

Indicators

Key features

Outcomes and outputs are results. They describe the intended changes in development conditions resulting from UN supported programmes and projects. But we can't know if a result has been achieved without **indicators**.

Indicators tell us how intended results will be measured, and whether (or how far) these results have been achieved. Indicators are objectively verifiable and repeatable measures of a particular condition.

Definition: Indicator

A quantitative or qualitative variable that allows the verification of changes produced by a development intervention relative to what was planned.

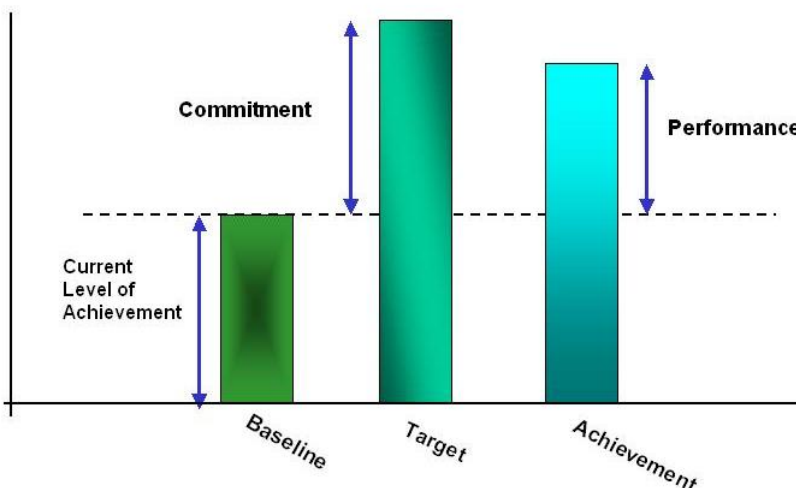
- Approved Harmonized Terminology, UNDG, 2003.

As far as possible results should be worded as clearly and simply as possible. But human development is a complex and sometimes risky endeavour. Results can also be complex and risky. And where results are being agreed between two or more agencies with government and civil partners, their wording may sometimes be ambiguous (...and occasionally tortuous). This is where indicators shine. They complete the result. Just as you would never drive without a speedometer, you would never use a result without an indicator. They force clarification of what is meant by the result, and are used for monitoring, evaluating, and reporting on achievement.

When deciding how many indicators to use, it is important to keep in mind the cost and effort involved in gathering and analyzing required information. It is important to develop a manageable, and track-able set of indicators, rather than have too many which are beyond our capacity to track. One to four indicators, per result, should be adequate.

Sophisticated statistical tools aren't usually necessary to develop or track indicators. Whenever possible, indicators should rely on existing operational information or publicly available sets of data (e.g. National, sub-National or UN statistics). The use of secondary data, when available and appropriate, is preferable owing to the higher costs associated with primary data collection.

Figure: Baseline, targets and achievement



All indicators must be accompanied by **baselines** and **targets** and should lend themselves to aggregation at all levels. Without baselines and targets, measurement of change over time

is not possible. As illustrated above:

- Baselines establish the value of the indicator at the beginning of the planning period;
- Targets describe expected values upon completion of the plan;
- Performance monitoring of the indicator tells us about actual achievement, against the original target.

As far as possible, **indicators must be dis-aggregated**. Averages hide disparities, and the recognition of disparities is essential for **human rights based programming**. Indicators can be disaggregated by sex, age, geographic areas such as cities, districts and provinces, and by ethnicity. Caution! Dis-aggregation can be politically sensitive as well as expensive. Ethnic or regional disparities can lead to charges of discrimination. And very large sample sizes are often needed to provide quantitative data which are statistically reliable for different regions and population groups. This can increase costs.

To ensure objectivity, indicators, baselines and targets should not be changed retroactively once established, unless by consent of all partners in the development cooperation.

In the UNDAF, indicators, baselines and targets are listed in the **M&E Framework** (see *CCA-UNDAF guidelines, part IV*). When it comes to indicators, there is a lot of choice as to how to proceed. There are no right or wrong choices, rather UN agencies, working together with partners, must decide on the mix of indicators most appropriate to the programme or project. This will depend on the availability of data, the budget for surveys and studies and for routine monitoring, and the capacities of the agency and implementing partners to collect and analyze data.

Current UNDAFs reveal the wide range indicators:

Quantitative indicators measure change in numerical values over time.

Qualitative indicators measure changes which are not easily measured through numerical values such as process-related improvements, and improved quality of services, policies or capacity.

Qualitative indicators usually need additional criteria. For example, if an intended result is to see greater civil society participation in local development, and the indicator is the quality of local public consultations, then partners must agree beforehand on the criteria for determining a quality process. These criteria will often be country-specific, and once agreed, they can be used in a simple monitoring checklist.

Proxy indicators measure changes not directly related, yet closely associated with, the issue under consideration. For example, an increase in the number of political parties and voter turn-out might serve as proxy measures of improved governance.

Binary indicators or “yes-no” indicators, are more common at the output level, and are simple measures of change. For example, an output might be: “Draft curriculum developed”, and the indicator is “Yes” or “No”.

Composite indicators, compared with simple indicators, are complex measures capturing two or more distinct variables. The table below shows an example of a composite indicator containing three distinct variables (number of people exposed to urban pollution, number of people exposed to industrial pollution and number of people exposed to agrochemical pollution). To be meaningful, all three of these variables must be reflected in baseline and target values, and the UN system must be capable of systematically monitoring and reported back on them. If this is not the case, a different indicator should be chosen.

Example: Composite indicator

UNDAF Outcome Indicator	Baseline	Target
Number of people exposed to urban, industrial, and agrochemical pollution	An estimated 1.2 million people in South Africa are currently exposed to unacceptable levels of urban pollution, 600,000 to unacceptable levels of industrial pollution, and 200,000 to unacceptable levels of agrochemical pollution	Number of people in South Africa exposed to unacceptable levels of urban, industrial, and agrochemical pollution reduced to 850,000, 400,000 and 80,000 respectively by 2013

There is no set rule about whether **indicators & targets** have to be separated or included in the same statement. The examples that follow below are taken from actual UNDAFs and show that the UN follows both practices.

A Typology for Indicators

Indicators are often a mix of the types described above. The following table shows different possible indicators for a typical UNDAF outcome. This table can be used for any result. The three vertical columns show whether the indicator describes the ends (substantive), the means (process), or is a proxy for the result. Each of these columns is further sub-divided according to whether the indicator is quantitative, qualitative, or a combination of the two. This analysis can help make sense of the options that the UN and partners have in their selection of indicators. It is better to be in the upper left of the table than in the lower right. **The more substantive and quantitative the indicator, the stronger it is.**

UNDAF Outcome: By 2011, there is greater economic growth in targeted poor rural and urban areas		
Substantive Indicators (Ends)	Process Indicators (Means)	Proxy Indicators
Quantitative - Income disparities between regions - Economic growth rates in targeted areas	Quantitative - Unemployment rate	Quantitative - Household consumption - Number of new cellphone users
Qualitative	Qualitative - Perception among poor communities that small business incentives are appropriate to their needs and financial situation	Qualitative
Combined (quan & qual)	Combined (quan & qual) N° and quality of pro-poor economic reform laws enacted (Note: the later indicator requires some criteria to determine how pro-poor the reforms were)	Combined (quan & qual)

In a rights-based approach, **the process is equally important as the result.** The quality of the process determines whether the results achieved are sustainable and will not harm other peoples' rights. Therefore a monitoring and evaluation system should include both substantive and process indicators. In the above example, the process-qualitative indicator is important for knowing whether economic reforms are perceived by the poor as being appropriate to their needs.

At the same time, it may be more cost-effective to ensure that the 3 quantitative indicators are dis-aggregated by area and income group. This is an example of the choices facing the UN and partners in their selection of indicators

Indicators at different levels

Measuring Outcomes

Wherever possible, **UNDAF Outcome indicators** should be aligned with MDG indicators. Where MDG indicators are used, it is important that targets established for the UNDAF Outcome Indicators are sufficiently ambitious when compared to the 2015 targets for the MDGs.

From a rights-based approach, indicators for UNDAF outcomes should measure the performance of rights-holders to exercise and claim their rights, and of duty-bearers to respect, protect and fulfill those rights. Disaggregated indicators give a better sense of the expected changes for the most

disadvantaged or excluded groups. For example, the number of Indigenous women’s organizations that participated meaningfully in the formulation and monitoring of a public policy which provides access to education.

Rights-based **agency outcome indicators** should measure the quantitative as well as the qualitative changes needed to close legal, institutional policy and capacity gaps which prevent rights-holders and duty-bearers from performing their respective roles. So a national Law on Food Security is adopted (yes/no indicator), and how effectively the office of the ombudsperson monitors compliance (qualitative information).

Measuring Outputs

Because outputs are tangible and deliverable, they are also easier to measure than outcomes. This makes it easier to identify indicators. The indicator may be quantitative or qualitative, and come from existing service data or from routine progress reports. Very often, output indicators will be **binary** or **yes OR no indicators**. Using the example above, a UN agency could work with government and civil society to draft the text of a new law. In this case the indicator is: **Yes** the draft was prepared, or **No** it wasn’t. And these Yes-No indicators do not require baselines or targets. The UN may have also helped to develop a national consultation mechanism to ensure the broadest possible public input to the development of the law. Here again, the indicator could be Yes-No. Or you could use a more ambitious quantifiable indicator such as the number of public consultations conducted. These process indicators are also useful for a human rights based approach which emphasizes the quality of the participation process, and respect for the principle of equality and non-discrimination in identifying and delivering the output.

Checklist

CHECKLIST FOR VALIDATING INDICATORS	YES	NO
✓ The indicator describes how achievement of the result will be measured		
✓ Each and every variable included in the indicator statement is measurable with reasonable cost and effort		
✓ The indicator is clear and easy to understand even to a lay person		
✓ The indicator lends itself to aggregation		
✓ The indicator can be disaggregated by gender, sex, ethnic origin, social condition		
✓ A baseline (current) value can be provided for each and every variable included in the indicator statement (except for Yes-No indicators)		
✓ There is a target during a specified timeframe for each and every variable included in the indicator (except for Yes-No indicators)		
✓ The indicator is not repeated in any of the results below or above in the results framework		

Examples of Outcomes, Outputs and Indicators¹

Example 1: Poverty reduction

Result	Indicator
<p><u>UNDAF outcome:</u> By 2011, there is greater economic growth in targeted poor rural and urban areas</p>	<p><i>No growth data available</i> Proxy: Unemployment rate decreased from X% to Y% in targeted areas</p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> New businesses and jobs are created in targeted, poor rural and urban areas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N^o and type of new businesses registered - N^o new jobs created
<p><u>Outputs</u> Market-based vocational training programmes are developed</p> <p>Disadvantaged groups including youth and PLWHA have access to improved employment services and preferential credits for business development.</p> <p>Local business development funds piloted in selected areas</p> <p>Private public partnerships (PPP)s are created in poor rural and urban areas for infrastructure development and service provision</p>	<p>N^o training programmes developed and offered by Vocational Institutes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in use of employment services by young people/ people with low incomes - Amount of credits offered to young people/ people with low incomes as proportion of total business development credits - Qualitative assessment about service access from CSOs working with PLWHA - N^o LDFs operational - Increase (%) in LDF capitalization - N^o PPPs
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Local public administrations operate in a more effective and transparent manner, and receive larger fiscal transfers from central government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N^o LPAs with public official plans - Approval rates in citizen report cards (% increase from baseline) - Increase (%) in resources allocated to LPA budgets by central government
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Legal and regulatory framework is improved with particular emphasis on (1) delegation of authority, (2) decentralization of services, (3) costing of local services and budget needs of LPAs</p> <p>Administrative procedures and systems are simplified and streamlined to provide better services</p> <p>Targeted departments of LPAs plan, implement, and monitor in a participatory manner</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft reform proposals developed - N^o procedures and systems re-designed - N^o public consultations conducted by LPAs - N^o local development plans - Plans incorporate needs assessments and budgets lines related to children, youth, women, and PLWHA (qualitative)
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Communities and CSOs participate in local development planning, implementation and monitoring</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N^o / quality of public consultations - N^o CSOs reporting active participation in civic and municipal events

¹ Examples have been adapted from CCAs, UNDAFs, CPAPs, and other guidance materials as follows: 1 - Moldova; 2 – Kyrgyzstan; 3 - Afghanistan; 4 – Yemen; 5 – Namibia.

Result	Indicator
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Network of CSOs are better able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - monitor social service quality, particularly for children, youth, women, PLWHA - influence policy-making <p>Mechanisms and fora, such as youth councils, are developed at local level to better engage children and young people in policy development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N° CSOs that report improved capacities in monitoring and advocacy - Quality and reach of CSO reports (qual.) - N°/ type of mechanisms developed - N° local councils involving children and young people in planning and decision-making

Example 2: Good governance

Result	Indicator
<p><u>UNDAF outcome:</u> Good governance reforms and practices institutionalized at all levels</p>	<p>N° and type of governance reform laws enacted and policies introduced at National and Ayil level</p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Governance bodies have greater capacity at central and local levels to carry out governance reforms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legislative framework and code for local self-governance adopted - N° recommendations from functional reviews implemented
<p><u>Outputs:</u> A legislative framework and code for local self governance is drafted</p> <p>Transparent decision making processes for select state bodies are developed with public consultation</p> <p>Municipal Civil Servants, and “Ayil” Councilors ,from targeted areas, are able to formulate and implement dev plans that are gender sensitive and use human rights principles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft framework document and code - Draft guideline for Ministerial decision making - Draft guideline/ mechanism for public consultation processes - N° and quality of draft local official plans
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Institutional capacity of Parliament strengthened to better perform legislative, representational and oversight roles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Procedures and management system adopted - Change in public perception of parliamentary effectiveness
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Legislators and parliamentary staff have improved skills to draft and propose legislation</p> <p>A strategy and action plan developed to improve Parliamentary relations with constituencies, Local Kenesh, and the media</p> <p>Improved Parliamentary oversight mechanisms are drafted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - N° of private members bills drafted - Constituency relations strategy and action Plan drafted - Parliament Web Portal activated - N° of constituency newsletters developed - Draft guideline for Parliamentary oversight

Example 3: Good governance

Result	Indicator
<p><u>UNDAF outcome</u> By 2008, Government at all levels and civil society, including communities and individuals, are better enabled to realise improved governance based on the rule of law and human rights, with particular emphasis on women and marginalized groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Both chambers of National Assembly democratically elected and functioning - N° Provincial and district councils established as per Constitution
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> By 2008, transparent, effective and efficient legislative and policy frameworks and processes are established and implemented</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of pending priority laws debated and passed - Basic interim legal framework approved en bloc by the new Parliament
<p><u>Outputs</u> Rules, responsibilities and division of labour for the main legislative bodies are clarified and their capacities strengthened within the framework</p> <p>National Assembly established and functioning</p> <p>Provincial, district, village and municipal councils established and functioning</p> <p>National budget process more effectively incorporates inputs from local governance Structures.</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Afghanistan UNDAF at output level.</i></p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> By 2008, an effective, more accountable and more representative public administration is established at the national and sub-national levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework for rationalisation of Ministries/ agencies developed and implemented - % of female senior civil servants at Grade 2 and above and more balanced representation of specific groups in the civil service
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Framework for a restructured, small and more coherent Government administration is in place</p> <p>Capacities of civil servants at all levels are strengthened to function within these parameters, including awareness of their obligations under international conventions and their role in meeting them</p> <p>National anti-corruption system developed (approved and fully functioning?) and public awareness on anticorruption mechanisms raised</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Afghanistan UNDAF at output level.</i></p>

Result	Indicator
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> By 2008, communities and individuals, especially women and marginalized groups, participate effectively in the development and political processes</p>	<p>- Voter turnout in parliamentary and district elections</p> <p>- N° CSOs registered with MoJ</p>
<p><u>Outputs</u> Roles and responsibilities of mechanisms for direct participation in governance, including CDCs, are clarified and their operations made effective.</p> <p>Development of policy, procedures and capacity for delivery of social services through planning and participation of communities.</p> <p>Wide public outreach campaigns improve awareness on relevant civic and human rights issues.</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Afghanistan UNDAF at output level.</i></p>

Example 4: Gender

Result	Indicator
<p><u>UNDAF Outcome:</u> Improved institutional and human capacity to promote gender equity and empower women in social, political, economic and legal spheres.</p>	<p>1. UN Gender Development Index <u>Baseline:</u> Current GDI value – 0.448 <u>Target:</u> At least 20% increase</p> <p>2. Share of women in elected bodies <u>Baseline:</u> 0.1% of elected positions <u>Target:</u> At least 15%</p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Improved institutional framework ensuring that women and girls have the benefit of their equal rights.</p>	<p>Female-male ratio in higher education and civil service <u>Baseline:</u> 25% of university students <u>Target:</u> At least a 20% increase in the ration of women in higher education and civil services</p>
<p><u>Outputs:</u> National laws modified in line with CEDAW provisions</p> <p>Improved access of women to both formal and traditional justice systems</p> <p>Increased active representation and participation of women in decision making political and social sectors</p> <p>Increased national and community level action to eliminate violence against women</p>	<p>- Number of articles violating CEDAW provisions <u>Baseline:</u> 56 articles and 25 laws <u>Target:</u> 80% of discrepancies removed</p> <p>- Number of female judges <u>Baseline:</u> 12 female judges in judicial courts (1%) <u>Target:</u> 60 female judges in judicial courts (5%)</p> <p>- Number of courts with help desks for women <u>Baseline:</u> Zero <u>Target:</u> 60 help desks for women in courts</p> <p>- Number of women voters <u>Baseline:</u> 3.4 million women voted in 2003 <u>Target:</u> Increase # of women voters by 50%</p> <p>- Number of women running for office <u>Baseline:</u> In 2003, out of 1529 candidates for parliament, 11 were women <u>Target:</u> A ten fold increase in the #of women candidates</p> <p>- Number of women in Parliament, local council and the Shura council <u>Baseline:</u> One in parliament, 2 in Shura council, 36 in local councils <u>Target:</u> Parliament, Shura and local councils are comprised of 15% women</p> <p>- Number of perpetrators brought to trial and held accountable <u>Baseline:</u> To be established <u>Target:</u> At least 5 operational assistance centres for women subject to domestic violence</p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Increased reflection of gender concerns in allocation of public financial resources.</p>	<p>1. Ratio of public expenditure on primary and reproductive health care to total public education and health sector expenditure <u>Baseline:</u> Current ratio <u>Target:</u> Increase by 30%</p> <p>2. Percentage of female teachers <u>Baseline:</u> 19.8% <u>Target:</u> Double the percentage</p>

Result	Indicator
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Development of line ministries' capacity to apply, assess, and monitor gender-differentiated budgets</p> <p>Increased capacity among women's organisations to monitor and follow up gender budgeting in development activities</p>	<p>- Number of ministries using gender-differentiated budgeting <u>Baseline:</u> None <u>Target:</u> All social sector ministries and at least two ministries dealing with economic issues</p> <p>- Number of CSOs/ women's organizations able to monitor gender budgeting <u>Baseline:</u> The current capacity of CSOs in this area is extremely limited. <u>Target:</u> At least 10 CSOs/women's organisations</p>
<p><u>Agency outcome:</u> Improved social perceptions and attitudes towards statuses and roles of women and men.</p>	<p>Percentage of population agreeing with the principle of equal rights between women and men <u>Baseline:</u> To be established <u>Target:</u> At least triple the percentage</p>
<p><u>Outputs:</u> Media, young people and CSO networks mobilised to change perception of gender roles</p> <p>Religious, political and traditional leaders and advocates engaged in promoting an improved status of women</p>	<p>- Number of radio/TV programs dedicated to gender issues <u>Baseline:</u> No regular radio or TV programme on gender issues <u>Target:</u> At least five weekly programmes</p> <p>- Percentage of women between the ages of 15-19 who marry <u>Baseline:</u> 17.2% of women between the ages of 15-19 <u>Target:</u> Reduce the percentage by half</p>

Example 5: Basic Services

Result	Indicator
<p>UNDAF outcome: By 2010, the capacity of Government and civil society institutions is strengthened to deliver and monitor essential/critical health, education and special protection services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of the public service meeting required competency level (PEMP) <u>Baseline:</u> None - % of teachers qualified <u>Baseline:</u> >60%
<p>Agency outcome: Institutional and community capacity for effective delivery and uptake of critical services, in health and education maintained and strengthened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Diphtheria Polio Tetanus (DPT 3) immunization coverage sustained at 80% in all districts - Maternal mortality (MDG 5) decreased from 271/100,000 (2000) to 120 in (2010) - Proportion of pregnant women and children under 5 sleeping under treated bednets to reach 60% <u>Baseline (2000):</u> 7% (children only) <u>Target:</u> 60% - National Education Fund accessed by xx% of schools <u>Baseline:</u> no fund - Proportion of orphans to non-orphans attending school is equal. <u>Baseline:</u> none - % of children in Grade 7 who are promoted to Grade 8 <u>Baseline (2002):</u> 76.8%
<p>Outputs: Strengthened PHC with focus on children and mothers.</p> <p>Improved access to and retention in quality basic education, especially for vulnerable children</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Namibia UNDAF at output level.</i></p>
<p>Agency outcome: The national statistical system is strengthened to ensure effective development and application of tools for evidence-based decision-making, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Statistical System & Poverty Monitoring Strategy finalised - Implementation of Integrated Household Survey Programme <u>Baseline:</u> subject specific - Operationalisation of DevInfo in NPCS linked to all line ministries. <u>Baseline – not yet in place</u> - % NPCS statistical plan followed (Performance Expenditure Management Programme Indicator)
<p>Outputs: National capacities for implementation of National Statistical Plan III and the Poverty Monitoring Strategy strengthened.</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Namibia UNDAF at output level.</i></p>
<p>Agency outcome: Increased awareness and capacity for protecting the rights of children, women and other vulnerable groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction of proportion of men agreeing that wife beating is justified for at least selected one reason <u>Baseline – 44%</u> - # of cases handled by Women and Child Protection Units <u>Baseline (2003)</u> Reported child abuse cases: 894 - % of successful prosecutions of rape and child abuse cases (a Performance Expenditure Management Programme indicator) <u>Baseline-</u> (to be determined first year of programme)

Result	Indicator
<p><u>Outputs:</u> The rights of women and children and other vulnerable groups are protected through enactment and application of required and existing legislation.</p> <p>Women, children and those in other vulnerable groups are aware of their rights and how to access the services available.</p> <p>Improved capacity of service providers to offer protection from violence and abuse and care to women, children and vulnerable groups.</p>	<p><i>No indicators listed in Namibia UNDAF at output level.</i></p>