

UNFPA

Policies and Procedures Manual

Policy and Procedures for Development and Approval of the Country Programme Document Programme

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for Development and Approval of the Country Programme Document (CPD)
Previous title (if any)	
Policy objective	The policy outlines the process for developing and approving the CPD. It includes information on developing the draft, review and quality assurance steps, revision, and clearance, editing and submission to the Executive Board for review and approval.
Target audience	All country offices with country programmes and other units, providing technical, programmatic, and operational oversight and support towards the development, review, and approval of country programmes
Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
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POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR DEVELOPMENT AND APPROVAL OF THE COUNTRY PROGRAMME DOCUMENT (CPD)

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I. Purpose

This policy and procedures apply to UNFPA supported country programmes.¹ It guides the development and approval processes for country programme documents (CPDs) and related programming instruments.

The UNFPA supported country programme is developed based on national development plans and priorities and implemented jointly by national partners, UNFPA and other development and humanitarian actors. The programme must be derived from – and aligned with – the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF or “Cooperation Framework”), complemented – and informed by – the [UNFPA Strategic Plan](#), other key policy, programmatic and legal frameworks, such as the country reviews undertaken by the different United Nations human rights mechanisms and as relevant the humanitarian response plan, refugee response plan and the Integrated Strategic Framework in United Nations mission settings.²

The CPD articulates UNFPA's contribution to achieving national priorities outlined in the CF and results that happen to align with the UNFPA transformative results and ICPD agenda. Furthermore, the CPD outlines actions that are timely, integrated, conflict- and climate-sensitive, gender-transformative and peace-responsive. It details the strategic approach, interventions, and partnerships for achieving envisioned results and provides information on programme management, monitoring and evaluation, risk management, implementation arrangements, and proposed use of indicative resource estimates.

The CPD is the result of consultations with different stakeholders at national and international level. It is UNFPA's accountability instrument with the government, Executive Board, government, and target population. The CPD is also a critical tool for resource mobilization, advocacy, policy dialogue and partnerships for accelerating the achievement of the three transformative results.

II. Policy

A country programme must be harmonized with the national development planning and Cooperation Framework cycle, which usually lasts for five years.³ It must align – to the extent possible – with the country programme cycles of other United Nations entities contributing to the same Cooperation Framework, such as UNDP and UNICEF.

¹ This policy – to some extent – also guides the development and internal approval processes for the global and regional programmes, which are developed in tandem with strategic plan cycles.

² [United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework – Internal Guidance](#) (UNSDCF Guidance 2019), para. 13.

³ Shorter programme cycles between two and four years are also possible (in general, to align with national priorities and plans).

The country programme development process typically takes circa 40 weeks before its approval by the Executive Board. The country office must conduct several analytical evidence-gathering exercises and inclusive consultations with the national government and relevant stakeholders to inform the country programme strategic approach and priorities and follow CPD development and approval procedures prior to submission of the CPD to the Executive Board.

At the outset of the CPD development phase, the country office head of unit must initiate an internal [strategic dialogue](#) (convened by the regional office) at the intersection of the Common Country Analysis (CCA) finalization and before the Cooperation Framework strategic prioritization process.⁴ Although country programme ideation and preparation starts before the CCA process, a country office should formulate the CPD only after the Cooperation Framework strategic priorities are agreed.⁵

The head of unit must develop the CPD using one of the three options provided in the Cooperation Framework⁶ and as agreed within the United Nations country team (UNCT), following the procedures outlined in the subsequent section of this policy.

Upon development, the CPD must be submitted to the Programme Review Committee (PRC) by the respective regional director for quality assurance review and internal approval by the PRC Chair, i.e., the Deputy Executive Director - Programme (DED-P). The Executive Board Branch/Office of the Executive Director (EBB/OED) will then submit the CPD to the UNFPA Executive Board for review and approval (per Executive Board decision [2014/7](#)).

The CPD must be accompanied by a national government endorsement letter and confirmation from the United Nations Resident Coordinator that the CPD is aligned to the Cooperation Framework. It will also be accompanied by the draft Cooperation Framework and/or its outcome matrix⁷ (i.e., not necessarily the signed version), which is made available to the Executive Board – posted on the United Nations Development Coordination Office’s dedicated website – when the draft CPD is presented for consideration for Board comments.⁸

The new CPD must be presented for review and approval by the Executive Board – either at a Board session within one year before the first year of implementation of the new country programme cycle or, at the latest, at the session held at the beginning of the first year of implementation (the Executive Board’s first regular session for programmes starting at the beginning of that calendar year⁹). UNFPA, in collaboration with other United Nations entities, especially UNDP and UNICEF, harmonize – to the extent possible – the submission of their CPDs to the same session of their respective Executive Boards.

⁴ The strategic dialogue is not undertaken at the start of country programme conceptualization. The latter is envisioned earlier in line with national development planning processes and the CCA.

⁵ UNSDCF Guidance 2019, paras. 8, 55.

⁶ UNSDCF Guidance 2019, paras. 79.

⁷ [Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review](#) (QCPR 2020), para. 74.

⁸ UNSDCF Guidance 2019, para. 81.

⁹ For CPDs being presented for approval at the Executive Board’s first regular session (usually held in late January/early February), the draft CPDs would have already been reviewed and commented on by the Board members in November of the year prior to the Board session, thus before the beginning of the first year of implementation.

Ideally, CPD approval should follow due consultation and agreement of the programme country government with the Cooperation Framework. However, it is possible for a CPD to be approved by the Executive Board before the government signs the Cooperation Framework. Under such circumstances, should there be any changes – as per the [Cooperation Framework Guidance](#) – UNFPA shall align the CPD with the Cooperation Framework at the earliest opportunity and no later than the annual review.¹⁰

The UNFPA country office may not spend any country programme funds until the Executive Board approves the CPD or is informed of the programme extension. The only exception is for new programmes or extensions being presented to the First Regular Session of the Executive Board in the same financial year the implementation is meant to begin. In this case, for business continuity, the respective head of unit¹¹ must document such expenditure in a note to file, indicating that funds were spent before approval of the CPD at the relevant Executive Board session.

Principles

UNFPA country programme must *align strategically* – and provide measurable contributions – to national development priorities, needs and contexts, the SDGs and Cooperation Framework,¹² and the current [UNFPA strategic plan](#) and its integrated results and resource framework. It must also align with the current UNFPA [Business Model](#) and reflect the UNFPA comparative advantage in the country.

The CPD must be *nationally owned*.¹³ It must be duly developed in conjunction with - reviewed and agreed to - by the programme country government (confirmed by a government endorsement letter) and aligned with the Cooperation Framework (confirmed by the Resident Coordinator in writing).¹⁴

The programme must be developed through an inclusive *consultative process*¹⁵ with the national government and critical stakeholders, including bilateral partners, relevant members of the humanitarian community, representatives of marginalized and vulnerable groups, young people, women and adolescent girls and other target populations left furthest behind, in keeping with the principles of national ownership and leaving no one behind.

The programme must be guided by – and advance – *key programming principles*, such as [leaving no one behind](#), the human rights-based approach, gender equality and women’s empowerment, resilience, sustainability, accountability, and an integrated and multidimensional programming approach. It should also be underpinned by three mutually reinforcing modes of implementation, namely results-focused programming, capacity development and policy support.¹⁶

¹⁰ UNSDCF Guidance 2019, para. 81.

¹¹The UNFPA head of unit refers to the country representative, division director, regional or sub-regional director, country director, or the Chief of Operations (or the delegated officer), as appropriate.

¹² This includes alignment with UNFPA’s humanitarian Inter-Agency Standing Committee lead-agency mandate on gender-based violence.

¹³ QCPR 2020, para. 2.

¹⁴ Without this endorsement in writing, the CPD cannot be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

¹⁵ QCPR 2020, paras. 28, 74.

¹⁶ UNSDCF Guidance 2019, paras. 16–23.

The programme must reflect specific consideration to the assessment of risks, including programmatic and operational risks threats (natural or human-made disasters), emergency preparedness and response, and mitigation strategies and the role of UNFPA with regards to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) in development and humanitarian settings.

The programme must be informed by strategic foresight. This may include trends, future scenarios and evidence coming through a futurecasting process.

The programme must also be developed through a robust [theory of change process](#), applying the critical steps of unpacking the core problems and identifying root causes, exploring innovative solutions, and conducting a proper prioritisation process involving all the stakeholders.

It must be *evidence-based*.¹⁷ It should draw on the CCA and other critical evidence (e.g., humanitarian needs overview), including the views of representatives of those left behind and those furthest behind. It must be technically robust, including deploying high-impact interventions and capturing humanitarian preparedness activities based on a risk assessment, informed by human rights based and gender transformative analysis, particularly in priority countries with a high probability of being impacted by crises.

The *evaluative evidence* gathered through the previous country programme evaluation and other evaluative evidence (when available¹⁸) and implementation processes must inform the programme design. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that all significant findings and recommendations available from the last country programme evaluation, or other evaluative evidence,¹⁹ and their subsequent management responses and/or implementation plans: (a) have been considered; (b) have informed the design and development of the CPD; and (c) have been informed by a review of human resource needs, to ensure there is sufficient capacity to implement the country programme and sustainable organizational structure.

The evidence should be presented as a high-level summary in the CPD narrative. The CPD must articulate a clear rationale or justification for the programme, the critical priorities to be addressed over the programme cycle, and the relevant partnerships and strategies for realizing the programme. It should specify programme management processes to ensure effective programme implementation and outline key partnership strategies and joint modalities to achieve commonly defined United Nations goals and priorities.

The CPD must contain as an annex the Results and Resources Framework (RRF), with specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) indicators and baselines and targets for UNFPA contributions to the Cooperation Framework, national priorities and the strategic plan, and an estimate of total financial resources from all funding sources based on an integrated partnership and resource mobilization and south-south cooperation plan in the context of an agreed level of ambition.

The programme must be *needs-driven*.

¹⁷ QCPR 2020, para. 24.

¹⁸ Evaluation policy suggests a country programme evaluation in two programme cycles.

¹⁹ See [Evaluation Office Guidance](#) on evaluative evidence.

- It should be informed by an assessment of the gaps and costs to realize the transformative results in the country context and drive the shift from funding to financing agenda, building on investment cases, and costing approaches.²⁰
- It should then be based on UNFPA contributions towards the larger needs (including UNSDCF) in the country context, taking into account the likely contributions of other partners. The UNFPA contributions/priorities should be fully needs-based and costed – and should be as granular as possible, at least at the output level, which may be achieved using the Programme Costing Tool.²¹
- The costed needs for UNFPA’s programme must be assessed comprehensively against all financial resources expected to be available/mobilised for the programming period, as per the integrated partnership and resource mobilization – including the Institutional Budget, regular resources, and other resources from all sources, domestic and external such as bilateral and multilateral co-financing, thematic funds, pooled funds, or joint programmes. In addition, it should further factor in any cost-share with other partners, as well as through South-South and triangular cooperation.

III. Procedures

The Cooperation Framework guidance presents three options for developing an entity-specific country programme instrument, i.e., the CPD.²² The choice of an option must be duly discussed and agreed upon by the United Nations country team (UNCT), facilitated by the head of unit, and cleared internally by the Deputy Executive Director - Programmes. The options and specific internal requirements are as follows:

- Option A – Cooperation Framework adopted entirely as the CPD.
 - To justify this approach, it must be clear that the ICPD Programme of Action and related UNFPA issues are positioned substantively and prominently in the Cooperation Framework. The positioning is substantiated with evidence in the CCA, UNSDCF strategic priorities, outcomes, outputs, and related indicators.
 - To fulfil Executive Board and internal accountability, quality assurance and programme management requirements, the country office will develop a UNFPA Results and Resource Framework to unpack specific programme linkages and contributions to the Cooperation Framework, which will be presented to the Executive Board along with the Cooperation Framework.²³

²⁰ Developing Investment cases for Transformative Results [Toolkit](#) (Jan 2021)

²¹ See [Programme Costing Tool](#)

²² UNSDCF Guidance 2019, para. 79.

²³ In this case, the RRF would be contained in a separate addendum to the Cooperation Framework. As of December 2021, no UNFPA country office has used Option A, and as such, the Executive Board has not seen such a country programme. Further guidance may follow if/when Option A is used.

- For internal quality assurance purposes, the head of unit must also prepare a CPD and supplementary documents.²⁴
- Option B – A separate CPD articulated, with Cooperation Framework outcome(s) copied verbatim as UNFPA CPD programme outcome(s).²⁵
- Option C – Builds on option B but includes other outcomes not prioritized in the Cooperation Framework.
 - This option is only used on an exceptional basis to capture normative and standard-setting activities that are not captured in the UNSDCF.

Building on the outcome of the strategic dialogue process and Cooperation Framework strategic prioritization, the UNFPA country office drafts the CPD in consultation with the government, representatives from furthest behind groups, bilateral and multilateral partners, and national stakeholders, including women-led and youth-led organisations,²⁶ humanitarian organisations and United Nations partners. Thus, the country programme design and development process must be consultative. It must actively engage government and key national stakeholders to ensure national ownership, consensus on programme priorities, intended results and partnership, and data collection and validation approach, including progress measurement yardsticks (e.g., indicators/targets).

The head of unit ensures the CPD is consensus-based, endorsed upon consultations with all key stakeholders, especially relevant government ministries, departments, and agencies, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as appropriate.²⁷

The United Nations resident coordinator must also review the CPD to ensure the proposed programme derives from – and aligns with – the Cooperation Framework as per the [Management and Accountability Framework](#) of the United Nations Development and Resident Coordinator System.²⁸

The head of unit must establish a harmonized approach through regular consultation and collaboration with United Nations entities developing their respective CPDs or equivalent documents, ideally, for approval at the same Executive Board session, particularly UNDP and UNICEF.

²⁴ See the updated list of supplementary documents in the [Country Programme Review and Approval Guidance Note](#). Furthermore, the document may be operationalized through the Output Operationalization Tool.

²⁵ There is a high prevalence of Option B among UNFPA country programmes, and this is the standard approach in nearly all countries.

²⁶ National stakeholders should include non-traditional stakeholders: private companies, religious leaders, community leaders, etc.

²⁷ Please see Step 4: Editing and Submission, subsection on national endorsement for more information.

²⁸ UNSDCF Guidance, para. 82.

The country office leads the CPD development under the guidance of the regional office, which provides integrated technical, programmatic, and operational oversight and support. Therefore, the country and regional offices should work closely throughout the CPD development process. Headquarters complements these roles where there are specific requests or identified capacity gaps – as well as with the corporate quality assurance process.²⁹ The PRC provides the final internal review and quality assurance of the CPD, before approval by the PRC Chair (i.e., DED-P), having received a memo from a regional director requesting approval, followed by the Executive Board approval processes.³⁰

IV. CPD Development and Approval – Key Steps

The CPD development typically follows five key steps, as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Five steps to CPD development and approval



Step 1: Analytical Evidence Gathering

The country office conducts several analytical evidence-gathering exercises and initial consultations with the government and partners to understand the development and humanitarian challenges and possible entry points, including understanding the key national priorities, and key trends (foresight) in the country that may impact the achievement of the three transformative results and ICPD Programme of Action. Specific attention should be given to the identification of recurrent, ongoing, and seasonal emergencies, and natural disaster or national security threats that might result in a humanitarian crisis.³¹

²⁹ See Annex A – Roles and Responsibilities for detailed information.

³⁰ See process overview flow chart in Annex III

³¹ To ensure analysis captures required data for UNFPA to deliver on the strategic plan humanitarian results, data will also be gathered via the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, GBV and SRH

The analyses should inform UNFPA engagement in the CCA/Cooperation Framework and national development planning processes, namely Population Situation Analysis, development of investment cases, Country Programme Evaluation, thematic or corporate evaluations and lessons learned in the current programme cycle, if applicable.

Step 2: CPD Development

Upon CCA finalization, in consultation with the regional office, the country office initiates a [strategic dialogue](#) process to chart the vision and priorities for the next programme cycle, considering significant determinants of the political context and support requirements and based on evidence of progress, performance and lessons of the previous cycle and comparative advantage within the national and United Nations country team context.

The regional office convenes the strategic dialogue with the participation of the PRC. The head of unit in the country office presents the initial thinking of the strategic vision, priorities, and approach of the proposed programme for testing, validation, and co-creation through articulating a white paper.³² The strategic dialogue outcome, prepared by the country and regional offices and validated by the PRC, informs UNFPA engagement at the UNSDCF strategic prioritization processes.

Depending on established processes at the country level, the country office engages the UNSDCF strategic prioritization guided by recommendations, strategies, and approaches.³³ Thereafter, the programme theory of change is developed in alignment with the Cooperation Framework and strategic plan.³⁴

The country office begins drafting the CPD as much as possible after the processes cited above but not before the agreement of Cooperation Framework strategic priorities and consultation with key stakeholders.³⁵

The CPD narrative and RRF sections must be presented clearly and concisely and follow the [standard CPD template](#). In addition, it is mandatory to present the entire document (narrative and RRF) in a maximum length of about 6,000 words.³⁶ The [CPD Annotated Guidance](#) provides details that underpin the following brief CPD subsection descriptions:

- *Programme Rationale*: This opening section provides the justifications or rationale for the new programme, based on evidence briefly summarized from the CCA, the UNSDCF theory of change and other relevant analytical sources.

partners, and strategic Humanitarian Programme Cycle documents, including the Humanitarian Needs Overview and other key risk and vulnerability analyses to achieve a more targeted understanding of vulnerability and capacity.

³² See the [strategic dialogue concept note](#) for description. There is no standard format for the white paper. However, it should capture the substantive elements as outlined in the concept note.

³³ See [UNFPA Cooperation Framework e-toolkit](#).

³⁴ See [UNFPA Programme Theory of Change Guidance](#).

³⁵ [UNSDCF Guidance](#) 2019, para. 8.

³⁶ The entire CPD, comprising narrative and RRF, should not exceed 6,000 words. Therefore, it is important to balance out the total words used throughout the document. A good rule of thumb is not to exceed 3,000 words in the narrative.

- *Programme Priorities and Partnerships*: This is the main section, which presents the vision of the proposed programme, its strategic direction, level of ambition and the concrete priorities towards the accelerated achievement of the transformative results in the country context, including critical partnerships and roles of partners towards realizing national priorities, SDGs and the UNSDCF.³⁷
- *Programme and Risk Management*: This section articulates operational modalities, coordination, and accountability arrangements. It captures the roles of national actors and stakeholders as well as country office human resource capacity, strategic and implementing partnerships and resource mobilization opportunities for programme delivery. It speaks to assumptions and risks – anticipation, mitigation, adaptation, management – and accountability arrangements. It must articulate clear statements of accountability, verbatim.
- *Monitoring and Evaluation*: This section indicates UNFPA’s approach to programme management for results, focusing on results monitoring, data collection, analysis, reporting and planned evaluation.
- *Results and Resources Framework (RRF)*: In an annex, presented as a table, the RRF, based on the theory of change analysis, is an essential component of the CPD, as mandated by the Executive Board. The UNFPA RRF summarizes the country programme outcomes, outputs, indicators, baselines, and targets to be achieved, and their alignment and contribution to UNFPA Strategic Plan and UNSDCF outcomes. It also includes a list of potential partners and a comprehensive overview of the proposed indicative financial resources available.

Some other specific policy guidance in the context of alignment of the CPD, especially the RRF, with the UNSDCF are as follows:

Outcomes

The Cooperation Framework guidance mandates that the CPD must copy verbatim the Cooperation Framework outcome statements. Given that these outcomes guide the UNFPA country programme, the head of unit must fully participate in the UNSDCF process (and humanitarian response plan development process, if applicable), to ensure the UNFPA strategic plan outcomes are sufficiently integrated, mainstreamed and/or captured in at least one outcome in the Cooperation Framework.

Outputs

CPD outputs could be (a) country programme-specific (b) UNSDCF outputs, depending on the relevance, or (c) common outputs with other United Nations entities. In such situations, the country office may adopt any of the output options or a combination. However, the outputs must include clear linkages with the UNFPA strategic plan. Where a country office opts for a UNSDCF output, the following conditions shall apply: (a) the UNSDCF output must be closely aligned with a relevant strategic plan output; or (b) UNFPA must contribute significantly to the output in terms of interventions, targets and/or resources compared to other contributing United Nations entities. Overall, a clear articulation of linkages between outputs and outcomes in the CPD narrative is required.

³⁷ It may include UNFPA accountabilities to SRH and GBV in emergencies, particularly coordination, as per its Inter-Agency Standing Committee humanitarian mandate.

Indicators

The RRF must include relevant outcome-level indicators from the Cooperation Framework and/or Strategic Plan.

At the output level, the country office has the flexibility to either identify its own indicators, adapt UNFPA strategic plan indicators, or use the relevant Cooperation Framework output-level indicators. If using UNSDCF indicators, such selection should take into consideration programme contributions to the output, and the need for aggregation and global reporting.³⁸ The country programmes can also include common and shared indicators with other United Nations entities. In these situations, the entities sharing those indicators are accountable for meeting the targets.

The country office must identify indicators (quantitative and qualitative measures of programme performance that enable results tracking) for each output. Each indicator must:

- Be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART).³⁹
- Have established baseline data for each indicator, once defined.
- Have a clear target for each output indicator.
- Be objectively verifiable and must relate to – and align with – UNFPA’s interventions.

Each indicator must have comprehensive metadata explaining the definition, method of measurement, source, and complementarity with other United Nations entities.

The means of verification and risks and assumptions are not included in the RRF. Instead, after the Executive Board has approved the CPD, the RRF must be further detailed through an operational multi-year programme plan that breaks down the high-level results of the CPD into a lower-level, more manageable results formulation. The country office can use the [Output Operationalization Tool](#) or similar monitoring framework as long as the following minimum standard elements are included:

- *Annual output indicator targets:* These targets should align with the country office baseline and target commitment of the strategic plan integrated results and resource framework. They should be the same as those entered in the institutional results management system⁴⁰ to monitor and report programme results and inform deliverables expected from the workplans.
- *Annual resource estimates needed to achieve output results:* These should be the basis for formulating workplans in the enterprise resource planning platform.
- *Annual targets:* It is recommended that country offices include a more detailed list of main milestones, or activities or groups of activities (interventions) with annualized baselines and targets and resources for each output as a basis for programme design.

³⁸ Additional guidelines are captured in the UNFPA results-based management guidelines (see the [Country Programme Review and Approval Guidance note](#) for the relevant guidelines).

³⁹ If data availability is an issue, plans must be made to develop the required baselines and targets prior to the submission of the CPD. If data is not available, this specific indicator should not be included in the CPD. Placeholders such as “TBD” should never be included in the CPD.

⁴⁰ This is the Strategic Information System currently, or outcome of the enterprise resource planning.

Estimated Resource Needs

The head of unit must assess the total resource needs of the programme, substantiated by a systematic costing of outputs, targets and strategic interventions. This is crucial to estimate the total indicative resource amount for the programme period for integrated results-focused planning. [UNFPA's standard programme costing tool](#) can be used to scope the country programme, select indicators, set targets, and cost them at the programme outcome and output levels.⁴¹

Furthermore, it is also important to assess available resources from all sources, including considering linkages with the Cooperation Framework funding framework, against the estimated resource needs to arrive at a resource gap, which informs resource mobilization targets captured in the RRF and the [Integrated Partnership, Resource Mobilization and South-South Cooperation Plan](#).

Resource needs and gap estimation must rely on proper identification of all the types of functions and costs that are considered programme costs, as per the [Guidance Note on Cost Classification and Cost Recovery](#). Upon the most recent data, it is important to assess the overall resource estimates potentially available for the country programme from various sources, which will be grouped as regular and other resources in the RRF, including:

- Regular resources (guided by the [UNFPA Resource Allocation and Distribution System](#), Institutional Budget allocations).
- Other resources, including but not limited to:
 - Global resources for country programming from UNFPA thematic funds, such as Maternal Health, UNFPA Supplies, the Humanitarian Thematic Fund, Joint Programmes (such as FGM, EFM, etc (where relevant)).
 - Humanitarian funding,⁴² where relevant.
 - Additional resources expected to be mobilized at the country level, in line with the integrated Resource Mobilization and Partnerships Plan, including domestic resources donor governments, the private sector, multilateral partners such as international financial institutions, United Nations entities, SDG Fund, joint programmes, and other contributions.

Prioritized needs and realistic indicative planned resources must be calculated and presented for each of the programme outputs, including funding gaps. It is important to ensure that indicative resources allocated to a specific output, both regular and other, are reasonable given the importance of that output within the country programme overall context. The indicator targets should reflect what could be achieved realistically with the projected resources.

⁴¹ The programme costing tool can also help to identify funding gaps and inform the partnership and resource mobilization plan.

⁴² Central Emergency Response Fund and Emergency Funding (CERF) are only available for 6–9 months and, therefore, cannot be considered a sustainable source of funding for the whole period of a country programme.

The programme regular resource estimates for a new cycle build on the Resource Distribution System (RDS) figures for successive years of the CPD cycle, where it aligns with the strategic plan cycle⁴³ or indicative ceiling in the last year of the previous CPD cycle.⁴⁴ When estimating the resource needs, the country office must ensure each output includes sufficient funds for personnel based on the planned structure and results-based management of the programme.

It is essential to ensure that all inputs needed to deliver the programme and/or achieve results are planned and the inputs allocated to specific outputs (results) of the programme.⁴⁵ Some cost elements may include posts and associated costs (e.g. consultants),⁴⁶ operational costs such as safety and security, rent, utilities and procurements; and costs related to evaluation, data collection and research and monitoring activities, which may be considered in the programme coordination and assistance (PCA) portion of the total budget.⁴⁷

Programme coordination and assistance

PCA is the segment of a country programme that describes specific activities with direct relevance for the programme as a whole, but that cannot be attributed to a particular programmatic area.⁴⁸ This includes some ad hoc, time-bound and other administrative programme support, advocacy events (e.g. research, printing, publications, distribution, media), facilitation of UNSDCF, CPD and evaluation activities and safety and security (e.g., Security Risk Measures (SRM) and Residential Security Measures (RSM)).⁴⁹

Country programme evaluations should be resourced adequately for overall planning, monitoring, annual progress reviews and programme support that are genuinely cross-cutting.⁵⁰

Activities that fall under PCA can only be included in a UNFPA-implemented work plan. Total PCA resource requirements must be included in the RRF. The total estimated amount to be spent on PCA activities can be as much as 15 per cent of total expenditures for regular resources but must not exceed \$1.5 million cumulative throughout the life of the country programme.⁵¹ The annual PCA amount may vary from year to year. However, the cumulative PCA amount for the entire country programme approved yearly shall not exceed the above financial limits.

⁴³ See [Policy for Regular Resource Allocation and Distribution for Country Programmes](#) (2018).

⁴⁴ This is in a case where successive years of a CPD cycle are beyond the strategic plan and figures are not available.

⁴⁵ See [Guidance Note on Cost Classification and Cost Recovery](#).

⁴⁶ See [Guidance Note on Allocating Post Costs Across Funding Sources](#) (2022).

⁴⁷ Actual posts do not need to be listed in the RRF or in the CPD.

⁴⁸ It is advised to align as best as possible programme cost elements to the output, they contribute to most significantly or directly.

⁴⁹ Please use the [Security Funding Requirements sheet](#) to assist in determining safety and security costs.

⁵⁰ See [Guidance note on the Resources Allocation System \(RAS\) and Resource Distribution System \(RDS\)](#), which specifies arrangements for evaluation-related resources.

⁵¹ This rule also applies if a country programme is extended. If the \$1.5 million cumulative amount is reached prior to extension, the country office must get approval, in writing, from the Deputy Executive Director (Management).

The head of unit must ensure the PCA component does not exceed the financial limit. The regional director must play an oversight role to identify cases where country offices spend more than the maximum established limit (15 per cent of expenditures or more than \$1.5 million) on PCA. The Deputy Executive Director - Management must clear, in writing, any exception to the established thresholds, including in cases of humanitarian emergencies that may warrant an exception.

Step 3: Review, Quality Assurance, Revisions, Clearances, and Internal Approval

UNFPA country office must submit the draft CPD to the regional office for timely review and feedback, following the outlined procedures. The regional office review aims to provide a first-level substantive, political read of the document and to ensure adherence to the UNSDCF and UNFPA's strategic focus and direction, its results frameworks, and related policies and procedures.⁵²

The review should include management, programme, and technical teams of the regional office, including resource mobilization, human resources, and operations. Reviews will factor in UNFPA guidelines, frameworks and region-specific issues when assessing and providing feedback on the draft document.

The country office revises the draft CPD after receiving the review feedback from the regional office. Then, the country office submits to the regional office for clearance the final draft CPD, accompanied with other supplementary documents.⁵³ The Regional Director clears and submits the draft CPD and supplementary documents to the PRC⁵⁴ through the PRC Secretariat for quality assurance assessment/reviews.

The PRC review and approval processes and [timelines](#), including the established procedures for CPD political review, are defined in detail in [Country Programme Review and Approval Guidance Note](#). The PRC Secretariat initiates the substantive peer review and [Political Review](#) processes of the CPD and supplementary documents. Upon completion, the consolidated assessment and recommendations are provided to the PRC and respective country offices through the regional office.

The PRC Chair convenes the PRC meeting for the final substantive review and deliberation on the CPD package, building on the peer reviewers' and political review team's substantive assessment and recommendations. Upon PRC review, the country offices revise the CPD. Then, through a memo, the respective regional director submits the final draft CPD (including details on how all feedback has been addressed) to the DED-P (as PRC Chair), who approves the final draft CPD internally. The country office shall continue engagements with the national government, including securing the government endorsement.

National government endorsement

⁵² See Annex I

⁵³ See the [Country Programme Review and Approval Guidance Note](#) for the latest list of supplementary documents.

⁵⁴ See [Programme Review Committee Terms of Reference](#).

Following internal UNFPA approval of the CPD, the UNFPA head of unit submits the CPD to the national government coordinating authority for formal endorsement. The UNFPA head of unit must obtain government coordinating authority endorsement. The endorsement should ideally be in the form of a letter from the government,⁵⁵ or if that is not possible, a second-best option would be a letter from the UNFPA head of unit to the government recording its oral endorsement. In cases where the government letter of endorsement is not ready in time to meet the submission deadline, the draft CPD will not be posted at the 12-week mark before the Executive Board session. This will lead to delays in posting the draft CPD and is to be avoided wherever possible; this speaks to the need for early engagement with the government.

Stakeholder consultations

The UNFPA head of unit ensures that the CPD is primarily a consensus-based document, building on the national development plan/framework, international human rights commitments, the voluntary national commitments to the ICPD Programme of Action, the Cooperation Framework, and the strategic plan. The head of unit should also ensure that: (a) the CPD is developed in consultation with all relevant national stakeholders;⁵⁶ and (b) the Government coordinating authority provides endorsement and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is consulted (where it is not the coordinating authority) and its concurrence is secured.

UNFPA should also invite the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as appropriate, to stakeholder consultations, based on the country office's judgement. The UNFPA head of unit should work with the relevant national counterparts to keep the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' pertinent departments informed of the CPD development process and other key parts of government, including the Ministry of Finance – in cooperation with relevant headquarters business units – ensure alignment with permanent missions to the United Nations in New York.

In the interest of a smooth approval process, the UNFPA head of unit is required to attach, with the draft CPD, a [Political Checklist](#)⁵⁷ highlighting outstanding issues/concerns that the government (especially if there has been a change of government) or key donors/stakeholders might raise at the Executive Board meeting.

Step 4: Editing and Submission

As per Executive Board decision [2014/7](#), the regional office must submit the final draft CPD (internally approved and endorsed by the government coordinating agency, e.g., Ministry of Foreign Affairs) to the Executive Board Branch (EBB) in the Office of the Executive Director (OED), as per timelines in Annex II. The final draft must be accompanied by the following documents (those designated with * are mandatory per decision 2014/7) to support the [editing](#) and Executive Board review process:

⁵⁵ The letter is addressed to the UNFPA Country Representative or Head of Office and does not have to be in a specific format.

⁵⁶ These include United Nations organizations, multilateral and bilateral partners, and other relevant stakeholders, including civil society partners, marginalized and vulnerable groups, relevant national authorities, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

⁵⁷ Political Checklist revised to include a brief on consultation with donors; Ministry of Foreign Affairs buy-in; and UNSDCF alignment.

- Draft CPD (after DED-P approval) *⁵⁸
- [Costed evaluation plan](#) of the new country programme*
- Evaluation of the previous country programme cycle (when applicable) *⁵⁹
- Government endorsement letter⁶⁰
- Resident Coordinator's letter
- [Political checklist](#)
- UNSDCF, United Nations Strategic Framework or equivalent – posted on United Nations Development Coordination Office [web page](#).⁶¹

EBB edits the draft CPDs in line with the [United Nations Editorial Manual](#), posts them online no later than 12 weeks before the Executive Board session, and finalizes the translation and submission of the CPDs to the Executive Board. When posting the documents, EBB requires two supporting documents essentially: the costed evaluation plan and (if available) the evaluation of the previous country programme cycle.

These two supporting documents are posted alongside the draft CPD under review. However, the letters of government endorsement and resident coordinator's support, including draft UNSDCF posting by United Nations Development Coordination Office (DCO), provide additional assurance for posting the draft CPD for Executive Board review.

Step 5: Executive Board Review and Approval

The Executive Board review is scheduled for three weeks. Member States wishing to comment on a draft CPD do so by using the [UNFPA CPD Comment Template](#) and submitting their comments to the EBB/OED. As per established [timelines](#),⁶² EBB coordinates the commenting process with the Executive Board members.⁶³

In some cases, the comments from Executive Board members might necessitate substantive changes/revisions to the CPD that could materially impact the programme. In that case, the head of unit must inform and consult with the government coordinating authority. Depending on the nature and scope of the proposed changes, the UNFPA head of unit must enlist the support of government counterparts and those concerned with the final approval process. UNFPA should make efforts to clarify the proposed new changes to government counterparts, explain the programmatic reasons for them, address any concerns, and reflect these in the revised CPD.

⁵⁸ Draft CPD after PRC Chair approval, including changes arising from Government reviews.

⁵⁹ There is no need to submit if a country programme evaluation has not been conducted.

⁶⁰ While the government endorsement letter is not posted, it is required for the Executive Board review.

⁶¹ In response to the UNSDCF Guidance that mandates the Executive Boards to review CPDs alongside respective Cooperation Frameworks to ascertain alignment, the United Nations Development Coordination Office will post UNSDCF's on its [web page](#) to inform the Board reviews. As the UNSDCF will be available there, the country office does not need to submit it.

⁶² Annual CPD/PRC/Executive Board [timelines and schedules](#) are produced by the PRC Secretariat.

⁶³ Due to the tight deadline for revision of the draft CPD, if the government letter of endorsement is not ready quickly enough, the country office must confirm, via email, that the government has endorsed the revisions and send the letter to Policy & Strategy Division and EBB once it has been received.

Furthermore, where relevant, the head of unit should reach out to the local embassies of commenting countries, as appropriate, to explain any responses to the comments received. Any changes made to the draft CPD after it has been posted for the three-week commenting period need to be triggered by a comment made by a Member State; in other words, the draft CPD should not be changed other than to respond to comments made by Member States during the commenting period.

Upon consulting with partners and the government, the head of unit must prepare the final draft CPD (in clean and tracked versions, highlighting any revisions, as necessary, resulting from the comments from Executive Board members already included) and with the support of the regional office respond to each of the comments on the draft CPD made by Member States through the comment template.

Having secured regional director clearance, the head of unit submits through the regional office written responses and revised CPD in response to Executive Board comments within a week following the three-week review by Executive Board members. Changes or edits to the draft CPD emerging from the commenting process shall be brought to the attention of the PRC Chair by the respective regional director. The PRC Chair shall determine if additional approval is required. Otherwise, the approved documents proceed to EBB.

Once EBB secures final approval of the DED-P on the written responses to the comments received from the Executive Board, EBB finalizes the CPDs and submits the final CPDs for translation into French and Spanish. In line with the Executive Board rules of procedure, EBB must post the final English-language versions of the CPDs to the Executive Board website six weeks before the Executive Board session; the other language versions (French and Spanish only) are made available on the website and published in the United Nations Official Documents System four weeks before the session.

The final CPD version is accompanied by the two supporting documents, as outlined above; a cleared comment and response template, complete with UNFPA country and regional office responses to comments made by Member States; and the original draft CPD that was submitted for review to the Executive Board.

In accordance with [Executive Board decision 2014/7](#) and [general timelines](#) (Annex III), the Executive Board reviews and approves CPDs at a single Executive Board session. UNFPA presents the CPD for consideration at an informal session about two weeks before the formal session and final approval of the Executive Board at the session that is most appropriate in terms of government and country-level planning and priorities.⁶⁴ The Executive Board considers and approves the CPDs on a no-objection basis⁶⁵ during the CPD segment of the Executive Board session itself.

⁶⁴ This should ideally be the same session in which UNDP and UNICEF are submitting their respective CPDs, since they are part of the same United Nations country team.

⁶⁵ An informal session of the Executive Board is scheduled prior to the formal session to review the CPD in detail.

Other Forms of Country Programme Documents

- *Countries without formal CPDs:* For countries where a full-fledged country programme is not deemed necessary as per the local context,⁶⁶ the UNFPA head of unit develops and submits relevant programme documentation⁶⁷ to the regional office for quality assurance review and endorsement. Based on PRC Chair's recommendation, the Executive Director⁶⁸ approves appropriate programme documentation with a resource limit within their approval authority as delegated to them in the [UNFPA Financial Regulations and Rules](#), rule number 109.2.⁶⁹ After that, workplans are developed for implementation.
- *Multi-country or sub-regional programme documents:* In some cases, country groupings may present one combined multi-country or sub-regional programme document to the Executive Board, in the same format as individual country programmes. The programme document, in this instance, must include the overall programme rationale and contextual analysis of the represented group of countries. In contrast, the sections on results and resources must represent the aggregate of the results through the various interventions in the constituent countries. The development and approval of sub-regional programmes follow this policy and procedures for development and approval of country programme documents.

IV. Country Programme Extension

The UNFPA Executive Director has the authority to approve the first country programme extension of up to one year in duration, and the Executive Board takes note of the extension. Extensions of more than one year in duration, and any subsequent extension of any duration, must be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.⁷⁰

An omnibus report captures all extensions in one document, with one table (for information) showing the first-time extensions approved by the Executive Director, and a second table showing the extensions submitted for Executive Board approval.

A country programme can be extended for up to two years at a time⁷¹ for one or more of the following reasons:

⁶⁶ See UNFPA Executive Committee discussion paper [Formalizing CPD Initializing and Transitioning Processes](#) (2018).

⁶⁷ A CPD format but not intended for Executive Board approval. The front page has no United Nations logo.

⁶⁸ The PRC Chair (DED-P) may also grant approval on behalf of the Executive Director.

⁶⁹ Programmes that exceed the Executive Director's approval authority must be submitted to the Executive Board.

⁷⁰ [UNFPA Financial Regulations and Rules](#), Rule 109.2, g).

⁷¹ A country programme can be extended more than once in exceptional circumstances. However, the total number of extensions depends on the recommendation of the host government and United Nations country team, subject to Executive Board approval.

- The United Nations country team has decided to extend the current UNSDCF to allow the new country programme to synchronize with the cycles of the national development plans/strategies/frameworks and/or with the programming cycles of other United Nations system agencies operating in the country.⁷²
- Significant changes in national development priorities (e.g., due to a change of government, elections, development of new policies) are anticipated to affect the content or timing of the next UNSDCF/country programme.
- The formulation of the next country programme is likely to be delayed due to an emergency or related situation (e.g., internal conflict, humanitarian crisis, pandemic) affecting the day-to-day operations of the country.

Unless under exceptional circumstances,⁷³ which need to be documented, the extension must include the indicative additional resources to be allocated to the programme if any. A revised RRF is required when there are additional resources or otherwise needed. The regular resources approved will depend on the overall availability of resources to the organization.

The process for country programme extensions follows the country programme approval process, outlined in section 4, with the use of the [Format for Country Programme Extensions – Annexes II and III](#). The guidelines for country programme extension quality assurance process and requirements are detailed in the [Country Programme Review and Approval Guidance Note](#).

Following the approval of a country programme extension, a country office must [amend](#) all relevant implementing partner agreements, as they are only valid for the duration of the initial country programme. The country office should also adjust the timeline for the country programme evaluation, when applicable, to ensure the assessment covers the extension period.

⁷² The UNSDCF can also be extended by the United Nations country team because of anticipated delays in negotiations with the government.

⁷³ See [Guidance on United Nations country-level strategic planning for development in exceptional circumstances](#).

ANNEX I: Roles and Responsibilities

The table below provides the roles and responsibilities of various UNFPA units/persons for the critical steps in CPD development and approval procedures.

STEPS	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON/UNIT	DELIVERABLE
1. Analytical evidence gathering	Develop analytical evidence for next country programme, including engaging CCA/Cooperation Framework processes	Head of unit	Analytical evidence base informing country programme strategic direction
	Initial consultations with national governments and partners	Head of unit	Buy-in on the proposed priorities and possibly of endorsement upon CPD development
2. Develop the draft CPD	Initiate strategic dialogue process	Regional director/head of unit	Strategic dialogue white paper and outcome documents, capturing agreed strategic priorities for the next programme cycle
	Develop country programme theory of change, building on UNSDCF strategic priorities and strategic plan theory of change	Head of unit	Country programme theory of change developed

	Conduct programme costing exercise to determine estimated resource needs, available resources and gaps and set resource mobilization targets, including security funding needs ⁷⁴ in accordance with Security Risk Measures/Residential Security Measures approved documents	Head of unit with support of regional office and relevant headquarter units	Fully costed programme with estimated resource gaps feeding into resource mobilization plan; security funding reviewed and cleared by the Regional Security Adviser
	Conduct human resource capacity assessment	Head of unit with support of regional office and relevant headquarters units	Proposed human resource structure and associated costs Proposed HR initiatives to ensure staff continue to have the capacity to delivery throughout the CP duration
	Develop draft CPD in consultation with the regional office	Head of unit	Draft CPD and supplementary documents
	Submit draft CPD (and supplementary documents) to the regional office for review	Head of unit	Draft CPD reviewed and cleared by the head of unit

⁷⁴ Please use the security funding needs form to assist you in determining safety and security costs. This can be found in the tools and guidance notes section on the [Safety and Security page](#) of the Policy and Procedures Manual.

3. Review, quality assurance, revisions, clearances, and internal approval	Review draft CPD and provide feedback to country office	Regional office (including regional director, deputy regional director, regional M&E adviser, regional resource mobilization adviser, programme and technical teams, and international operations manager of regional office/sub-regional office)	Consolidated review feedback and comments on draft CPD provided to the country office
	Revise the draft CPD based on regional office feedback	Head of unit (with support of country office team)	Revised CPD draft for processing and clearance
	Review and clearance of CPD and supplementary documents	Regional director	Clearance of draft CPD package by the Regional Director and submission to the PRC
	Peer review and Political Review exercises initiated	PRC secretariat (including selected peer reviewers and political review team)	Peer review recommendations to PRC and regional/country office
	PRC session conducted	DED-P (a.k.a. PRC Chair) with the support of the secretariat and PRC members	CPD reviewed based on comments provided by PRC
	Incorporate and/or address PRC comments and develop final draft CPD	Head of unit	CPD final draft incorporating PRC review comments
	Provide internal approval to final draft CPD	DED-P (a.k.a. PRC Chair)	Final draft CPD approved to proceed to Executive Board
	Obtain national government endorsement	Head of unit	Endorsement by national government

4. Editing and submission	Submit internally approved final draft CPD, as well as Government endorsement and Resident Coordinator letters, Political Checklist and two supplementary documents (costed evaluation plan and country programme evaluation, if applicable) to the EBB/OED for editing and processing, copied to the PRC Secretariat	Regional director	Final draft CPD endorsed by national government
	Edit the final draft CPD	Executive Board Branch (EBB)	Edited draft CPD ready for review and comments by Executive Board
	Post CPD online for three-week review of edited draft CPD by Executive Board members (12 weeks ahead of the session) (see step 5)	Executive Board Branch (EBB)	Comments from Executive Board
5. Review and approval by the Executive Board	Comment on draft CPD during three-week preview (12 weeks before the session)	Executive Board	Executive Board comments on the draft CPD are communicated by EBB to the country office through the regional office
	Coordinate process of response to Board comments	Policy and Strategy Division (PSD) with country, regional and headquarters counterparts	Draft response to Executive Board comments revised by OED and shared with DED-P for clearance

	Consider comments by the Board	Head of unit discusses with government comments from the Executive Board/Member States, depending on the nature of comments received.	Final CPD and DED-P cleared response to Executive Board comments submitted to EBB
	Submit CPD for editorial review of the changes and posting	Head of unit and regional director/ Executive Board Branch (EBB)	Final CPD and UNFPA response to Executive Board comments ready for posting alongside other documentation
	Submit the CPD for translation	Executive Board Branch (EBB)	Final CPD submitted for processing and translation
	Post CPD to the Executive Board website	Executive Board Branch (EBB)	Final CPD and supporting documents posted for Executive Board approval six weeks before the session
	Regional office/PSD reach out to permanent mission	Regional director/PSD	Regional Director / PSD outreach to the Permanent Representatives in support of the CPD approval at the Executive Board session
	Hold informal consultation with Board members on CPD (two to three weeks before session)	PSD director, regional director (or deputy regional director), Executive Board Branch (EBB) and PSD	Informal consultation with Executive Board members on CPDs to be presented at the Board session
	Present the CPD at Board session	DED-P, Regional director (with participation and/or support of head of unit), EBB and PSD	Presentation of CPD at the Board session
Approval	Approve CPD	Executive Board	Final approved CPD

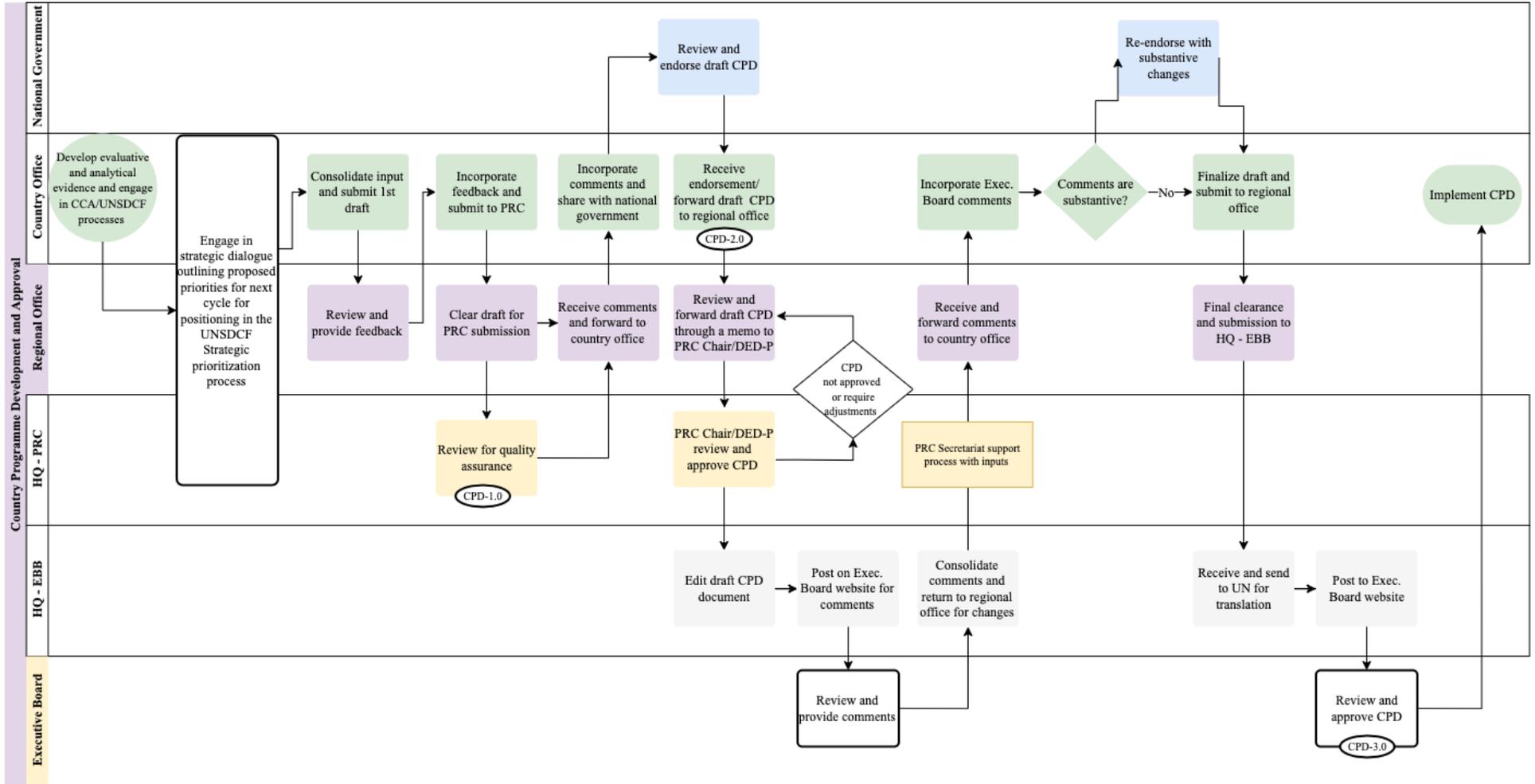
ANNEX II: Key Milestones and Timelines for CPD Development and Approval

Timelines for submission and approval of country programmes beginning January of Year N

Stages	Tentative number of weeks prior to the Executive Board session <i>[please refer to specific timelines for each session]</i>	Key milestones
<i>Programme development</i>	Analytical evidence gathering	Analytical evidence developed. Engagement in CCA/UNSDCF processes, strategic dialogue process, and consultation with the government and partners. Programme theory of change developed and CPD developed
	24–21 weeks	Draft CPD submitted for review to regional offices
		Review and consolidated comments provided to country offices by regional offices
		Revised draft CPD submitted to regional offices for final quality assurance review before forwarding to PRC Secretariat
<i>Quality assurance and internal approval process</i>	20 weeks	Submission of draft CPD by the regional office to the PRC through the PRC Secretariat for substantive and political peer review
	19 weeks	PRC meets and provides final feedback to the country office through the regional office
	18 weeks	Country office incorporates the PRC comments, finalizes the document, and sends to regional office
<i>Executive Board process</i>	17 weeks	Regional office submits draft CPD to EBB/OED for editing. EBB/OED edits all CPDs during the five weeks, preparing and posting the edited draft CPD in English for review and comments by the Executive Board. Edited CPDs are shared with the RO for feedback prior to the review.
	12 weeks	Executive Board members review edited draft CPD for three weeks and provide comments, if any. EBB, with the support of PSD, forwards all comments received to the regional/country office for their written response.

	9 weeks	UNFPA regional/country office considers comments from Board members. The Regional Director clears the responses and submits them to EBB/OED for OED review and DED-P clearance. These are then posted alongside the final CPD on the UNFPA Executive Board website six weeks before the session
<i>United Nations process</i>	8 weeks	EBB/OED submits the final CPDs for processing and translation
	6 weeks	EBB/OED posts the final CPDs in English six weeks before the session
	4 weeks	EBB/OED posts the translated CPDs four weeks before the session
	2–3 weeks	Informal consultation with Executive Board members on the final CPD (two to three weeks before the session)
	During Executive Board session	Executive Board discusses and approves final CPD on a no-objection basis

ANNEX III: Process Overview Flow Chart



ANNEX IV: Risk Control Matrix

The risk control matrix can be found in the following Google drive:
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzrC9ALCReCvNjNIVzk1MS13R1k>