development system, as an essential element of accountability that could, inter alia, contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and requested the United Nations development system and its individual entities to continue to strengthen results-based management, focusing on long-term development outcomes, developing common methodologies for planning and reporting on results, improving integrated results and resources frameworks, where appropriate, and enhancing a results culture in the entities of the United Nations development system.

Furthermore, the criteria for the success of the United Nations system in addressing the 2030 Agenda echo the basic philosophical foundations and principles for results-based management, which include the following: (a) a results-oriented focus on successfully achieving outcomes; (b) consideration of all conditions for achieving outcomes, which has implications for systems operations; (c) integrated and interdependent ways of working for collective value and impact around shared, and often conjoint and indivisible outcomes; (d) critical inquiry based on

⁷JIU/NOTE/2017/1, p. vi.

⁸Ibid., para. 5.

evaluation; (e) dynamic ways of learning and working for transformative changes, reflective of a learning organization that is operating in the context of often unpredictable and fast-paced development, which requires resilience; and (f) collective accountability at all levels, addressing joint outcomes and a hierarchy of integrated results in a logical chain.⁹

Box 5. Linkages between the 2030 Agenda and results-based management principles

The 2030 Agenda strives for sustainability and in this regard focuses on:

- Strategic and adaptive management through system-operation for outcome and impact
- Integrated and interdependent ways of working through partnerships or collaborations for achieving outcomes that typically require more than one player
- Success in achieving goals and outcomes through evidence-based policymaking, continuous learning and adaptation with due regard to the complex contexts and the fast pace of development in the world

C. TRANSLATING RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT INTO ACTION: APPROACH OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

The UNODC results-based management approach to programming, led by the Strategic Planning and Inter-Agency Affairs Unit, is framed by human rights and gender equality principles and guided by the results framework for programmes and projects of the Joint Inspection Unit. Such an approach ensures quality assurance processes that are more robust while strengthening coherence between UNODC projects and programmes, corporate strategic priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals. That approach also guarantees that the results of the projects and programmes of the Office are measurable and that they contribute to the strategic priorities and the achievement of the Goals.

⁹Results-based management in the United Nations development system: analysis of progress and policy effectiveness — summary report (JIU/REP/2017/6, para. 6).

Box 6. What does a human rights-based approach contribute to results-based management?³

Whereas results-based management is a management tool that can assist in achieving a desired result, a human rights-based approach is a framework that can help to define both the results and the process by which they are to be achieved.

A human rights-based approach specifies the subjects of programming results: the rights-holders and duty-bearers.

Furthermore, when utilizing a human rights-based approach:

- Outcomes reflect improvement in the performance of, or the strengthened responsibility of, the rights-holders and duty-bearers resulting from institutional or behavioural change.
- Outputs should close capacity gaps.
- Monitoring should reflect how programmes have been guided by human rights principles, such as non-discrimination, participation and accountability, in the process of reaching results.
- The programming results should specify the realization of human rights as laid down in international instruments.

³ Adapted from United Nations Development Group, *Results-Based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM Concepts and Approaches for Improved Development Results at Country Level* (October 2011).

CHAPTER III

Key concepts and elements in
results-based management

This chapter contains definitions of key United Nations programming concepts that form the basis of an effective results-based management system (see table 1). Those concepts will be explored in more detail in subsequent chapters, which will look into the practicalities of utilizing a results-based management approach within the project or programme cycle.

TABLE 1. KEY CONCEPTS

Objective	A specific end result that is desired or expected to occur as a consequence of capacity-building, at least in part, and to which a development intervention is intended to contribute. Results are changes in a state or condition that are derived from a cause-and-effect relationship.
Outcomes	The intended change of behaviour of the beneficiaries; outcomes relate to changes in institutional performance, among individuals or groups, as viewed through a human rights-based approach and with consideration given to the Sustainable Development Goals. The achievement of outcomes depends on actions of various stakeholders and is not entirely in the hands of UNODC.
Outputs	The changes in skills or abilities, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a specified time period; the tangible results of UNODC interventions, for which UNODC is exclusively responsible.
Activity	Actions taken or work performed for which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources, are mobilized to produce specific outputs.
Inputs	The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions.
Performance indicator	A unit of measurement that specifies what is to be measured along a scale or dimension. It is a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring an output or outcome, with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment.
Baseline	Information about the existing situation that is gathered at the beginning of a project or programme. It is the reference point against which changes that occur during a project or programme are measured.
Target	Specifies a particular value that an indicator should reach by a specific date in the future in order for the action to be considered a success. For example: "Total number of corruption incidents to decrease by 85 per cent among groups X and Y by the year 2020."
Means of verification	The source of information for establishing the status of the indicator and the measure of success of the project or programme. It typically includes existing information, systems, surveys, studies and evaluations.
Logical framework	Explains how results are to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions and risks. The logical framework (also referred to as "log frame") reflects strategic-level thinking across an entire organization, a project, a country programme or a programme component within a country programme.

(cont.)

Performance monitoring	A continuous process of collecting and analysing data for performance indicators for the purpose of comparing the implementation of the development intervention, partnership or policy reform against the expected results (achievement of outputs and progress towards outcomes).
Performance	The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner (a) operates according to a specific standard or specific criteria or guidelines, and (b) achieves results in accordance with stated plans.
Risks	Risks are the conditions that can negatively affect the project or programme. If a risk is too high, teams must take steps to mitigate the risk or address the problem that results from a risk.
Assumptions	Assumptions are the conditions that need to be in place to ensure the project or programme progresses the way it is envisioned. They are often outside the control of the project or programme.

TABLE 2. CHANGES REFLECTED IN RESULTS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS

Inputs (what implementers invest in)	Activities (what implementers do)	Outputs (what implementers produce)	Outcomes (changes in capacities and/or performance of duty-bearers)	Objectives (changes in conditions)
Human and financial resources	Develop a curriculum	Goods and services	Changes in behaviours and attitudes	Progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals
Personnel	Train	Changes in skills and capabilities	Social action	Economic benefits
Equipment	Recruit	Systems	Women's empowerment	Political benefits
Time	Evaluate	Evaluations	Enhanced visibility	Cultural benefits
Technology	Procure	New products	Changes at the institutional level	Gender equality
Knowledge	Facilitate	Reports	Policy formulation	Enhanced security
Information	Develop plans, policies	New information	Decision-making	Benefits to civil society
			Establishment of new norms	
			Increased knowledge	
			Increased efficiency	
			Increased competencies	
			Development of new standards	

* Adapted from United Nations Development Group, *Results-Based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM Concepts and Approaches for Improved Development Results at Country Level* (October 2011), p. 13.

CHAPTER IV

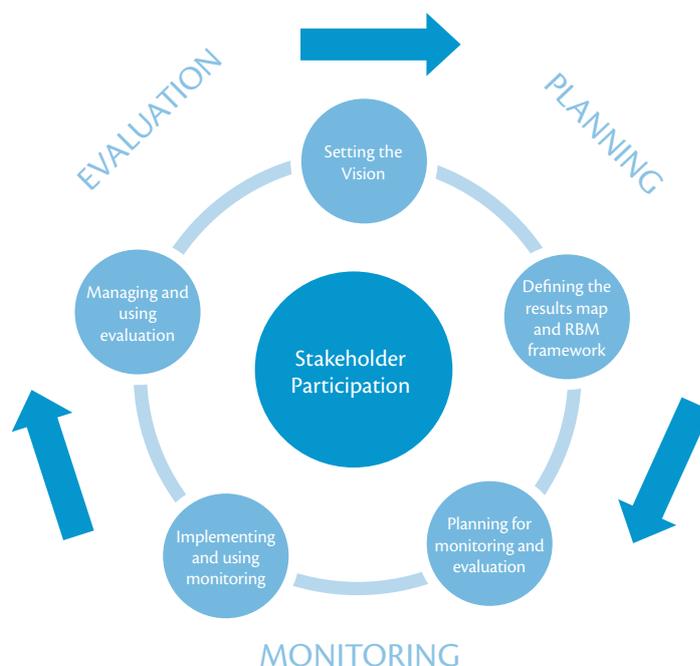
Results-based management
in the planning phase

A. RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT IN THE PROJECT AND PROGRAMME CYCLE

Typically, results-based management follows a life-cycle approach — that is, an approach aligned with the key stages of the project or programme cycle (see figure III). The first stage of the process (the planning phase) involves setting the vision and defining the results framework. Subsequently, the implementation phase gets under way and monitoring becomes an essential task, helping to ensure that the desired results are being achieved. Monitoring and evaluation are key components of the process, because feedback loops help managers to build on evidence to adjust strategy, design and implementation as needed. For the development of UNODC global, regional and country programmes, as well as for the development of any national project, consulting with substantive and thematic sections in UNODC headquarters is of utmost importance and, as such, strongly recommended in order to ensure proper planning, monitoring and reporting and to avoid duplication of effort.

This chapter provides a step-by-step guide on how to set the vision and results of the project or programme, and translate it into a results-based management framework that is consistent with corporate priorities and global goals, and allows for effective monitoring and tracking of both the performance and the results of the project or programme.

FIGURE III. LIFE CYCLE OF RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT*



*Adapted from United Nations Development Programme, *Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation for Development Results* (New York, 2009).

B. STEP 1: SETTING THE VISION

The vision-setting process, undertaken at the planning stage, starts with a situation and/or a stakeholder analysis that enables UNODC teams to identify, through a structured exercise, the challenge they want to address and the context in which they will operate.

Box 7. What is a situation analysis?

A situation analysis involves research and broad consultation with relevant stakeholders in order to:

- Develop a shared understanding of the problem in its various dimensions
- Identify the key stakeholders involved
- Identify any knowledge or information gaps
- Select those elements that the project or programme would be best placed to address
- Identify potential partnerships
- Gather lessons learned and evidence from similar initiatives
- Begin to delineate key objectives

Box 8. Stakeholder participation

Throughout project or programme planning and design, stakeholder participation is always important; however, the level of participation must be considered strategically in the light of limited funds.

The processes of vision setting and theory of change development may benefit from the active engagement of a large and diverse audience of both men and women, because different inputs and viewpoints will help build a nuanced and robust understanding of, among other things, the given context, how change happens and how the project will catalyse change. All of those elements are critical for designing strong projects and programmes. As such, the need for such an audience may be best addressed through a dedicated discussion space, such as a workshop that brings different stakeholders together to brainstorm. Specific investments by UNODC may be necessary, including time invested by staff, funding, and material and technical resources to support a workshop.

The subsequent process of designing and choosing indicators and means of verification, as well as setting baselines and targets, can be accomplished at almost no additional cost to UNODC through discrete consultations and meetings with the relevant staff and actors to discuss various issues, including validity and relevance of proposed indicators, availability of data sources, data collection processes and roles and responsibilities.

Once the situation analysis is completed, there are different ways that the information gathered can be used to support programme planning as well as vision- and result-setting. UNODC

recommends the “problem tree” analysis,¹⁰ as it is a simple method to break down complex issues and arrive at solutions. The problem tree analysis allows teams to identify the core problem, causes and effects, the relationships between the different problem pieces and possible solutions.

Box 9. Problem tree analysis

In order to understand a situation that is to be influenced by a project, it is essential to be aware of problem conditions which describe public safety constraints. Problems and their interrelationships can be identified and visualized using the problem tree.

Problem tree instructions

The problem tree is a diagram showing the cause-effect relationships between problem conditions in a defined context. Consider the following steps:

1. Define precisely the situation (sector, sub-sector, area, etc.) to be analysed.
2. Define approximately five major problem conditions related to the selected situation.
3. Organize the problem conditions according to their cause-effect relationships.
4. Add further problems, thus describing causes and effects.
5. Check the diagram (tree) for completeness (most relevant conditions) and logical order.

Note: Problems are existing negative conditions (who has the problem?); a problem is not the absence of a solution but an existing negative condition; its position in the problem tree does not indicate the importance of a problem.

During the process to select projects and programmes, there should be analysis of the overall situation and discussion of how a specific intervention could resolve an identified bottleneck in achieving the overall goals.

Box 10. IMPORTANT

In the case of UNODC, potential interventions must be evaluated using the strategic framework of the Office, which serves as reference criteria when setting priorities, identifying projects or programmes for implementation, and approval. Thus, during the phase of formulating a project or programme, it is important to reflect on the specific mandate and corporate priorities of UNODC, and consider whether the Office has, both within the United Nations system and beyond, a comparative advantage in the field in question that would enable it to bring about the desired change. Potential criteria for selecting an intervention can include its contribution to national and corporate strategic priorities (results), priorities of stakeholders, donor preferences, resource constraints and experiences (good practices). This exercise will facilitate prioritization, ensuring that teams will be able to select from competing priorities those critical demands which could benefit the most from their interventions.

¹⁰ A practical example of a problem tree analysis is presented in annex II. Other types of analysis that can be incorporated into the problem tree approach include gender analysis, human rights-based analysis, child rights-based analysis, stakeholder analysis, political economy analysis and capacity gap analysis. Methodologies can be used in combination to complement evidence gaps and provide more nuanced understanding of certain issues.

C. STEP 2: DEVELOPING THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The situation analysis and problem tree analysis provide all necessary elements for developing the theory of change for the project or programme, which will allow further refinement of the results. For UNODC, the adoption of a theory of change approach allows for better planning as activities are directly linked to a thorough understanding of how change happens in a given setting and how project or programme interventions will produce the intended results. Also, by being able to measure progress over a long-term period, the theory of change sets solid foundations for more effective results-based management.

The theory of change involves an ongoing process of reflection to explore change, including how it happens and how it affects the role played by a UNODC project or programme in a particular context, sector and/or group of people. During the exercise, the manager of the project or programme must consider it within a broader analysis of how change happens while identifying the conditions that need to be in place for long-term goals to be met.

In practical terms, the theory of change is a planning and evaluation method that relies on a clear long-term goal as well as measurable indicators for success and the formulation of actions to achieve goals.¹¹

Box 11. IMPORTANT

The theory of change approach involves the following elements:

- Demonstrates a causal pathway from the baseline to the outcomes stage by specifying what is needed for goals to be achieved
- Requires the user to articulate underlying assumptions that can be tested and measured
- Changes the way of thinking about initiatives, as well as altering the starting point of such deliberations from “what will be done” to “what needs to be achieved”

Robust theories of change often build on participatory methodologies that allow for the meaningful engagement of all relevant stakeholders at all stages. During the process, the project or programme manager should clearly articulate all assumptions and potential risks that may hinder or facilitate the achievement of the intended results. Risks are the conditions that can negatively affect the project or programme. If a risk is too high, teams must take steps to mitigate the risk or address the problem that results from a risk. Assumptions are the conditions that need to be in place to ensure the project or programme progresses the way it is envisioned. They are often outside the control of the project or programme.

While thinking through the risks and assumptions, the project or programme manager needs to account for potential internal limiting factors, including time frame, planning cycles and budget constraints. The manager also needs to consider the external environment and any potential adverse

¹¹ Taplin, D., and Clark, H. *Theory of Change Basics: A Primer on Theory of Change*, ActKnowledge, New York, 2012.

effects that could be caused by contextual issues, including the political climate, economic conditions, informal societal structures such as hierarchies based on gender, and existing or new legislation. During the implementation phase, the manager of the project or programme will test the assumptions and manage the potential risks identified in the theory of change.

The key to developing a robust theory of change is a thorough understanding of different results in the change pathway¹² and how they will complement one another. To a large extent, the more well-grounded, evidence-based and accurate the situation analysis is, the more sound the theory of change will be.

There is no blueprint specifying what a theory of change should look like. Often it is a visual representation of the log frame of the project or programme, accompanied by a brief narrative explaining the rationale, the links between the different results (i.e., the “pathway of change”), as well as associated risks and assumptions (including the role of other actors not directly involved, but on whom the success of the project or programme may depend). Ideally, it should be no more than two pages. When using a narrative to explain the theory of change, “if” and “then” statements ought to be used to describe the causal relationships between results and how the different levels connect. For example:

(a) If Member States use the *International Standards on Drug Use Prevention* to increase the knowledge and skills of their staff, then target populations will be less likely to abuse substances, leading to a decline in prevalence rates;

(b) If UNODC assists in the development of draft laws and policies on violence against children, then Member States will be able to prevent and respond to violence against children more effectively;

(c) If UNODC fosters intergovernmental cooperation in the area of border management and security, then trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants will be significantly reduced.

Box 12. The seven stages of the theory of change development process^a

1. Identify long-term goals and the assumptions behind them.
2. Conduct backward mapping and connect preconditions or requirements necessary to achieve the goal and explain why these preconditions are necessary and sufficient.
3. Identify your basic assumptions about the context.
4. Identify the interventions that the initiative will perform to create the desired change.
5. Develop indicators to measure the outcomes and assess the performance of the initiative.
6. Conduct a quality review: is your theory (a) plausible, (b) doable (or feasible), and (c) testable?
7. Write a narrative to explain the logic of your initiative.

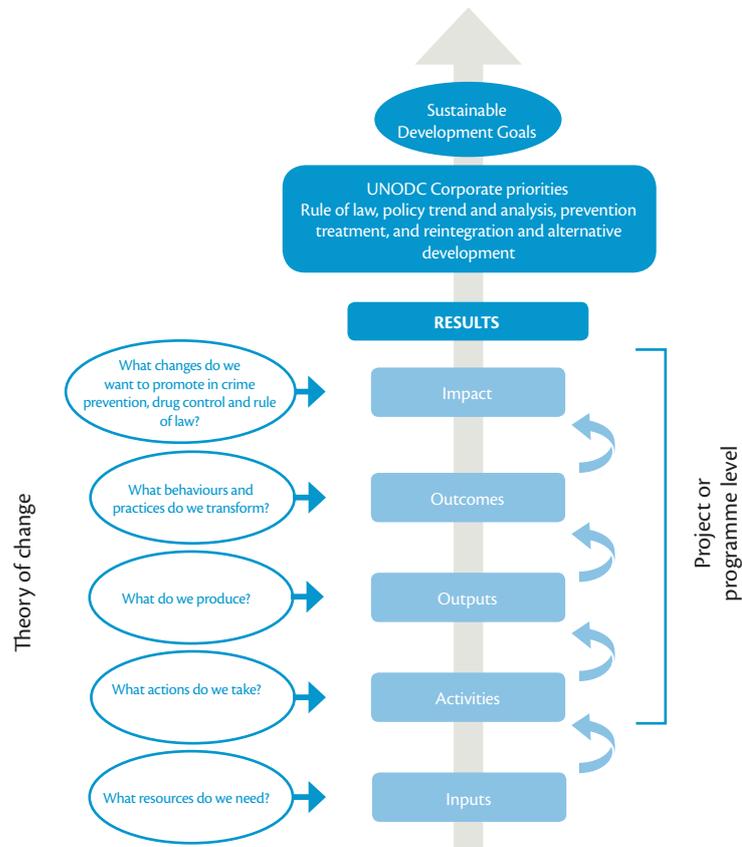
^a Adapted from: United Nations Development Group, “Theory of change: UNDAF companion guidance”. Available at <https://undg.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/UNDG-UNDAF-Companion-Pieces-7-Theory-of-Change.pdf>. Accessed on 3 September 2018.

¹² A pathway of change graphically represents the change process as it is understood by the initiative planners and is the skeleton around which the other elements of the theory are developed.

D. RESULTS FRAMEWORK: DEFINING AND FORMULATING RESULTS WITHIN THE THEORY OF CHANGE

The results framework reflects strategic-level thinking across an entire organization; a country, regional or global programme; a programme component within a country programme; or a project.¹³ It is the backbone of the theory of change and contains a logical model that sustains it and at the same time translates it into measurable products and behavioural, institutional and situational changes. It provides a straightforward guide to help structure the project or programme theory of change and ensures that planned results follow a logical pathway. The results framework unfolds in a hierarchical order whereby achieving a lower-level result will lead to the subsequent higher-level result and so on, until the ultimate envisioned goal is attained, as long as the risks are mitigated and the assumptions hold true. The project or programme results framework should link to corporate priorities, because results will ultimately be used to demonstrate the contributions of UNODC — and the United Nations system overall — to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. For a guide to structuring a results framework, see figure IV.

FIGURE IV. GUIDE TO STRUCTURING A RESULTS FRAMEWORK



¹³ Results-based Management Handbook, p. 8.

Box 13. IMPORTANT

A well-structured results framework makes it possible to:

- Design better projects and programmes
- Perform more effective monitoring
- Communicate results more clearly
- More efficiently respond to partner and donor requests for information

Within a results-based management approach, result statements should be able to demonstrate, using simple language, the realistic changes that the project or programme will catalyse as opposed to what it is going to do. Result statements should be concise and specific and should specify the expected change, the direction of that change, who will experience it and where it will occur.¹⁴

There is no need to demonstrate causality in the result statement since the theory of change already shows the logic pathway of the project or programme (this will shift focus away from change to action). Words such as “through”; “in order to”; and “by means of” should thus not be used. For example: the capacity of judges in the area of juvenile justice increased *through* training; technical assistance received *in order to* improve legislation on drug control. Rather, simply state the result achieved: for example, fair, effective, and accessible criminal justice systems in country X.

Box 14. IMPORTANT

ACTION LANGUAGE	CHANGE LANGUAGE
Expresses would-be results from the providers' perspective — usually starts with “by doing” this or that	Describes changes in the conditions and/or quality of life of people
Can be interpreted in many ways because it is not specific or measurable — e.g., increase the number of drug users who are placed in rehabilitation centres	Sets precise criteria for success
Focuses only on the completion of activities — e.g., to establish 25 new drug rehabilitation centres	Focuses on results, and does not focus on the methods to achieve them, hence the need to avoid expressions such as “through” or “by doing” this and that

Note: Adapted from *Results-based Management Handbook* (2011).

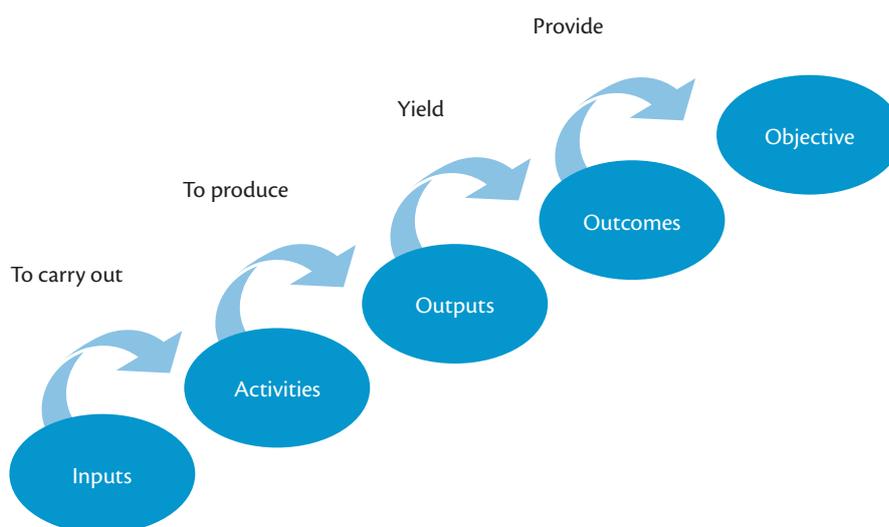
¹⁴Results-based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada, p. 38.

E. ATTRIBUTION, CONTRIBUTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Whereas attribution is a result that can be directly associated with the project or programme interventions, contribution is a result that is associated with the work of the project or programme and other organizations, Governments and external actors working in the same domain. Generally, the higher the level of the result, the weaker the contribution of one single actor (the highest level being the objective, and the lowest being the output). When designing the results chain,¹⁵ it is important to keep in mind the accountability threshold (or level of control) over the results set for the project or programme. It is useful to think through the following questions moving from one result level to the other. For example: Can we achieve the result only with our resources and skills? Do we have full control over the result? Do we share control? Or is the result fully beyond our control?

Usually, the greatest level of control, or accountability threshold, of the project or programme rests at the activity level. That is where the project or programme can exercise the most direct control over the outputs it produces. When moving up the results chain, control becomes weaker and attribution and contribution become fuzzier, as a greater number of external factors start playing a role, thereby affecting results (see figure V). Those external factors need to be taken into consideration during design and implementation in order to guarantee the success of the project or programme. Some practical examples will be explored subsequently when looking at the role of risks and assumptions in the logical framework (log frame).

FIGURE V. RESULTS CHAIN



¹⁵ The results chain refers to the causal or logical relationship between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and the objective of a project or programme: Output (immediate result) > Outcome (intermediate achievement) > Objective (long-term impact).

F. STEP 3: TRANSLATING THE THEORY OF CHANGE INTO A LOG FRAME

The theory of change is essential to supporting analysis. However, critical reflection and learning (“Are we doing the right thing?”) should be modelled in a corresponding log frame for purposes of management and accountability (“Are we doing things right?”). The log frame enables an integrated approach to project or programme planning, monitoring and evaluation that promotes greater effectiveness for development interventions. As such, each UNODC project and programme must have a corresponding log frame that mirrors the results, risks and assumptions identified in its theory of change.

A log frame provides an overview of the essential elements of a project or programme by translating the theory of change into a management tool that guides implementation. It supports a common understanding among project and programme planners and decision makers about what the interventions seek to achieve and how success will be measured.

Box 15. IMPORTANT

Within the Office, the systematic and rigorous use of the log frame should contribute to:

- Improving the quality of projects and programmes by relating individual interventions to the actual needs of target beneficiaries, cooperating partners and recipient countries
- Enabling staff and partners to develop planning documents that meet clearly defined quality standards and can serve as a basis for decision-making
- Improving professional communication (including reporting) among parties involved in project and programme planning and management by using a set of clearly defined terms, practice-oriented instruments and concepts
- Enhancing staff motivation by promoting teamwork, interdisciplinary exchange of experiences and establishing a cooperative organizational culture following the ideal of a learning organization

Essentially, log frames describe the project and programme objectives, outcomes and outputs, and link them to measurable indicators, means of verification, activities, assumptions and risks. UNODC has adopted a standard log-frame template, which breaks the theory of change and the results chain of the project or programme into four levels of results, namely (a) inputs and activities, (b) outputs, (c) outcomes, and (d) objective (impact). Indicators, targets and verification methods are set for each corresponding result, in order to enable performance assessments, monitoring and evaluation of the project or programme. Risks and assumptions must also be clearly outlined, so as to keep all stakeholders aware of potential factors hindering and enabling project or programme implementation. Annex IV contains a standard UNODC log-frame template with instructions. For examples of log frames, see tables 3, 4 and 5.

Neither the theory of change or the log frame of the project or programme are static. They need to be flexible in order to reflect changes in project or programme strategy and implementation that need to be made whenever evidence exists to suggest that adjustments

are necessary to guarantee the success of the project or programme. This cycle of improvement enables effective management for results throughout the implementation phase, embodying key principles of results-based management (do → learn → adjust). All relevant stakeholders, such as donors and senior management, should be consulted to obtain their timely agreement prior to amending the theory of change, results chain or log frame of the project or programme, and the managers of the project or programme should be prepared to present solid evidence to justify the changes proposed.

TABLE 3. EXAMPLE OF A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK: STRENGTHENING THE RULE OF LAW IN COUNTRY X

	Indicators	Means of verification	Risks
Project objective: Fair, effective and accessible criminal justice system based on the rule of law in country X	Number of regions in country X that use restorative justice programmes (out of 10 regions) Baseline: 2 (2020) Target: 10 (2022)	Study on application of restorative justice programmes	Lawmakers, policymakers and institutions lack interest in following a restorative justice approach
Outcome: Justice professionals apply restorative justice measures	Number of cases diverted to restorative justice programmes Baseline: 10 (2020) Target: 150 (2022)	Court orders and decisions	Justice professionals are not convinced by the concept of restorative justice
Output: Enhanced capacity of justice professionals on restorative justice	Number of justice professionals with increased knowledge of restorative justice Baseline: 0 (2020) Target: 25 (2022)	Pre- and post-training assessments	Justice professionals are not willing to broaden their perspective on emerging judicial concepts
Activities: 1.1.1 Conduct training activities on restorative justice			

TABLE 4. EXAMPLE OF A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK: PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVES IN PRISONS IN COUNTRY X

	Indicators	Means of verification	Risks
Project objective: Improved access to and utilization of health-care services, including treatment for HIV, viral hepatitis and drug dependence, as well as rehabilitation in prison settings in country X	Increased number of inmates benefiting from treatment and care services for HIV, viral hepatitis or tuberculosis prevention, both while imprisoned and after release Baseline: 20 per cent (2020) Target: 100 per cent (2022)	Reports from the national stakeholders, including prison administrations, health-care providers and non-governmental organizations	National authorities do not see prison reform issues as a priority

<p>Outcome: Prison administrations provide comprehensive prevention, treatment and care services for sexually transmitted infections, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and tuberculosis</p>	<p>Number of prisons providing prevention and treatment services (out of 20 prisons) Baseline: 0 per cent (2020) Target: 20 per cent (2022)</p>	<p>Medical records provided by prison administration</p>	<p>Lack of knowledge and equipment Prison setting is not conducive to providing comprehensive health-care treatment</p>
<p>Output: Standard operating procedures and training manuals produced on the prevention, treatment and care of sexually transmitted infections, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and tuberculosis in prisons and closed settings</p>	<p>Number of draft standard operating procedures and training manuals that have been developed for the prevention, treatment and care services for sexually transmitted infections, HIV, hepatitis B, hepatitis C and tuberculosis Baseline: 0 (2020) Target: 10 (2022)</p>	<p>Standard operating procedures and training manuals</p>	<p>Lack of interest on the part of United Nations partner organizations and national counterparts in producing standard operating procedures and training manuals</p>
<p>Activities: 1.1.1 Develop and draft standard operating procedures in prisons and closed settings in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and national health programmes</p>			

TABLE 5. EXAMPLE OF A LOGICAL FRAMEWORK: PREVENTION AND COMBATING OF CORRUPTION IN COUNTRY X IN SUPPORT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL TARGET 16.5

	Indicators	Means of verification	Risks
<p>Project objective: Prevention and combating of corruption in country X in support of Sustainable Development Goal Target 16.5</p>	<p>A composite indicator and corresponding means of verification will be developed in the initial stages of programme implementation in close consultation with the research branch and other key stakeholders.^a Baseline: Target:</p>		<p>Lack of political will and commitment by States to tackle corruption</p>
<p>Outcome: States parties participate actively and effectively in the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption</p>	<p>Number of country review reports finalized through the Implementation Review Mechanism in its first cycle Baseline: 114 (2020) Target: 177 (2022)</p>	<p>Country review reports</p>	<p>States lack resources to ensure active participation</p>

(cont.)

<p>Output: Tools and good practices are made available to effectively conduct country reviews under the Implementation Review Mechanism</p>	<p>Percentage of States parties expressing satisfaction with the quality of tools and services provided Baseline: 0 (2020) Target: 80 per cent (2022)</p>	<p>Periodic survey and follow-up with States parties</p>	<p>Delays in the finalization of tools owing to slow administration and coordination processes with and among relevant technical assistance providers</p>
<p>Activities: 1.1.1 Consolidate good practices on effective methodologies in the implementation of the Convention against Corruption</p>			

*In cases where a baseline survey is required to establish baselines and targets, these may be left blank. The corresponding means of verification will also be left blank pending the establishment of baselines and targets. These will need to be added to the log frame as soon as they become available.

G. INPUTS AND ACTIVITIES: RESOURCES DELIVERED THROUGH SPECIFIC ACTIONS

Inputs are the financial, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions, whereas activities describe how the inputs will be delivered through the project or programme. In the illustrative log frame, the Office will conduct a training with judges (activity) in order to deliver information and knowledge resources (input). Inputs and activities must be strictly within the scope and capabilities of the project or programme (budget, time, competences of the implementer), in order to guarantee the complete achievement of intended outputs. As discussed earlier, activities and outputs are areas of full accountability for the project or programme, because it is at this level that managers can exercise full oversight over delivery and more tightly control conditions that determine success or failure.

H. PROJECT AND PROGRAMME OUTPUTS: CHANGES IN SKILLS AND ABILITIES, OR AVAILABILITY OF NEW PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Outputs refer to the direct services stemming from project or programme activities. In this particular example, the project or programme seeks to increase the technical knowledge of judges in order to strengthen country X's justice sector by providing a capacity-building training exercise in the field of restorative justice. The number of trained justice professionals with an increase in knowledge indicates the capacity of country X to effectively put restorative justice principles and measures into practice. In this example, an increase in knowledge can be an indicator of achievement for the output (enhanced capacity) that the project or programme will produce. Achievement can be verified by administering pre- and post-assessments with trainees to assess whether they were able to assimilate the content of the course and acquired the necessary skills as a result of the training course.

A key risk factor to consider is that justice professionals — the key beneficiary group — may not be willing to broaden their perspectives on emerging judicial concepts.

I. PROJECT AND PROGRAMME OUTCOMES: CHANGES IN BEHAVIOURS AND PRACTICES

Project and programme outcomes contain a development hypothesis: it describes the behavioural change that it seeks to achieve. As such, it is a describable measure of change that derives from an initiative's output.¹⁶

The outcome relates to the target group that benefits most immediately from the project or programme interventions (e.g., political decision makers, government officials and end users of services). The outcomes should convey an element of action to be taken by the beneficiary of the project or programme once they receive technical assistance and, as such, this action should go beyond the products and services (outputs) delivered by the Office and focus on what will change. For example, if justice professionals are trained on restorative justice, while the output should be an increase in knowledge of justice professionals on restorative justice, the expected outcome would be that justice professionals apply restorative justice principles and measures (such as mediation schemes or conferencing). Means of verification for this outcome could be analysis and verification of corresponding court orders and decisions, showing the number of cases diverted by the court, which is the chosen indicator to measure achievement of this result. The baseline value is 10 (2017) but it is expected to increase to 150 cases by 2020, which will demonstrate that the trained judges are applying the concepts and skills learned in the training in their practical work.

The risks associated with the outcome may be that justice professionals are not convinced by the concept of restorative justice and remain reluctant to embrace it, which will require managers to think about ways in which they can engage with potential beneficiaries to understand prevailing stigmas and foster buy-in.

J. OBJECTIVE: MEANINGFUL LONG-TERM CHANGES IN BEHAVIOUR, PRACTICES, BENEFITS AND/OR LIFE CONDITIONS

The project or programme objective is the final goal that the intervention intends to achieve, that is, what UNODC technical assistance will promote and how it links to overarching corporate priorities and global goals of the Office. The objective outlines two dimensions of the impact of the project or programme: behavioural change and expected benefit for the project or programme

¹⁶ *Results-Based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada*, p. 36.

beneficiaries. The change in behaviour (application of knowledge and skills, related practices and utilization of technology) describes in which way the beneficiaries will use the capacities or potentials (e.g., those related to human resources and technical concerns) delivered through the Office's inputs, activities and outputs. Ideally, the project or programme objective can be linked to the Sustainable Development Goals and refers to the corresponding Goal indicators to which it contributes.

In the log-frame example shown in table 5, the project or programme intends to promote the application of restorative justice programmes in order to meet the strategic objective of strengthening the rule of law in country X, which is linked to Sustainable Development Goal 16 ("Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels"), and Goal 5 (Equal access to justice for women and men). To measure whether this objective has been attained, the proposed corresponding indicator will look at increased use of restorative justice programmes. The target set is that all regions in the country adopt restorative justice programmes by 2020, given that at baseline (2015) these were only applied in two regions. The suggested means of verification is a cross-country study on the application of restorative justice programmes to be conducted at the end to assess the status of adoption by courts.

Associated risks may potentially be that law and policymakers, and institutions, lack the political will to adopt a restorative justice approach.

K. STEP 4: RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS IN THE LOG FRAME

As seen earlier, a careful consideration of risks and assumptions will help project and programme managers anticipate challenges that might occur during implementation, which may set the project or programme off track. With these in mind, risk mitigation strategies and plans must be devised. In the log frame example provided in table 3, if training activities are planned with the aim of strengthening the capacity of justice professionals in restorative justice, managers should be mindful that the success of the training activity depends, to a great extent, on the profile and motivation of trainees (beneficiaries). What should be done if the wrong audience is selected? What if the individuals attending are not receptive to the subject? What if attendees cannot afford to attend the training activity owing to logistical or other concerns? It is important to consider where the training activity will be held, if participants will be able to get there, and if women's participation will be enabled through considerations of suitability of time, venue, and security.

Having considered these potential risks in advance, it is possible to fine-tune the beneficiary selection process to ensure that the right audience is engaged. The necessary logistics and budget arrangements can then be made to account for the need to provide transportation and lodging stipends to beneficiaries. In addition, it is important to develop a training curriculum that is

sensitive to the cultural context, including gender aspects, and the profile of the target audience. Sometimes risks are so significant that it may not be sufficient to simply account for them while conceiving the intervention's implementation strategy. Stand-alone activities may be required (e.g., an induction session with potential beneficiaries to raise awareness about restorative justice and foster buy-in even prior to participant selection and implementation of the training activity). In such cases, these risks should be presented in the log frame and duly accounted for at the planning stage.

L. STEP 5: PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

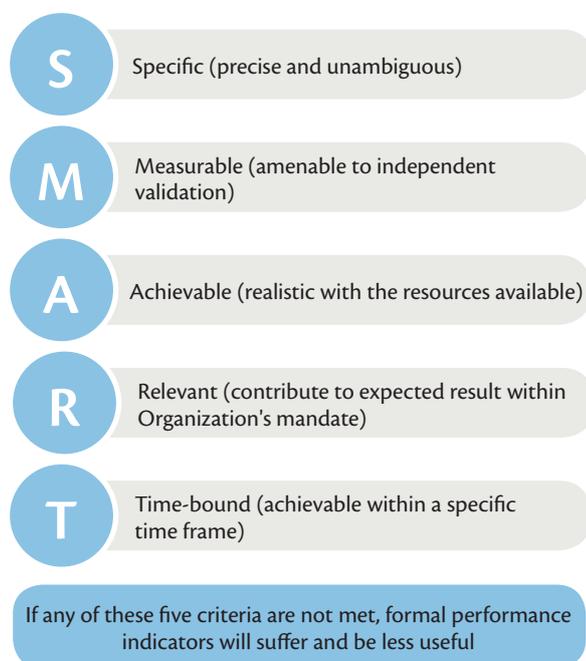
Within results-based management approaches, indicators are critical, as they tell us how a result will be measured or quantified, and how we can tell whether it was achieved.

Box 16. Why are indicators important?

Indicators are important for a variety of reasons, namely that they:

- Help measure objectives, outcomes and outputs
- Specify (in measurable terms) how the achievement of an objective can be verified or demonstrated
- Define performance standards (minimum requirements) for each objective
- Focus on important characteristics of an objective
- Provide a basis for project monitoring and evaluation
- Are necessary for providing information on impact achievement
- Lead planners and interested parties to a clear definition and common understanding of project objectives
- Ensure that decision-making is informed by relevant data
- Can be quantitative (represented by numbers, percentages or ratios) or qualitative (used to measure quality and often are based on perception, opinion or levels of satisfaction)

Result statements are a necessary precondition for being able to develop sound indicators. A good performance indicator should be "SMART": **s**pecific (precise and unambiguous), **m**easurable (amenable to independent validation), **a**chievable (realistic with the resources available), **r**elevant (contributes to expected result within Organization's mandate), and **t**ime-bound (achievable within a specific time frame). It is critical to strike a balance between an appropriate set of measures to keep track of results and the cost involved in collecting data for those indicators (see figure VI).

FIGURE VI. “SMART” PERFORMANCE INDICATORS*

* See Jody Zall Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington, D.C., World Bank, 2004), pp. 68–70.

Outcomes and outputs can be measured either through quantitative or qualitative indicators. Quantitative indicators measure an amount, ratio or percentage. Qualitative indicators measure perceptions, opinions or judgments. Qualitative indicators should be used sparingly, because they often rely on subjective perceptions. As a result, they may not be enough to demonstrate the results and actual changes that the project or programme interventions have yielded. Objective, quantifiable information on progress can provide more solid ground for well-informed strategic decisions, helping managers to align budgets and manage resources in order to ensure successful results.¹⁷ Nevertheless, in order to adequately assess the results that have been achieved, managers may need both quantitative and qualitative measures. For example, it is not enough to know how many women are participating in an activity. The quality of their participation and experience is also important to producing a complete picture of the effects of the project or programme. However, because it is difficult to standardize qualitative data for comparison or analysis, qualitative indicators should be quantified wherever possible.

The following checklist is recommended to facilitate the indicator development and selection process by teams.¹⁸

¹⁷ J. Z. Kusek and Ray C. Rist, *A Handbook for Development Practitioners: Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System* (Washington D.C., World Bank, 2004), p. 69.

¹⁸ Adapted from *A Handbook for Development Practitioners*, p. 69.

Box 17. Checklist: selecting indicators^a

1. Set in place a participatory process for the identification of indicators, engage relevant stakeholders and take into consideration lessons learned from past projects or programmes.
2. Look again at the results selected for the project or programme and reassess if they are “SMART”.
3. Make a wish list of all potential indicators that could be used to measure the result; then for each indicator, the following questions should be considered:
 - Is it as accurate a reflection of the result as possible?
 - Is it sufficiently precise to ensure result measurement?
 - Does it call for the most practical, cost-effective collection of data?
 - Is it sensitive to a change in the result, but relatively unaffected by other changes?
 - Can it be disaggregated as needed when reporting on the result?

^a *Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System*

When considering disaggregation needs, it is of utmost importance to be particularly conscious of gender issues. Disaggregation is important because interventions may not affect all targeted beneficiary groups, regions of the country or communities, for example, in a uniform manner. Disaggregating data — for example, by subgroup, sector or geographic location — increases the utility of the indicator by showing the effects of the project or programme under a more nuanced light. From a human rights-based approach, disaggregated data can provide an equitable basis for informed decision-making: for instance, making it possible to strategically position and allocate resources in order to target those harder-to-reach subgroups or geographic locations, which are often overlooked by development interventions.

Once the best indicators have been shortlisted, the logical framework needs to be revisited and the bigger picture assessed. Does the set of indicators chosen constitute a balanced and useful tracking tool to monitor progress in the project or programme, and does it measure whether planned results have been achieved? Are there too many indicators, keeping in mind that resources, time and effort will need to be invested for each indicator? The rule of thumb here is: less is more.

Box 18. Tip: how to formulate indicators^a

Indicators are particularly important if the objective is not “tangible”. When formulating indicators, begin with the indicator for the outcome. In addition, keep in mind that indicators must:

- Define minimum performance standards
- Be defined with “adequate precision”

^a See *Ten Steps to a Results-based Monitoring and Evaluation System*.

M. STEP 6: MEANS OF VERIFICATION

Methods of verification refer to the source of information and data that will be used to verify the status of a specific indicator. Broadly, there are two types of verification methods: primary or secondary sources. The use of a primary source requires the project or programme to generate the information internally, through its own data collection and gathering systems, which can include surveys, observation, field visits and reports. Human and financial resources may need to be mobilized to complete those tasks, so it is important to consider such resources at the planning stage and to ensure that they are accounted for in the project or programme budget.

When relying on secondary sources, information will be obtained from external sources, including government documents, official policy documents, national surveys and partner reports. Although the use of secondary sources can be cost-effective, it is important to consider that managers may have less control over the quality of the data when they are supplied by third parties, so it may be necessary to investigate whether additional quality control measures need to be adopted (e.g., data triangulation). Furthermore, when secondary sources are used for regular reporting, it is critical that consistency be maintained throughout to ensure that the information needed is available at the frequency required.

N. STEP 7: BASELINE AND TARGETS

A baseline measurement reflects the status quo before the project or programme interventions take place. In the log frame, baseline data should always be accompanied by the date (normally the year) when they were obtained. When utilizing secondary data, it is vital to clearly list the source in the means of verification. To guarantee consistency and data quality, it is important that the same data collection procedures and/or sources are used throughout the project or programme life cycle.

Box 19. IMPORTANT

There is no prescribed formula for setting targets; however, it is worth considering the following aspects:

- Resource constraints and cost estimates
- Lessons learned
- Expert judgment
- Historical trends
- Donor expectations and requirements

Targets should be ambitious but achievable and relevant. They should be time-bound, and the expected date of reaching the target should always be stated alongside the value set (usually the year the project or programme ends). In that context, it is crucial to store all notes,

calculations or sources of data that were used to arrive at the target, because they may be needed in future discussions with stakeholders, if the project or programme exceeds or fails to meet planned targets.

Box 20. Tip: setting targets

Baselines for output indicators tend to be zero, since the aim is to measure results stemming directly from the project or programme activities, which are primarily the responsibility of the manager.

The availability of baseline information is often a precondition for being able to formulate sound and realistic targets. In many contexts, however, baseline data may not be readily available and should be generated at the onset of implementation by the project or programme itself (i.e., a baseline study should be conducted). In such cases, the results framework should clearly state how the project or programme plans to produce baseline data and set targets, and provide a clear timeline for undertaking those tasks.

Box 21. Checklist for validating the project or programme log frame

- Are the results clearly defined (objective, outcomes and outputs) according to clear, agreed-upon definitions?
- Is there a clear hierarchy of project results describing a justifiable means-to-end relationship from inputs to project objective?
- Is there a clear relationship between what the project is doing and the expected benefits and other development priorities?
- Are the activities and the outputs manageable, considering the resources of the project implementers?
- Are there measurable indicators for all result levels (objective, outcomes and outputs)?
- Is there a clear description of the time horizon as a part of the indicators?
- Is there a clear description of risks and assumptions, which can affect the success of the project or programme?
- Are the assumptions realistically assessed, avoiding wishful thinking?
- Is it clear who is responsible for project implementation?
- Can the resources be justified in relation to the expected benefits (efficiency)?

CHAPTER V

Results-based monitoring

A. MONITORING FOR RESULTS

Monitoring, together with planning and evaluation, are the foundation of results-based management. It is an ongoing part of project and programme management that involves the systematic collection and analysis of data based on the intervention's indicators.¹⁹

Monitoring and systematic reporting must be undertaken for all UNODC programmes and projects regardless of duration and budget. Monitoring must be continuously strengthened in response to demands for greater accountability in the use of resources, clearer basis and evidence to support well-informed decision-making, and an increase in the application of practical lessons from experience to guide future development interventions and ensure greater effectiveness.

Box 22. IMPORTANT

At UNODC headquarters, results-based monitoring is supported by the Strategic Planning and Interagency Affairs Unit and is a critical component of effective project and programme management for the following reasons:

- It provides the main stakeholders of an ongoing project or programme with early indications of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of project or programme results and objectives.
- It helps organizations track their achievements by regularly collecting information and using it to determine how the project or programme is performing.
- It provides a solid ground for timely decision-making and ensures that all partners and donors are informed of project or programme results.

Whereas traditional management approaches may identify objectives or outcomes during planning, once implementation begins, monitoring tends to focus mostly on inputs, activities and outputs. Although those are areas of greater accountability for managers, focus on monitoring at the outcome level throughout the implementation phase is one of the fundamental changes introduced by results-based management, and it is a critical function of results-based monitoring.

The focus of the results-based management approach is on outcomes, starting in the planning phase and continuing throughout implementation.²⁰ In that regard, UNODC places high importance on concise outcome-based reporting in its semi-annual and annual programme progress reports.

¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Evaluation Handbook: Guidance for Designing, Conducting and Using Independent Evaluations at UNODC* (Vienna, 2017), p. 18.

²⁰ *Results-based Management for International Assistance Programming at Global Affairs Canada*, p. 9.

B. ESTABLISHING THE RESULTS-ORIENTED PERFORMANCE MONITORING FRAMEWORK

UNODC monitoring takes place at the project or programme level and is ensured by the Programme Review Committee.²¹ Therefore, as seen earlier, the log frame provides the overall guiding framework for designing the project or programme monitoring framework and system.

The performance monitoring framework facilitates the “management for results” approach by providing a structured plan for the collection and use of data during the project or programme implementation. The actual data collected on log-frame indicators, and the analysis of those data, allow the team to assess progress and detect issues that could interfere with the achievement of results early enough to take corrective action.

Box 23. IMPORTANT

The performance monitoring framework will help to:

- Plan for the systematic collection of relevant data over the lifetime of the project or programme
- Document the major elements of the monitoring system
- Ensure regular collection of data for every indicator in the performance measurement framework

Essentially, the performance monitoring framework comprises data collection and analysis. It will allow managers to determine if the programme is being implemented as planned, if results are being achieved and whether any adjustments need to be made. Annex III contains a monitoring plan that allows for the tracking of progress achieved during project or programme implementation.

Box 24. Key questions to consider when designing monitoring frameworks

1. What information is needed and how will it be used to track progress on results and indicators? What is the relevance of that piece of information to guiding the project?

Tip: Avoid the duplication of data collection efforts (two different teams or divisions collecting the same data for different projects in the same sector).

2. How will data be collected and analysed?

Tip: There are several methods for collecting and monitoring data, including participatory approaches, an analysis of records and secondary data, observation, surveys, field trips, focus groups and interviews.

²¹ All lessons learned from programme and project implementation are incorporated in the UNODC planning cycle through the Programme Review Committee to promote a culture of continuous institutional learning. UNODC also publishes a results-based annual programme-level report that is helping to identify emerging priorities and gaps that need to be filled.

3. What information is needed? Who needs it? When is it needed? What decision-making processes need to be supported by data?

Tip: Maximize the use of the same data for different purposes or for various users and collect data that are "decision-oriented" (related to the information needs of decision makers).

4. How will information be maintained and managed for different uses? (for example, project performance assessments, identifying corrective actions, reporting and evaluations)

Tip: Whatever platform one chooses (paper-based or electronic), it is important to remember that an information management system should be set up to ensure that information is effectively collected, stored and analysed.

5. What resources (human, technical and financial) are needed to support monitoring functions? What are the costs of information-gathering and can those costs be justified in relation to the overall project budget?

Tip: To the greatest extent possible, minimize the use of resources for data collection.

Box 25. Good practices in performance monitoring

- Engage stakeholders in the design of the performance monitoring framework and system
- Ensure adequate technical capacity of staff and funding allocation
- Ensure quality and appropriateness of data collection tools
- Implement quality assurance protocols for data collection and analysis
- Establish clear procedures for timely and regular dissemination of information to managers and decision makers

C. PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

An important process in results-based management, in which monitoring data plays a fundamental role, is the performance assessment. The assessment is a process in which the actual project or programme results are reviewed against planned results and targets in the log frame to gauge how well the project or programme is progressing. Performance assessments are critical in order to shed light on areas of deficiency and help determine what adjustments need to be made and when. Such adjustments include shifting focus and/or adjusting the project or programme strategy (theory of change, log frame and/or implementation approach), reprioritizing, building capacity and allocating resources more effectively.

Box 26. IMPORTANT

The main reason for regularly collecting monitoring data is to use it. Monitoring data should provide a solid base for decision-making, helping to fine-tune the project or programme strategy and/or implementation so that planned objectives are attained, embodying key results-based management principles (do → learn → adjust).

Although it may be necessary to undertake performance assessments prior to reporting (a topic that will be discussed later), it is important that this type of exercise be conducted regularly throughout the lifetime of the project or programme and not only at the end, because findings from performance assessments may help to make adjustments in a timely fashion, adapting the approach used to ensure the project or programme achieves its objectives.

Box 27. Tip: dashboards for performance monitoring

A useful tool to facilitate performance assessments is a project or programme dashboard. Many sophisticated software programs exist, but a simple and cost-effective dashboard can be produced using a simple spreadsheet program. Using a spreadsheet, data can be input to produce graphs showing actual project or programme achievements against baselines and targets for all indicators contained in the log frame. This resource can provide a broad overview of where the project or programme is in relation to planned achievements for each result, helping to determine which indicators are on track.

D. LEARNING AND LESSONS LEARNED

Learning is a core feature of results-based management because it allows for reflection on what has worked and what has not, and provides an opportunity to refine the strategy and approach of the project to achieve or improve results. Learning can emerge from a formal exercise, like an evaluation (to be discussed later), or happen informally, through periodic team meetings where staff are brought together to reflect on project or programme strengths and weaknesses. Performance assessments play a fundamental part in learning.

Box 28. IMPORTANT

Essentially, learning involves reflecting on our experiences, using our mistakes as an opportunity to grow, considering how to remain relevant in an evolving context, and questioning our understanding of how to promote changes for the communities we serve (i.e., testing the assumptions in our theory of change and log frame).

Lessons learned can be defined as the learning garnered from the process of performing actions and activities. Lessons learned critically reflect on the quality of the results stemming from those actions. As such, identifying lessons learned requires one to think about the causes that have produced the effects, as well as the reasoning behind corrective actions that the project or programme manager took to address them. Lessons learned draw on positive experiences — for example, good ideas that improve efficiency or save money — as well as negative experiences that surface after an undesirable outcome occurs.²²

²² Adapted from Project Management Institute, *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK Guide)*, 4th ed. (Newton Square, Pennsylvania, 2008).

The purpose of documenting lessons learned is to share and use the knowledge derived from an experience to promote the recurrence of desirable outcomes and/or preclude the recurrence of undesirable outcomes. As such, lessons learned pave the way for improved practices, policies, projects, programmes and procedures.

Box 29. Guiding questions for identifying lessons learned

Broadly, the process of identifying lessons learned and/or best practices entails critical reflection around the following key questions:

- What was the particular challenge or circumstance being faced at the time (context)?
- What was the approach taken by the project or programme to overcome the challenge and/or to capitalize on the situation, and what were the results achieved (positive, negative, neutral)?
- Which causes led to those results?
- Which actions and/or methods employed by the organization worked well and which did not? What improvements could be made to the approach to ensure better results in the future, if any?
- Which concrete recommendations stemming from that experience could we adopt in order to make things work better next time?

A final and important step in the process involves the implementation of a set of concrete actions to ensure that the lessons learned are mainstreamed and/or standardized within the project or programme or, more widely, the organization. Critical reflection on learning experiences is certainly a vital part of the process; however, from a results-based management perspective (do → learn → adjust), lessons learned are only useful when they are practically applied and serve to inform future action.

The process of identifying lessons learned may not necessarily involve actual written documentation; rather, the focus remains on collective critical reflection and application of what was learned.

CHAPTER VI

Results-based reporting

Results reporting is one of the key challenges, yet fundamental pieces of effective results-based management, as it plays a vital role in being able to demonstrate the value of a programme or project. Often, reports do not amply tell the story of the effects generated by the project or programme interventions. Unlike reporting that focuses solely on activities, results-based reporting communicates important information about key activities, outputs and the resulting outcomes or changes associated with the output strategy. Reporting is tied to stakeholder demands and the intention to use information being provided. This includes reporting to governing bodies, those involved with executive management and programming management, and partners and at the national level, as deemed appropriate or necessary by the organization. The objectives are accountability, improvement and development of knowledge systems at the organizational and global levels.²³ Reporting interim programme progress to participants, managers and stakeholders, as well as delivering a final report of programme outcomes, is therefore essential.

Box 30. IMPORTANT

Effective results-based management requires presenting credible, reliable and balanced information. Quality criteria for results-based reporting include the following:^a

- Completeness
- Balance (positives and negatives)
- Consistency
- Substantiveness and reliability
- Clarity

^a *Results-based Management Handbook: Harmonizing RBM Concepts and Approaches for Improved Development Results at Country Level*, p. 41.

Broadly, UNODC makes use of several reporting mechanisms, namely the following:

- Annual reports
- Semi-annual programme progress reports
- Annual programme progress reports
- Programme Review Committee meetings

Within the results-based management approach, UNODC strives to produce succinct reports that are able to clearly convey the contribution of the project or programme to achieving the planned results and objectives. An effective results-based report communicates and demonstrates the effectiveness of the intervention. It makes the case to stakeholders and donors for continued support and resources. A results-based report can be used to demonstrate

²³ JIU/NOTE/2017/1, p. 66.

accountability to governing bodies of United Nations agencies, Governments and donors. A results-based report also allows resident coordinators and United Nations country teams to inform their decision-making.²⁴

An important element of effective results-based reporting is the log frame, which articulates the different project or programme results and, as such, streamlines reporting by ensuring that it remains focused at higher-level results, which is the real change that projects and programmes seek to achieve (impact).

In practical terms, reporting involves using gathered data to report against indicators outlined in the project or programme log frame in order to illustrate whether the planned targets of the project or programme have been reached, surpassed or missed. Aside from quantitative data, qualitative information can be used to complement and demonstrate the multidimensional effects that can result from project or programme interventions. Quantitative and qualitative data should be combined with lessons learned, success stories and documentation of best practices whenever possible. In line with the key tenets of results-based management (do → learn → adjust), highlighting challenges, areas of inefficiency and poor results can equally lead to an effective report if it can be shown how lessons learned from past failures are incorporated to improve future performance.

Box 31. Tips for reporting programme progress^a

1. Set automatic calendar reminders and tasks to check on and report progress.
2. Hold regular meetings with managers and stakeholders. They are opportunities for each group to report their own observations and findings and to discuss what is working and what is not.
3. Meetings drive the performance and outcomes and create data to report on. They can also serve to facilitate reporting on an interim basis.
4. Not only do meetings facilitate the sharing of results, they can also facilitate strategic interaction with stakeholders that solidifies the role of the project or programme manager as a business partner.

^aJames D. Kirkpatrick and Wendy K. Kirkpatrick, *Four Levels of Training Evaluation* (Alexandria, Virginia, Association for Talent Development, 2016), p. 143.

When drafting a report, it is important to be mindful of the target audience and to remember that the length of a report does not necessarily determine its quality. Lengthy reports will most likely not be read in full and may invite readers to scrutinize unimportant facts and details about the project or programme, steering focus away from what really matters: namely, the results.

²⁴ *Results-based Management Handbook*, p. 40.

Box 32. Features of good quality reports^a

Describe what was achieved and list the indicators of success

- Compare actual results with expected results
- Quantify achievement whenever possible against a baseline
- Highlight findings with quotes, testimonials and photos
- Explain the reasons that the achievements of the project or programme failed to reach, or exceed, the expected target
- Highlight any unforeseen problems or opportunities that may require new strategies or a redesign of the initiative
- Tell the story of how the results were achieved, and highlight when there is potential for wider learning of lessons
- Recognize the involvement of others (partners, stakeholders and rights-holders) and assign a degree of attribution, if possible
- Ensure there are sufficient data to describe the effects of activities undertaken
- Take stock of lessons learned and how they will guide future action

^a *Results-based Management Handbook*, p. 40.

CHAPTER VII

Evaluation

Evaluations are carried out using social research methods and practices. The evaluations have several functions. They measure the role that the programme, projects and policies have played in changes that have occurred, and they help to obtain a mature understanding of how those changes came about. An evaluation is aimed at increasing knowledge of one or several aspects of the intervention for the purposes of learning from the project or programme, informing decision-making processes and enabling accountability to stakeholders, donors and citizens.

The main difference between monitoring and evaluation is the timing and focus of the assessment. Monitoring is a continuous part of project or programme management that involves the systematic collection and analysis of data based on the intervention indicators. Those data help determine the progress being made in implementing activities, achieving results and using allocated resources. Monitoring is therefore an internal assessment aimed at keeping interventions on track and ensuring the timely decision-making needed to improve the design and functioning of those interventions. Information collected through monitoring is an important source of data used in evaluation processes to understand what is happening. It consists of quantitative and qualitative information on individual indicators, collected on an ongoing basis by programme or partner staff. Monitoring and evaluation, together with planning, make up the foundation of results-based management.

As noted in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the review of management and administration at UNODC in 2010,²⁵ the evaluation function at the Office is a priority area of consideration, because it is of primary importance for UNODC to be able to measure and demonstrate the effectiveness and efficiency of its programme delivery and related programme outcomes. The vital role that evaluation plays in the success of interventions is becoming increasingly apparent. The United Nations Secretary-General stressed that, in order to be fully accountable, a culture of evaluation, independent and real-time evaluation with full transparency was necessary.²⁶ Moreover, evaluation is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which highlights that the follow-up and review processes for the Sustainable Development Goals will be informed by country-led evaluations and by data that are accessible, timely, reliable and of high quality. Evaluations at UNODC follow the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards. In relation to evaluations, the UNODC evaluation policy provides guidance and is also binding. The policy has been endorsed at the highest level by Member States and the Executive Director of UNODC.

The evaluation policy of UNODC requires all projects and programmes to be evaluated at least every four years, or six months before the intervention is finalized. Most UNODC interventions are evaluated at two points during their life cycle:

- A midterm evaluation is typically conducted during the development or improvement of the project or programme.
- A final evaluation is conducted, as noted above, six months before the end of a project or programme.

²⁵ JIU/REP/2010/10.

²⁶ United Nations Evaluation Group, News Center, "UN designated Secretary-General calls for strong culture of evaluation", 31 October 2016.

An evaluation is an assessment, conducted in as systematic and impartial a manner as possible, of an activity, project, programme, strategy, policy, topic, theme, sector, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.²⁷ UNODC requires evaluations to determine how well its interventions have addressed the principles of human rights and gender equality and to identify and analyse specific results at those levels. An evaluation should provide credible, useful evidence-based information that enables the timely incorporation of its findings, recommendations and lessons learned into the decision-making processes of the organizations and stakeholders.²⁸

Box 33. IMPORTANT

The purposes of evaluation are to promote accountability and learning. Evaluations are aimed at understanding why — and to what extent — intended and unintended results were achieved and at analysing the implications of the results. Evaluation can inform planning, programming, budgeting, implementation and reporting, and can contribute to evidence-based policymaking and developmental and organizational effectiveness.

Source: United Nations Evaluation Group, "Norms and standards for evaluation" (2016), p. 10.

In addition to the credible, reliable and useful information provided by the evaluation, four main purposes emerge from evaluation processes. Those processes are organizational learning, accountability, knowledge generation and opportunities for dialogue, with decision-making being a common factor throughout the evaluation.²⁹ In some cases, evaluations become development interventions in themselves. Evaluations can create the space for participants to reflect on an intervention, whether individually or in groups, which may inspire new ideas and provide the necessary motivation, leading to change (e.g., new partnerships or initiatives). The evaluation can therefore act as an agent of change, often becoming an intervention in itself.

A. EVALUATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Evaluations undertaken within the United Nations system need to take into account a number of considerations, including specific agendas, principles, criteria, norms and standards. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development guides all the work of the United Nations and evaluation is essential for generating knowledge that can be used at the country level to inform the setting of priorities and to improve public policies and interventions. Within this context are efforts led by

²⁷ United Nations Evaluation Group, "Norms and standards for evaluation" (2016), para. 1.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ All graphics used in the section on evaluation are taken from the UNODC Evaluation Handbook: <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/evaluation/evaluation-handbook.html>.

UNEG and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development to harmonize, standardize and strengthen evaluation practice and to ensure ethical conduct. These are the criteria, norms, standards and principles that evaluation processes need to follow.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development also requires that special consideration be given to issues that require more attention in order for the collective goals not only to be reached, but in an equitable manner. Specific issues that intersect with evaluation include the need to use evaluation approaches that are responsive to human rights and gender equality, and the imperative of strengthening national evaluation systems. Thus, country-led evaluation is at the heart of the review mechanism of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The work of UNODC with regard to the 2030 Agenda helps to build evaluation capacity in selected countries. In addition, it directly contributes to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically targets 16.6 and 16.7, by furthering the development of effective, accountable and transparent institutions in the ministries of Member States, ensuring that responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making takes place at all levels.

B. HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EVALUATION PROCESSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

The promotion and protection of human rights and gender equality are guiding principles for all United Nations entities. There is virtually no aspect of the work of the United Nations that does not have a human rights dimension. In the United Nations context of evaluation, that dimension is closely connected to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Interventions that do not follow these principles risk reinforcing or neglecting harmful patterns of discrimination and exclusion.

The main concepts underlying evaluations that are responsive to human rights and gender equality are inclusion, participation, non-discrimination and fair power relations. Considering these concepts helps improve programming by taking into account important social and cultural issues that can make interventions more effective and sustainable. Based on the guiding principles of UNEG, the whole evaluation process at UNODC is required to follow approaches that are participatory, inclusive and sensitive to human rights and gender equality, thereby advancing human rights, gender equality, and the inclusion and empowerment of women and other marginalized groups.

C. EVALUATION AND RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

Ultimately, an evaluation needs to be useful to the commissioning organization or team. Good evaluations are those that provide information and recommendations that help managers and policymakers make sound decisions and that help teams and stakeholders to modify and improve

programming. Relevant and based on credible and reliable evidence, good evaluations can be used to promote future actions or policies among stakeholders who might otherwise be reluctant to lend their support. Such evaluations can also have a significant and useful role in fulfilling the reporting requirements of results-based management systems.

An evaluation is conducted at predetermined points in time and uses multiple sources and types of data. It is usually conducted by independent external consultants. An evaluation provides detailed information, including why and how things are happening. Monitoring and evaluation are integrally linked. Monitoring indicates whether an activity is on track to achieve its intended objectives; however, evaluation indicates whether the intervention as a whole is on the right track and what lessons can be drawn from its implementation.

Box 34. Evaluation meta-analysis reports

The UNODC evaluation function conducts a biennial meta-analysis of the findings and recommendations of evaluation reports, tracking the changes within UNODC with regard to evaluations, thereby contributing to the UNODC accountability framework. These reports contain a systematic analysis of evaluation results from that time frame, and in particular of all evaluation recommendations. The main results are reported and used to initiate discussion at the organizational level. The results are also used to inform overarching thematic priorities including questions of planning and design, human rights and gender, and results-based management. The reports are used widely within UNODC to inform decision-making and organizational learning. The UNEG Professional Peer Review of the Evaluation Function in UNODC (2016) found evidence that it had been well received by both senior management and Member States and generated interest and discussion.

D. EVALUATION IN THE PROJECT AND PROGRAMME CYCLE

Evaluation is part of the whole project and programme life cycle, as shown in figure VII, which highlights how evaluation is embedded into the three main stages of any programme or project planning, implementation, and of course, evaluation, which includes the dissemination of the findings. The evaluation-related activities in each phase build upon each other and contribute to continuous learning about what is working, what adjustments need to be made and what lessons can be drawn for future use.

These steps are not to be understood as linear or stand-alone; rather they complement, cross over and influence each other. Project and programme management is ultimately responsible for integrating evaluation into the project or programme cycle and for properly planning, budgeting for and initiating the evaluation process. Before initiating an evaluation, however, close consultations with the UNODC evaluation function on issues of timing, the modality of evaluation and the evaluation budget is mandatory. Only then can the required information be entered into the web-based evaluation portal.

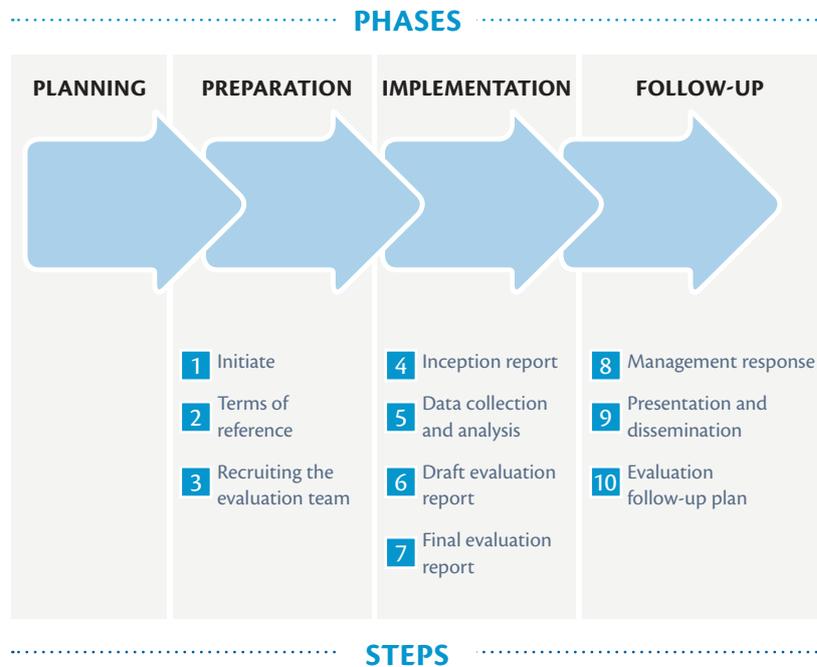
Box 35. Evaluation knowledge database and organizational learning

The UNODC evaluation application has an evaluation knowledge database of recommendations and lessons learned. It includes the complete set of recommendations and lessons learned emerging from all completed evaluations since 2011. In order to analyse the available data according to individual needs and focuses of projects and programmes, the data can be sorted according to key aspects, including region, thematic area and specific projects or programmes. All UNODC staff are encouraged to consult the evaluation knowledge database for future planning and project or programme design.

FIGURE VII. EVALUATION IN THE PROJECT OR PROGRAMME LIFE CYCLE

* Adapted from UNODC, *Evaluation Handbook: Guidance for Designing, Conducting and Using Independent Evaluations at UNODC*, 2017.

UNODC has established clear processes for using and managing evaluations along the different stages of the cycle. The processes are organized into four phases comprising a total of 10 steps (see figure VIII).

FIGURE VIII. EVALUATION PROCESS: PHASES AND STEPS

For detailed guidance on evaluation, please refer to the UNODC *Evaluation Handbook*, which provides in-depth instructions, standards and tools for conducting, designing and utilizing high-quality human rights- and gender equality-responsive independent evaluations in support of accountability, learning, knowledge generation and organizational dialogue within UNODC.³⁰

³⁰ *Evaluation Handbook*.

CHAPTER VIII

Conclusions

This Handbook is meant to serve as a reference resource in designing and managing effective projects and programmes that (a) are consistent with the UNODC results-based management approach, (b) are in alignment with the strategic priorities of UNODC and the United Nations overall, and (c) effectively contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

Upon completing this Handbook, the reader should understand:

- What results-based management is, its importance to the United Nations system and its role as a critical management approach within the 2030 Agenda
- How UNODC incorporates the results-based management approach into its projects and programmes
- How to use systematic approaches to develop a project or programme (situation and/or stakeholder analysis and the problem tree) and prioritize actions in a way that ensures the project or programme is consistent with UNODC strategic priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals and adds value to the context within which the programme is conducted
- How to employ a participatory theory of change process to unpack the log frame of the project or programme, as well as how to articulate it in a clear results framework that links inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and objectives, and is cognizant of underlying risks and assumptions
- How to formulate results statements that describe the change at all levels
- How to model your theory of change and results framework in a log frame, including designing appropriate gender-sensitive indicators for each result, and determining corresponding methods of verification, baselines, targets, risks and assumptions
- How to build your log frame to develop and implement a project or programme monitoring framework that takes into account information needs of key stakeholders, appropriateness of data collection tools, information management processes, data quality control measures and costs
- Importance of using monitoring data to provide regular and timely feedback information to decision makers, allowing for project and programme assessments and, ultimately, adjustments to be made to strategy and implementation approaches when needed
- Critical role of learning within the results-based management approach and how to identify and use lessons learned to improve the effectiveness of your project or programme
- What the evaluation process entails, the key principles and processes involved, and the key role it plays in supporting learning and accountability within the results-based management approach
- How to draft succinct results-oriented reports that illustrate achievements but also shed light on inefficiencies and lessons learned, demonstrating how these are or were utilized to improve the effectiveness of the project or programme

In order to facilitate the application of the content and new skills learned, annex V provides a practical step-by-step guide to results-based management, which can be used to steer the work required to develop, implement, monitor and evaluate the project or programme.

Lastly, it is vital to remember why all this is important. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals — higher-level results of conjoint and aggregated value — requires the concerted and synergic efforts of various projects, programmes, interventions and actors, and therefore everyone must play a part. Ensuring that a project or programme is well-grounded in the principles and good practice standards of results-based management is a fundamental step in supporting UNODC, and the United Nations system as a whole, in making a meaningful contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

ANNEXES

Annex I

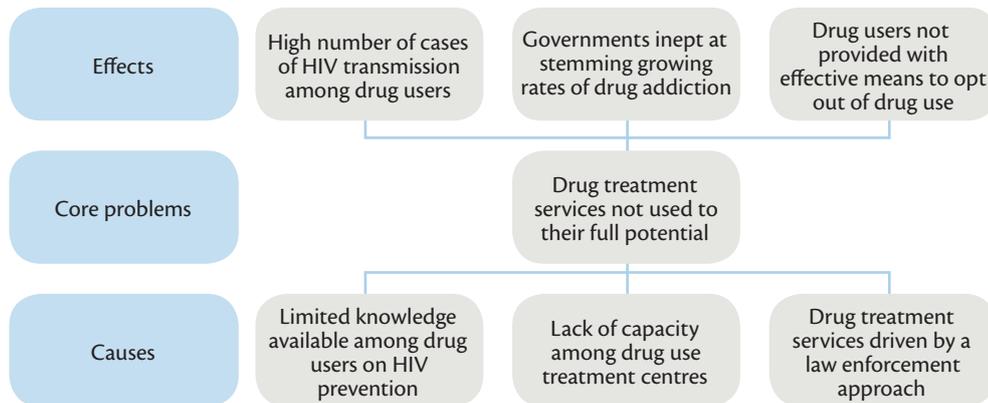
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS RELEVANT TO THE MANDATE OF THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME



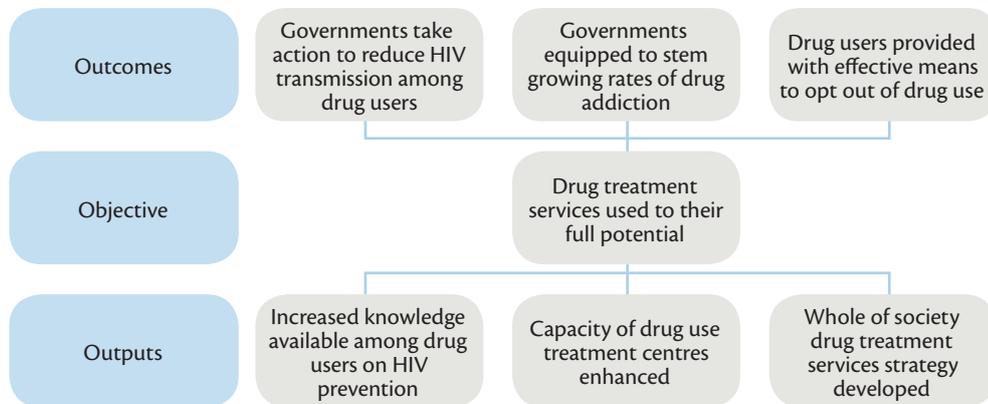
Annex II

THE PROBLEM TREE AND THE OBJECTIVE TREE

Problem tree example



Objective tree example



Annex III

MONITORING PLAN TEMPLATE

Activities and milestones	Monitoring milestones by quarter and year																Budget	Responsibility	Achievements and actions
	2012				2013				2014										
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4							
Outcome 1																			
Output 1.1																			
Output 1.2																			
Outcome 2																			
Output 2.1																			
Output 2.2																			
Output 2.3																			
Outcome 3																			
Output 3.1																			
Output 3.2																			

Annex IV

GUIDED UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME LOG-FRAME TEMPLATE

UNODC LOGICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDE			
Title: Clear title that captures the gist of what the project or programme is to achieve	Subprogramme in strategic framework: List one or more of the subprogrammes in the strategic framework of UNODC that the project or programme will cover	Region or country: List all regions and/or countries that the project or programme will cover	Project number or code: Project number or code provided by the secretary of the Programme Review Committee
		Date: Day/month/year	Duration: The exact duration in months
Expected accomplishment(s) in the strategic framework: List the exact accomplishment(s) as per the framework			
Relationship with country, regional and thematic programmes: List the country, regional and thematic programmes to which the project or programme will relate			
Contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: List all indicators that the project addresses			
	Indicators	Means of verification	Risks
Project objective: A specific end result desired or expected to occur as a consequence, at least in part, of an intervention or activity. It is the higher order objective that will assure national capacity-building to which a development intervention is intended to contribute. What is the objective to be attained by the project or programme?	Performance indicators are a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring the objective with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment. What indicator will be used to measure the success of the objective? Baseline: what is the current status against which progress will be measured? Target: what is to be accomplished?	How will the indicator be verified?	List the risks that could impede the attainment of the project or programme objective
Outcome 1: Outcomes represent changes in the institutional or target audience's behaviour as a result of utilizing the project outputs; if the outcomes are not monitorable, changes in capacity affect improvements that occur between the completion of outputs and the achievement of objectives. What outcome(s) will lead to the attainment of the objective?	Performance indicators are a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring the outcome with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment. What indicator will be used to measure the success of the outcome? Baseline: what is the current status against which progress will be measured? Target: what is to be accomplished?	How will the indicator be verified?	List the risks that could impede the attainment of the project or programme outcome(s)

<p>Output 1.1: Outputs are changes in skills or abilities and capacities of individuals or institutions, or the availability of new products and services that result from the completion of activities within a development intervention within the control of the organization. They are achieved with the resources provided and within the time period specified.</p> <p>What output(s) will lead to the attainment of the outcome?</p>	<p>Performance indicators are a qualitative or quantitative means of measuring the output with the intention of gauging the performance of a programme or investment. What indicator will be used to measure the success of the output?</p> <p>Baseline: what is the current status against which progress will be measured?</p> <p>Target: what is to be accomplished?</p>	<p>How will the indicator be verified?</p>	<p>List the risks that could impede the attainment of the project or programme output(s)</p>
	<p>Activities relating to output 1.1</p> <p>1.1.1 Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources, are mobilized to produce specific outputs. List the activities that will be conducted to achieve the output.</p> <p>1.1.2 ...</p>		

Annex V

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RESULTS-BASED MANAGEMENT

PLANNING	
Step 1	Conduct situation and/or stakeholder analysis
Step 2	Apply the problem tree to hone the project or programme vision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prioritize project and programme approach in relation to the mandate and strategic framework of UNODC, as well as the potential contribution to relevant Sustainable Development Goals; select the specific domains in which the interventions can achieve most meaningful impact
Step 3	Develop the project or programme theory of change and results framework: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Draft a theory of change narrative ✓ Formulate the results framework (input, activities, outputs, outcomes and objective) using language from the theory of change ✓ Identify risks and assumptions ✓ Determine the project or programme accountability threshold in relation to the results
Step 4	Model the theory of change and results framework in a log frame: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Use the UNODC standard template, clearly indicating the links with the strategic priorities of the Office and the Sustainable Development Goals ✓ Identify the most appropriate indicators to measure each of the project or programme results, using the proposed checklist to select the indicators and ensuring that they are "SMART" ✓ Determine the most appropriate verification method for each indicator; be particularly mindful of costs ✓ Set baselines ✓ Set targets ✓ If baselines and targets cannot be determined owing to the unavailability of data, ensure that a clear plan is in place to collect the needed information in due time
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING	
Step 5	Develop the project or programme performance monitoring framework and monitoring system (data collection tools, information management processes, databases, etc.)
Step 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure clear feedback-loop processes are in place to enable the use of monitoring data to help in making decisions about the project or programme, and correct the course of the implementation when needed ✓ Undertake periodic performance assessments
Step 7	Identify, document and use lessons learned as a means of sharing and using knowledge derived from an experience to improve the project or programme and/or to inform future action
Step 8	Plan for evaluations that meet UNODC principles and high-quality standards (refer to <i>Evaluation Handbook: Guidance for designing, conducting and using independent evaluation at UNODC</i>)

REPORTING	
Step 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Be mindful of donors and UNODC reporting cycles✓ Ensure your reports are succinct; convey, in a clear manner, the contribution of the project or programme to reaching planned results and objectives; and shed light on lessons learned and how they are being utilized to improve action

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