



EVALUATION SYNTHESIS REPORT

RAPID EVALUATION SYNTHESIS OF UN WOMEN'S COORDINATION MANDATE



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SYNTHESIS REPORT

**UN Women Independent Evaluation,
Audit and Investigation Services**

Independent Evaluation Service

New York, 2026



EVALUATION SYNTHESIS TEAM:

Kay Lau, Evaluation Specialist

Ross Tanner, Evaluation Specialist

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT:

UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS)

Inga Kaplan, Chief, UN Women Independent Evaluation Service (IES)

Lisa Sutton, Director, UN Women Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services (IEAIS)

Copy-editing: **Catherine Simes**

Design and layout: **Yamrote A. Haileselassie**

Cover Photo: UN Women/Ashutosh Negi

ACRONYMS

CCA	Common Country Analysis
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GEAP	Gender Equality Acceleration Plan
GTG	Gender Theme Group
IES	Independent Evaluation Service
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNCT SWAP	United Nations Country Team System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality
UN SWAP	United Nations System Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UN80	United Nations 80 Initiative

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose and scope

This rapid evaluation synthesis examines recent evaluative evidence on UN Women's coordination mandate for the UN system, which was articulated as a distinct systemic outcome under UN Women's 2022–2025 Strategic Plan and spans global, regional and country-level functions. Drawing on 27 Independent Evaluation Service (IES) led evaluations published between 2024 and 2026, the synthesis assesses how UN Women's coordination efforts have contributed to UN systemwide coherence, accountability and collective action for gender equality across global, regional and country-level architecture, including UN inter-agency

mechanisms, regional coordination platforms and UN Country Teams (UNCTs). The analysis is anchored in UN Women's Coordination Mandate Theory of Change and situated within the context of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and ongoing discussions on UN system reform. As a rapid synthesis drawing on a defined set of recent IES evaluations, this report provides a partial view of UN Women's coordination mandate and should be understood as highlighting selected evaluative patterns rather than capturing the full range of coordination work across global, regional and country levels.

EVALUATIONS INCLUDED IN THE SYNTHESIS

9 CORPORATE EVALUATIONS

Thematic areas: Women's Political Participation | Social Norms Change | Sustainable Finance | Violence Against Women Prevention and Response | Women's Participation in Peace Processes | UN System Coordination | Intergovernmental Processes | Gender Equality Accelerators | Performance Against the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan



5 REGIONAL EVALUATIONS

Regional Strategic Note

Evaluations: Americas and the Caribbean, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, East and Southern Africa, and East and Central Europe.



10 COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATIONS

Iraq, South Africa Multi-Country Office, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liberia, Timor-Leste, Rwanda, Niger, Mali, Burundi



3 JOINT PROJECT EVALUATIONS

UN Women African Union Commission Memorandum of Understanding Evaluation, Joint programme evaluation in Colombia and in Kyrgyzstan



List of evaluations in Annex 3

What the evidence showed

Inter-agency coordination platforms are most effective in advancing gender equality as a collective UN responsibility when they are backed by senior leadership, adequately resourced and linked to UN system decisionmaking processes.

Interagency coordination platforms, particularly Gender Theme Groups (GTGs) at the country level, regional issuebased coalitions and Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Groups contributed most where they had clear mandates, regular followup, senior management support and engagement, and links to UNCT planning, accountability and resourcetracking processes. Where these enabling conditions were absent, the presence of formal coordination structures alone did not translate into results.

Accountability frameworks are most effective when embedded in core planning, management and resourcing systems.

UNCTlevel accountability tools, especially the UNCT System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality (UNCTSWAP), had the greatest value when used to inform planning/programming cycles and decision-making, rather than being treated primarily as compliance or reporting exercises. UN Women's coordination role strengthened accountability where it supported UNCTs to translate UNCT-SWAP Scorecard findings into operational change. Accountability frameworks were less effective where ownership of the tool and follow-through by senior leadership were weak, where there was limited familiarity with the tool, or frameworks were insufficiently connected to decision-making processes.

The Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) represents a promising approach to reinforce coordination across the UN system and existing accountability frameworks on gender equality but it remains new and underleveraged in practice.

Given that GEAP was only introduced in 2024, evaluative evidence on its implementation remains limited. However, findings suggest that the initiative is beginning to shape expectations around leadership accountability and collective action on gender equality. At the country level, GEAP is more often cited as a rationale for stronger coordination than a realized achievement. Evaluations consistently point to the need for clearer practical guidance, stronger socialization and closer alignment with existing coordination, planning and accountability processes if GEAP is to translate into tangible results.

Coordination to advance UN Women's normative work adds value by strengthening coherent UN positioning and translating global norms into countrylevel action.

UN Women's coordination role was most influential (a) where it enabled the UN system to adopt coherent, credible and contextappropriate positions on global and regional gender equality norms, particularly in politically sensitive or contested environments; and (b) in convening the UN system around priority thematic areas. Regional coordination played an important role by contextualizing global and regional norms, and helping to integrate norms from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW); the Beijing Platform for Action; Women, Peace and Security resolutions; Women and Girls Free From Violence frameworks; Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions and other frameworks into Common Country Analyses (CCAs) and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCFs). Regional coordination contributed by interpreting these frameworks and contextualizing them for diverse political and institutional environments.

Coordination to support UN Women's operational mandate is most effective when gender equality is institutionalized in core UN instruments and joint work is actively coordinated throughout implementation.

Coordination added value where it integrated gender analysis, data and technical tools into CCAs, UNSDCF, humanitarian plans and joint programmes, shaping collective UN priorities and strengthening gender-responsive indicators and resource tracking. Joint programming and joint plans enhanced coherence and accountability where coordination clarified roles, aligned agencies around shared gender results and was sustained beyond programme design. However, evaluations showed that joint work does not automatically generate coherence and requires continuous coordination to avoid siloed programme delivery and to minimize administrative burdens. Gender Equality Accelerators and related programmatic frameworks show promise in clarifying UN Women's coordination value proposition across thematic and programming areas, but the accelerators require greater socialization and clearer guidance to support their use and translation into UNCT processes and Resident Coordinator engagement.

Uneven and under-resourced coordination capacity emerged as a key constraint on UN Women's ability to consistently fulfil its system-wide coordination mandate.

UN Women's ability to deliver on its UN system coordination mandate is fundamentally shaped by the availability, continuity and resourcing of dedicated coordination capacity. Given the challenges of project resource mobilization for coordination functions, evaluations highlighted that coordination was most often funded by core or Strategic Note funding while Country Offices heavily reliant on non-core struggled to adequately fund coordination roles. Coordination was strongest where there was dedicated capacity, clear roles, sustained follow-up and predictable financing, and weaker where it depended on

overstretched staffing or short-term funding. More recent evidence also points to deliberate efforts to strengthen coordination capacity through regional coordination specialist arrangements. Regional coordination support has become a more intentional part of UN Women's delivery model, especially where country-level presence is limited. However, this has not yet fully closed the gap between UNCT expectations and available capacity.

Considerations for UN system reform:

As discussions on UN system reform advance, these findings highlight the importance of safeguarding the mechanisms, accountability frameworks and coordination capacity that have enabled progress on gender equality and to avoid their dilution under any reforms. Taken together, the findings suggest that coherence is most likely to be strengthened when coordination efforts are purposeful and well-integrated. Gender coordination appears most effective when it is strategically embedded within evolving system architectures, enjoys strong institutional buy-in and is closely linked to leadership decision-making and country-level processes. Accountability for gender equality is robust when accountability mechanisms are integrated into mainstream planning and management and resource-tracking systems, rather than operating as parallel compliance measures. Rising expectations for leadership accountability and collective delivery for gender equality, including initiatives such as GEAP, also underscore the importance of UN Women sustaining predictable coordination capacity and continued regional back-stopping as country-level presences become more differentiated.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE

This rapid evaluation synthesis examines recent evaluation evidence on UN Women's coordination role across national, regional and global levels, with a focus on how this role has contributed to accountability and collective action for gender equality within the UN system. The synthesis aims to provide a concise, evidence-based overview of coordination practices, highlighting areas where coordination has been effective as well as areas where performance has been uneven or constrained. The analysis is grounded in the UN Women Coordination Mandate Theory of Change finalized in 2025 and is situated within the context of UN Women's Strategic Plan 2026–2029 and broader UN development system reform. Using the Coordination Mandate Theory of Change as its primary analytical framework, and drawing on relevant UN80 documentation as contextual background, the synthesis assesses how coordination arrangements are functioning in practice across UN Women's operational, normative and coordination mandates, and identifies implications for ongoing discussions on system coherence, accountability and delivery.

The synthesis drew on 27 IES-led evaluations published between January 2024 and March 2026 and relevant UN system reports and evaluations.¹ UN Women evaluations included Country Portfolio Evaluations, Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluations and Corporate Evaluations.

There are some limitations to this evaluation synthesis that should be considered when interpreting the results. First, this synthesis draws primarily on a sample of existing evaluation evidence, which will not capture the full scope of UN Women's coordination work. Second, reviewed evaluations were conducted without the benefit of the recent Coordination Theory of Change, which will now help

inform and enhance future evaluations of coordination work. Finally, given the evidence base, global level coordination mechanisms were not covered as strongly as country and regional mechanisms. Similarly, gender parity goal and internal staffing policies were not directly examined in the evidence base, however, they are important dimensions of UN system reform.

The full concept note can be found in Annex 1, the methodology in Annex 2 and the list of included evaluations in Annex 3.

1.2 GUIDING QUESTIONS

The synthesis was guided by several questions. Across all questions, the synthesis attempted to understand what has worked well, what has not worked well and under what conditions in terms of strengthening UN system coherence and accountability for gender equality.

SYNTHESIS QUESTIONS

- 1 How has UN Women's coordination leadership within UNCTs – complemented by the Entity's two other mandates – contributed to strengthening results and enhancing accountability for gender equality?
- 2 What is the added value of UN Women's regional and global coordination roles in strengthening system-wide coherence, accountability and support to UNCTs on gender equality and women's empowerment?
- 3 To what extent has UN Women's internal capacity for UN system coordination been sufficient to deliver on its mandate?

2. RESULTS

This section presents findings from the rapid evaluation synthesis, organized in line with the Coordination Mandate Theory of Change. Results are structured across UN Women's three mandate areas – coordination, normative and operational – alongside a fourth area examining capacity for coordination.

Together, the first three sections address how UN Women's coordination leadership, complemented by its normative and operational mandates, has contributed to UN system coherence, accountability and results for gender equality (these address the first two guiding questions), while the fourth section examines the extent to which internal capacity has enabled or constrained delivery of this mandate (this addresses the third guiding question). The results are presented as a series of overarching insights, each supported by more specific findings with illustrative evidence and examples from evaluations.

2.1 COORDINATION MANDATE – LEAD COORDINATION AND COHERENCE WITHIN THE UN SYSTEM (ACCOUNTABILITY AND RESOURCES)

UN Women leads and strengthens coordination and coherence across the UN system to ensure collective accountability for gender equality results. Through standard setting translated into system-wide frameworks and mechanisms (including inter-agency coordination platforms at global, regional and country level, such as the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, regional collaborative platforms, issue-based coalitions and GTGs, and accountability mechanisms such as UN-SWAP and UNCT-SWAP, further reinforced by GEAP). UN Women supports UNCTs and UN-system entities to integrate gender equality across planning, implementation and reporting processes. This mandate focuses on strengthening accountability; mobilizing and tracking resources for gender equality; and ensuring that gender commitments translate into measurable system-wide results.

Coordination platforms

INSIGHT 1:

Inter-agency coordination bodies, when supported by leadership and given adequate capacity, have proven to be a key mechanism through which UN Women has extended its influence and expertise on gender equality, helping to position gender equality as a collective UN responsibility while advancing gender priorities across diverse coordination and thematic groups.

Country, regional and global-level coordination platforms play a central role in UN Women's coordination efforts to mainstream gender equality across the UN system. GTGs and Gender in Humanitarian Action mechanisms play pivotal roles within UNCTs and Humanitarian Country Teams, providing strategic support and advice to mainstream gender into the UN's development, humanitarian and peacebuilding actions at the country level. GTGs have supported UNSDCF development; facilitated consensus building on implementation of national gender equality priorities; supported reporting (such as UNCT-SWAP); provided gender-responsive data; and supported joint programming. Across regions, UN Women participates in regional collaborative platforms leading gender equality integration and participates in or leads thematic regional working groups and issuebased coalitions on gender equality. An issue-based coalition on gender equality typically lies at the heart of regional coordination on gender across the UN regional system.²

This is often complemented with Gender in Humanitarian Action and other related groups, such as jobs and social protection, justice and equality, populations left behind, statistics and others.³ At the global level, UN Women leads or supports a diverse set of coordination platforms; for example, the Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality, chaired by UN Women, is central to the UN system's coordination efforts for gender equality. Although there is limited evaluation evidence, one evaluation highlighted the network's role in advancing specific themes such as Women and Girls Free From Violence.⁴

The evidence suggests that formal coordination structures such as GTGs are an important foundation, but not sufficient on their own. Their effectiveness depends on whether they have senior management buy-in, clear terms of reference and workplans, regular meetings and a direct link to wider UNCT planning and accountability processes.

Evaluations provided evidence where satisfying these conditions led to tangible results. For example, in Liberia, clear terms of reference, annual workplans and budgets, regular meetings and learning spaces supported sustained alignment and accountability.⁵ In Rwanda, the GTG became more effective once there was a clearer action plan and a more defined role, although stakeholders still wanted stronger senior representation and more strategic follow-up.⁶ Evidence from Lesotho and Botswana suggests that where no functional GTG or equivalent mechanism existed, gender coordination quickly lost traction. By contrast, the Timor-Leste evaluation found the GTG was underused and not leveraged beyond joint work planning and scorecard completion. Stakeholders called for more strategic prioritization and more engagement from senior management. The evaluation in Bosnia and Herzegovina found strong cooperation between the Resident Coordinator and GTG, but traction reduced when meetings did not lead to high-level decisions, which weakened incentives for senior management participation. The Burundi evaluation found that an action plan alone was not sufficient when focal-point turnover and limited internal resources weakened continuity.⁷

Regional coordination bodies are viewed as more effective when there is clarity on UN Women's role and strong capacity for continuous and active engagement; however, the complexities of regional coordination pose a barrier.⁸ Evaluations suggest that regional coordination bodies were effective when UN Women's role was clear; capacity was sufficient for continuous engagement; and the mechanism had strong leadership, a clear thematic focus and tangible outputs such as policy advocacy, webinars, guidance notes, training and coordinated technical support.⁹ For example, a thematic lead position was vacant for an extended period in one region, which diminished the utility of the thematic coordination body;¹⁰ while strong capacity and focus led to tangible results. In the Arab States region, a technical working group established by the Regional Office in collaboration with ILO and UNESCWA convened the region's first conference on the care economy and social protection.¹¹ In Europe and Central Asia, all UNCTs in the region benefitted from at least one service from the Issue-Based Coalition on Gender Equality, including technical support for integrating gender equality into UNSDCF and CCAs.¹²

One evaluation highlighted the inherent complexity of UN system coordination at the regional level, including navigating resource-constrained environments.¹³ Another report highlighted the volume of regional coordination platforms, identifying at least 20 coordination groups.¹⁴ Despite these challenges, reports note that there is generally strong interest in fostering more cohesive UN-wide initiatives and messaging on gender equality.¹⁵

In humanitarian settings, Gender in Humanitarian Action leadership also demonstrates how UN Women can add value. In Timor-Leste, UN Women contributed to embedding gender in preparedness and risk reduction processes and co-chaired the Gender and Protection Sector to strengthen standards on gender-based violence prevention and response in humanitarian action.¹⁶ In Somalia, UN Women co-chairs the Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group, training civil society organizations on gender-responsive humanitarian interventions.¹⁷

In the Asia and Pacific region, stakeholders found the regional Gender in Humanitarian Action Working Group to be an effective coordination mechanism that facilitated knowledge exchange; effectively brought in voices from women-led civil society organizations; facilitated dialogue between country-level working groups and GTGs; and supported gender mainstreaming in other UN regional working groups.¹⁸

Evaluations also demonstrated UN Women's ability to coordinate beyond the UN system, linking UN processes with the wider gender equality ecosystem and bringing together a diverse range of actors including Member States, civil society, women's organizations, intergovernmental bodies, multilateral bodies such as development banks, academic and research institutions, and the private sector. The evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women noted that UN Women convenes both UN and non-UN entities for awareness-raising, advocacy, knowledge-sharing and, in some cases, programme implementation.¹⁹ The evaluation of UN Women's Work in Sustainable Finance similarly pointed to the Entity's role in convening and bridging across public and private-sector actors, and identified opportunities to engage more strategically with ministries of finance, public development banks, financial institutions, international financial institutions and multilateral development banks.²⁰ In Asia and the Pacific, the regional evaluation found that this comparative advantage enables UN Women to lead UN-wide responses to gender equality challenges.²¹

Accountability frameworks

This section focuses primarily on UNCT-level accountability frameworks, notably the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard, which featured most prominently in the evaluation evidence reviewed. In contrast, there was limited evaluative coverage of UN-SWAP limiting the synthesis' ability to assess how effectively systemwide accountability

at headquarters level translated into change at regional and country levels. Related mechanisms that link more directly to planning and implementation, namely CCAs and the Gender Equality Marker, are discussed under Section 2.3 on UN Women's operational mandate.

INSIGHT 2:

UN Women drives accountability for gender equality within the UN system, not just through facilitating reporting against agreed standards, but by leading agencies and UNCTs to translate these standards into operational change.

The added value of UNCT-SWAP was greatest when it was used not just as a reporting and compliance exercise, but as a practical mechanism to shape planning, indicators, resource tracking and follow-up. Most Country Portfolio Evaluations noted that UN Women played a key role in providing coordination support to strengthen reporting on UN and UNCT-SWAP; and, in many cases, supported implementation of the action plan and integration of gender consideration across UNCT planning and programming. Evaluations suggest that accountability for gender equality was strongest when UNCTSWAP tools were embedded across the planning and programming cycle rather than applied as periodic assessments. In Iraq, UNCT-SWAP recommendations were reflected in the UNSDCF, with gender equality embedded as a core priority and supported by gender outcome indicators.²² In Rwanda, UN Women helped align UNCT work with the scorecard; embed gender in annual reporting and the CCA/CF; strengthen SWAP reporting with the Resident Coordinator's Office; and led Gender Equality Marker reviews in joint programming.²³ In East and Southern Africa, the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecards were seen as key drivers of institutional change by tracking progress, enhancing accountability and informing leadership engagement.²⁴

Accountability frameworks alone cannot drive institutional change, and several evaluations show the limits of these frameworks when they lack ownership and the will to translate them into action. As with coordination bodies, leadership engagement, support and ownership were critical factors in using UNCT-SWAP to drive the institutionalization of gender equality and implementation of the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard. Where this was lacking, the effectiveness of accountability frameworks suffered. For example, in Timor-Leste, some stakeholders saw the scorecard as a “tick-box” exercise, rather than using it strategically to drive change.²⁵ In Lesotho, the South Africa Multi-Country Office Portfolio Evaluation found no effective UN-wide mechanism to coordinate gender equality programming and no analysis of gender-marker data to inform decisions. While the 2021 Gender Scorecard had produced an action plan, implementation had not commenced by the time of the evaluation.²⁶ In Mali, UN stakeholders reported limited familiarity with the scorecard.²⁷ In Rwanda, other UN agencies noted that SWAP results remained heavily focused on UN Women Rwanda results, recommending that other agencies need to be supported to strengthen their gender reporting.²⁸

UN Women’s global and regional coordination work strengthened country-level capacity to implement key accountability frameworks such as UNCT-SWAP. Regional Offices provided guidance on UNCT-SWAP requirements, facilitated reporting, translated documents, built capacity on use of the Gender Equality Marker and provided quality assurance on their application and reporting, drawing on corporate guidance and support from the UN Women Global Office.²⁹ For example, a regional evaluation in East and Southern Africa found that the Regional Office had strengthened UNCT accountability for gender through operationalization of UNCT accountability frameworks, including UNCT-SWAP, the Gender Equality Marker, gender parity targets and dashboards, and through technical and capacity development support. The Regional Office’s support contributed to a significant increase in the number of countries submitting UNCT-SWAP reports and action plans from 11 in 2021 to 20 in 2024 (of 24 countries).³⁰

The Gender Equality Acceleration Plan

INSIGHT 3:

The Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) has the potential to serve as a strong framework to accelerate gender equality but is currently new and under-leveraged, especially at country level where more support and practical implementation tools are needed.

Although evidence on implementation is still limited given its introduction at the end of 2024, GEAP points towards a reinforcement of UN coordination on gender equality, linking it more explicitly to existing incentives, standards and institutional follow-through. In Liberia, UN Women’s support to the Resident Coordinator on GEAP implementation was acknowledged by stakeholders, although the evaluation also noted that the plan needed additional socialization.³¹ In Rwanda, GEAP was cited more as a rationale for stronger UN coordination than as an achievement already realized, with partners still expecting a stronger coordinating role from UN Women.³² Similarly, regional evaluations state that GEAP has the potential to promote joint work and strengthen alignment and coherence among agencies on gender equality. However, several evaluations reported that limited corporate and regional support to countries had constrained this potential. For example, in East and Southern Africa, Country Offices requested more practical tools and implementation support, including on how GEAP is to be implemented and the ways in which it aligns with existing frameworks. In Asia and the Pacific, the regional evaluation notes that roll-out of GEAP will be a major focus of the Regional Office’s work in the future, requiring significant investment of personnel time.³³

2.2 NORMATIVE MANDATE – PROMOTE AND COORDINATE EFFORTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, IN LINE WITH GLOBAL NORMS AND STANDARDS

UN Women promotes and coordinates UN system support for global and regional norms and standards on women's rights, including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the Beijing Platform for Action; CEDAW; Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions; the Women, Peace and Security agenda; and many others. Acting as a normative and technical leader as well as a coordinator, UN Women supports Member States and UN entities in translating international commitments into national policies, legislation and accountability mechanisms. This mandate emphasizes coherence between normative frameworks and country-level programme implementation; strengthened monitoring and reporting; and inclusive engagement with civil society and women's rights organizations to uphold normative commitments.

INSIGHT 4:

UN Women's coordination role adds value by translating and embedding global and regional gender norms and standards into country-level processes, frameworks and programming.

UN Women's coordination leadership was most influential when it enabled the UN system to adopt coherent and credible positions on gender norms and standards, particularly in politically sensitive or contested environments. This enabled UNCTs to translate international and regional norms into more coherent advocacy and policy engagement. For example, in Timor-Leste UN Women's leadership of the GTG, and its support to the Universal Periodic Review and CEDAW-related processes received positive feedback from the UNCT.³⁴ Iraq shows the importance of this role in a more contested setting: after backlash against the term "gender" in 2023, UN Women led UN positioning on gender terminology. UN Women also coordinated on amendments to the Personal Status Law.³⁵ Somalia and Rwanda point to the same area of added value, but also to

gaps where UN Women's efforts were not fully realized. In both cases, stakeholders wanted stronger, more coordinated UN advocacy and messaging on sensitive issues.³⁶

UN Women's coordination leadership embedded global and regional gender norms within UN planning processes and frameworks. Regional coordination played a strong intermediary role, helping to bridge the divide between global and regional-level commitments to country-level actions by the UN system. Translation of global and regional norms to the country level is not automatic, it required concerted effort to influence national laws, policies and institutions. Regional Offices elevated gender equality and supported the integration of norms from CEDAW; the Beijing Platform for Action; Women, Peace and Security resolutions, Women and Girls Free From Violence frameworks; Commission on the Status of Women agreed conclusions and other frameworks into CCAs and UNSDCFs. Regional coordination contributed by interpreting these frameworks and contextualizing them for diverse political and institutional environments.³⁷



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

2.3 OPERATIONAL MANDATE – ADVANCE WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND OPPORTUNITIES ACROSS THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

UN Women advances women’s rights and opportunities across the Sustainable Development Goals and humanitarian settings by coordinating gender-responsive programming and joint action across the UN system. Through its leadership and the integration of gender equality in CCAs, UNSDCF and humanitarian plans, joint programming and thematic convening, UN Women supports the UN system to deliver results at scale. This mandate bridges coordination and delivery, ensuring that collective UN action responds effectively to the needs and priorities of women and girls across development, humanitarian and peacebuilding contexts.

Strategic planning, implementation instruments and thematic coordination

INSIGHT 5:

UN Women’s coordination mandate adds value by (a) institutionalizing gender equality within the UN system’s core strategic planning and implementation instruments; and (b) convening the UN system around shared thematic priorities, thereby shaping what the UN collectively prioritizes, plans, resources and delivers at the country level.

UN Women influenced work across the UN system at country level by integrating gender equality into core UN planning and implementation instruments, specifically CCAs and UNSDCFs.

UN Women’s strength was in bringing together gender analysis, data, technical tools and programming experience into CCAs, UNSDCFs, workplans, Gender Markers and SWAP follow-up. As discussed above, UN Women also integrated global and regional norms into these key processes. In Iraq,

UN Women drew on the UN-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard to shape the CCA and UNSDCF, including the Anti-Domestic Violence Law and Women, Peace and Security agenda; and supported embedding gender equality as a core UNSDCF priority with gender outcome indicators.³⁸ In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the GTG/PMT/SWAP process improved the gender-responsiveness of indicators (over 50 per cent in the new workplan) and joint programmes. While in Liberia, structured GTG-level workplans and budgets aligned with UNCT priorities; supported integration of gender equality in the CCA and UNSDCF; and improved the tracking of gender-related expenditure.³⁹ Similarly, in Niger, UN Women-led training on “Gender in the Coordination Framework” and the Entity’s gender leadership contributed to the inclusion of gender needs across all UNSDCF outcomes.⁴⁰ The South Africa Multi-Country Office produced gender equality profiles in all five countries under its purview, which supported national planning and CCA and UNSDCF development.⁴¹

UN Women’s coordination role strengthened implementation when tools such as the Gender Equality Marker were used to inform programming and resourcing decisions, rather than treated as compliance or reporting mechanisms.

In Rwanda, UN Women supported Gender Equality Marker reviews in joint programmes and GTG-led training on the Gender Equality Marker and UN INFO, which helped strengthen resource tracking and make gender more visible in joint planning.⁴² In humanitarian programming, the Iraq Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation notes that global tools such as the Gender with Age Marker helped mainstream gender because they created a more collaborative and accountable approach in project approval processes.⁴³ However, some evaluations highlighted examples, such as in Lesotho, where the Gender Equality Marker was reported against but not analysed to inform decisions and programming.⁴⁴

Regional Offices bolstered country-level capacity to ensure strong gender mainstreaming in key processes such as CCAs and UNSDCF.

Regional Offices supported CCA and UNSDCF processes through technical advice and production, and sharing regional studies and tools. This support was reinforced by more recent Entity investments in regional specialist capacity, including six regional coordination specialist positions.⁴⁵ In several countries, such support helped position gender equality as a core pillar of the UNSDCF, rather than only as a crosscutting issue. Knowledge and data products, such as regional gender profiles, dashboards, thematic briefs and joint analyses, were highlighted as being particularly useful for informing country-level processes by aligning advocacy and programming priorities and providing UNCTs with a common evidence base.⁴⁶

UN Women's coordination role also brought UN entities together around specific thematic priorities, supporting unified advocacy and operational efforts.

For example, in the Women and Girls Free From Violence thematic area, the corporate evaluation found that coordination helped connect normative advocacy with operational support, with the greatest added value when agencies aligned on cohesive messaging, multisectoral programming, joint monitoring and data, and common guidance for survivor-centred approaches.⁴⁷ In Women, Peace and Security, the corporate evaluation found that

UN Women added value by convening stakeholders and fostering collaboration, including by connecting women to peace-process duty bearers and creating channels for accountability; and, in some contexts, by leading and mobilizing UNCTs on Women, Peace and Security issues.⁴⁸ In Women's Leadership and Decision-Making, the corporate evaluation similarly found that UN Women advanced results not only through country programming, but also through coordination and advocacy across the UN system, including the Inter-Agency Task Force on Temporary Special Measures and the Inter-Agency Coordination Mechanism on Electoral Assistance.⁴⁹ In East and Southern Africa, the regional evaluation found evidence that the Regional Office had advanced the production, use and coordination of gender statistics through regional and national coordination, and convening and capacity development, including through the Africa Region Gender Statistics Forum. This convening helped link data to policy action in areas including Women and Girls Free From Violence; Women, Peace and Security; and unpaid care work.⁵⁰ In Asia and the Pacific and the Arab States, regional evaluations found that UN Women played a thematic convening role in humanitarian settings through co-chairing Regional Gender in Humanitarian Action mechanisms. These platforms helped strengthen inter-agency collaboration and support cross-UN gender mainstreaming.⁵¹



Photo: UN Women/Carolina Sainz

Joint programming and plans

INSIGHT 6:

Joint programming and joint workplans add value by aligning agencies around shared gender priorities, governance arrangements and accountability mechanisms; however, joint work does not automatically translate into stronger coherence and administrative hurdles need to be overcome.

UN Women's added value in joint programming is in helping programmes become more coherent, more gender-responsive and more connected to wider UN coordination efforts. Where this worked well, UN Women used coordination mechanisms to link agencies around shared gender priorities, reduce duplication and improve programme quality. In Somalia, leadership through the GTG helped connect gender coordination to the Joint Women, Peace and Security and Joint Rule of Law programmes, allowing agencies to pool resources around a more unified gender agenda.⁵² In Bosnia and Herzegovina, UN Women added practical value by developing a gender equality screening tool for joint programmes.⁵³ One evaluation found that global, regional and multi-country programmes enabled the use of standardized approaches (with some contextualization) based on a theory of change, drawing from global norms and standards. In some cases, such as Women and Girls Free From Violence, these programmes were supported by a global package of tools, guidance and access to good practices, and were adept at addressing a set of challenges common to several countries.⁵⁴

At the same time, joint programming did not automatically translate into coherence and required concerted efforts to align and integrate work across the programme. At times, joint programmes were delivered in silos and stakeholders reported administrative stretch and structural limitations dealing with multiple UN agencies rather than a coherent and unified UN voice.⁵⁵ For example, although joint programming increased in Bosnia and Herzegovina, evaluations noted that coordination efforts still faced competition for funding

and stronger coordination was needed not only at design stage but throughout implementation and monitoring.⁵⁶ The Kyrgyzstan joint programme evaluation found that UNSDCF results groups and the joint steering committee (meant to ensure joint oversight and coherence) were not fully utilized during implementation.⁵⁷

In some cases, joint work extended beyond specific programmes to create joint plans with shared results frameworks and governance arrangements. These represented a step-up in coordination to align mandates and deliver gender-transformative capacity-strengthening and programming. For example, in the Americas and Caribbean region, FAO, UN Women and UNFPA signed a two-year joint workplan to accelerate gender equality in rural Latin America and the Caribbean. The plan aligned mandates across food systems, care economies, and sexual and reproductive health, and centred on a structured capacity-building tool. Utilizing a shared results framework, common indicators and joint training, the plan enhanced accountability, coherence and evidence-based advocacy across agencies. The regional evaluation found this model to be a step up in the UN's ability to plan, budget and implement gender-transformative programming.⁵⁸



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

Gender Equality Accelerators/ programming frameworks

INSIGHT 7:

The Gender Equality Accelerators provide greater clarity on the role of coordination across thematic areas and have the potential to drive gender equality integration at country level; however, they require stronger socialization and integration into country and regional processes to realize tangible coordination results.

The Gender Equality Accelerators, in conjunction with the new Coordination Mandate Theory of Change, offer a good opportunity to clarify the tangible contributions and value proposition of coordination work across thematic and programmatic areas. UN Women's Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021) found that *"what UN system coordination means, entails and is expected to achieve in specific thematic areas... is neither clearly articulated nor uniformly understood."*⁵⁹ This was particularly true at country and regional levels, and among UN Women stakeholders. The advent of the Coordination Mandate Theory of Change and Gender Equality Accelerators/programmatic frameworks, which explain UN Women's value proposition across mandate areas, provides a good opportunity to clarify the objectives and results of UN Women's coordination leadership. However, these frameworks must be socialized and integrated into regional and country-level processes to realize tangible results. For example, while the Formative Assessment of the Gender Equality Accelerators acknowledged the potential for the accelerators to drive gender equality integration within UNCTs, it warned that there was no guidance for their practical application in CCAs and UNSDCFs, including entry points prior to inter-agency negotiations, such as CCA guidelines or GTG meetings. Limited consultation and socialization with other UN entities risked push-back and reluctance to adopt the Gender Equality Accelerators within UNCTs.⁶⁰

Emerging evidence suggests that UN Women's coordination leadership can add value by using gender-focused joint programming platforms to align agencies around shared gender results. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, joint programming was strengthened during co-creation of the Gender Equality Accelerator through the GTG, with stronger engagement at both leadership and operational levels.⁶¹ The evaluation of the TransformCare programme in Rwanda and Senegal also suggests that Gender Equality Accelerators can support coordination where they provide a shared inter-agency framework, convening space and positioning assets, rather than operating only as programme labels. Evidence from the programme indicates that this function was most visible through UN Women's role in the inter-agency working group on care; development of the UN system policy paper on transforming care systems; and support to Country Offices to position care within wider UN processes, including the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection. These efforts helped strengthen policy coherence, clarify comparative advantage and, in some contexts, improved joint working. However, their coordination value was weaker where global agreements did not translate into Resident Coordinator engagement, UNCT processes, early articulation of complementarity and clear division of labour at the country level.⁶²



Photo: UN Women/Jennifer Graylock

2.4 CAPACITY FOR COORDINATION

INSIGHT 8:

UN Women's ability to deliver on its UN system coordination mandate is fundamentally shaped by the availability, continuity and resourcing of dedicated coordination capacity at both country and regional levels. Where this capacity is sustained, including through regional backstopping and newer regional coordination specialist arrangements, the quality of coordination is stronger and more resilient; while overstretched personnel, short-term financing and reliance on project modalities constrain system-wide impact.

UN Women's internal capacity for UN system coordination has been variable, and not always sufficient to deliver on the Entity's mandate.

Coordination was stronger where there was designated capacity, clear roles, sustained follow-up and some predictable financing for horizontal functions across different country presences. It was more fragile where it relied on overstretched personnel, short-term contracts and non-core resources. A recurrent challenge is that coordination is hard to finance through project-based modalities, despite its importance for underpinning system-wide coherence and accountability. Similarly, the UN system-wide GEAP notes that current funding levels are not optimal for delivery of UN Women's triple mandate. GEAP calls for a strong and well-resourced UN Women through additional resources, including assessed contributions, linking this to strengthened coordination and accountability on gender equality.

Dedicated coordination capacity is closely linked to coordination quality.

UN Women's work in Niger shows how strengthened staffing can improve performance. The expansion of office capacity helped reinvigorate the GTG; increase UN Women's presence in consultation mechanisms; and support leadership within UN coordination mechanisms

on gender.⁶³ Conversely, a 2022 Regional Office decision to withdraw coordination officers from the four countries under the purview of the South Africa Multi-Country Office (except for in South Africa itself) led to reduced engagement in GTGs, UNCT processes and SWAP support, affecting the effectiveness of UN coordination on gender in these countries.⁶⁴ Many evaluations found a gap between UNCT expectations placed on the office and its actual human resource capacity to participate in UNCT processes, lead gender coordination and provide technical capacity and analysis.⁶⁵

Evaluations point to innovative and pragmatic arrangements that helped UN Women extend its coordination role.

In Timor-Leste, despite not specializing in humanitarian work, UN Women helped ensure response and preparedness processes were gender-responsive, with regional backstopping.⁶⁶ The Somalia Programme Presence pooled contributions from UN partners to fund coordination activities on gender equality;⁶⁷ and in the South Africa Multi Country Office, a coordination specialist in South Africa oversaw UN Volunteer focal points in the other four countries to assist GTGs, implementation of SWAP Scorecards and UN coordination. While this has helped maintain a coordination presence, the model has yet to be evaluated.⁶⁸ In addition, the Burundi UNCT set up an inter-agency resource mobilization group in response to coordination and financing gaps.⁶⁹

Availability of different funding sources affected coordination capacity.

Given the challenges of project resource mobilization for coordination functions, evaluations highlighted that coordination was most often funded by core or Strategic Note funding. Bosnia and Herzegovina benefitted from SIDA Strategic Note funding, which enabled the office to maintain personnel continuity for UN coordination and normative work.⁷⁰ Evaluations reported that Country Offices heavily reliant on non-core, such as Somalia, Niger and the South Africa MultiCountry Office, struggled to adequately fund coordination roles.⁷¹

More recent evidence also points to deliberate efforts to strengthen coordination capacity through regional coordination specialist arrangements. Regional coordination support has become a more intentional part of UN Women's delivery model, especially where country-level presence is limited.⁷² In NonPhysical Presences, small Country Offices, Multi-Country Offices, fragile settings and humanitarian contexts, Regional Offices have supported, or filled in for, country-level personnel, bringing technical expertise and coordination capacity. This method was found to be more effective than other coordination arrangements, such as using nearby Country Offices to support NonPhysical Presences.⁷³ In East and Southern Africa, for example, 8 of 11 Programme Presence/Non-Resident Agency countries had either seconded or appointed coordination focal points by February 2025;⁷⁴ in Asia and the Pacific, the Regional Office invested heavily in Non-Physical Presences and visited them more frequently than Country Offices, including to support UNCT participation and leadership on gender equality;⁷⁵ and in the Arab States, stakeholders explicitly valued the contribution of a Regional Coordination Specialist in Gulf Cooperation Countries.⁷⁶

This regional capacity translated into substantive support for country processes. Regional coordination support has been essential for improving the quality of gender analysis in CCAs, strengthening gender outcomes in UNSDCFs and enabling participation in UNCT-SWAP and other accountability mechanisms. Regional Offices also provided technical support on thematic areas, including Women, Peace and Security, care systems, gender statistics, political participation and Women and Girls Free From Violence.⁷⁷ In crisis settings, Regional Offices supported UNCTs by providing gender analysis to humanitarian coordination platforms; supporting integration of gender into humanitarian response plans; and ensuring alignment between humanitarian and development frameworks. For example, through its co-leadership of the Regional Gender Task Force under the Ukraine Refugee Coordination Forum, the Europe and Central Asia Regional Office produced gender analyses across seven countries and integrated gender perspectives into inter-agency reports on economic inclusion, health, education and protection. These inputs informed Regional Refugee Response Plans and were reflected in several CCAs and UNSDCFs.⁷⁸



Photo: UN Women/Ryan Brown

3. CONSIDERATIONS FOR UN SYSTEM REFORM

This section considers the implications of the synthesis findings of potential interest for ongoing discussions on UN system reform. It draws on recent evaluative evidence to highlight patterns in how coordination, accountability and capacity for gender equality have functioned in practice, identifying good practices and challenges. The considerations are intended to inform reflection on how UN Women's coordination work may need to adapt as the UN system continues to evolve.

1 UN system coordination and leadership is critical to advance gender equality as the UN system continues to evolve.

UN80 reform discussions emphasize improving efficiency, effectiveness, coherence, transparency and accountability across the system. Evidence from this synthesis suggests that gender equality results have been most consistently supported where there has been clear systemlevel leadership and coordination. As the UN system continues to evolve, coordination and leadership for gender equality may therefore function as an enabling architecture that helps translate systemwide reform into practice, particularly in areas that cut across mandates, pillars and planning frameworks.

The UN system-wide GEAP emphasizes the importance of a robust gender equality framework and highlights UN Women's leadership role. While evaluative evidence on implementation remains limited, GEAP is intended to influence how stakeholders frame expectations around leadership, accountability and collective action on gender equality across the UN system. As the initiative matures, its effectiveness is likely to depend less on the introduction of new frameworks or mechanisms, and more on how clearly it is translated into practical entry points at country and regional levels and how it aligns with existing coordination, planning and accountability processes.

2 A central issue is not whether gender coordination mechanisms are in place but the quality of coordination they produce, i.e. whether they are sufficiently strategic, backed by senior management and connected to wider UNCT decision-making.

Gender coordination arrangements added value when they had clear terms of reference, regular follow-up, senior management buy-in and participation, and direct links to planning and accountability processes. Where structures existed but were weakly led, overly focal-point driven or insufficiently connected to broader UNCT processes, their contribution was much more limited. GEAP reflects a similar emphasis on the importance of leadership buy-in, engagement and follow-through.

In the context of UN80, streamlining coordination mechanisms does not automatically lead to greater coherence. If coordination architecture is streamlined, it is important that it retains a clearly anchored gender coordination function, including in settings where cross-pillar coordination is especially important. Gender coordination will need to be more strategically embedded within any streamlined coordination architecture.

3 Accountability frameworks for gender equality are most effective when they are embedded in mainstream planning, management and resource-tracking systems.

The synthesis shows that tools such as UNCT-SWAP had greater value when they informed planning, indicators, joint programming, expenditure tracking and follow-up, and had less value when treated mainly as periodic reporting exercises. The same pattern is visible in emerging evidence on GEAP, which points towards a stronger incentive-based model but remains under-leveraged in practice.

For UN80 discussions, this reinforces the broader point that accountability for gender equality is likely to be stronger where it is integrated into core system processes, rather than left as a parallel compliance layer.

4 Coordination capacity appears to function as a core system requirement, even where it is not always financed or treated as such.

A consistent finding across the synthesis is that coordination was stronger where there was designated capacity, continuity, clear roles and some predictable resourcing. It was weaker where it depended on overstretched personnel, short-term arrangements or project-based modalities. While this does not necessarily point to a single institutional solution, it does suggest that expectations around coherence and accountability are difficult to sustain where the underlying coordination function remains thinly resourced. As system-wide frameworks such as GEAP raise expectations around leadership accountability and collective delivery on gender equality, the synthesis suggests that these expectations may be difficult to sustain in practice without corresponding attention to coordination capacity and continuity.

5 Regional backstopping becomes more important if country-level presence becomes thinner, more differentiated or more crisis-affected.

Regional Offices were often important in supporting CCAs, UNSDCFs, UNCT-SWAP processes and thematic coordination where country-level capacity was limited, including in small offices, multi-country settings, Non-Physical Presences and humanitarian contexts. In some cases, they effectively served as the main coordination backstop.

With UN80 emphasis on regional platforms and more differentiated field presence models, this suggests that regional gender expertise is likely to remain a significant part of how system-wide coherence and accountability are maintained in practice.

6 Safeguarding gender accountability and coordination gains during any UN system reform is critical.

Many UN system accountability and coordination mechanisms for gender equality reflect cumulative, hard-won institutional gains. To the extent that UN reform discussions include efficiency, streamlining or reorganization considerations, there is a risk that accountability frameworks, coordination mechanisms and coordination capacity could be eroded, even if unintentionally. Preserving and deepening the influence of mechanisms such as UN-SWAP, UNCT-SWAP and the gender equality marker, and ensuring that emerging initiatives like GEAP reinforce the influence and impact of coordination work, will be essential to sustaining progress on gender equality during system reform.



ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: CONCEPT NOTE

Concept note for a rapid evidence synthesis on UN Women's UN system coordination role and implications for UN 80 discussions

Independent Evaluation Service
March 2026

The purpose of this exercise is to understand what evaluation evidence indicates about how UN Women's coordination role across national, regional and global levels is being received and has contributed to stronger accountability and collective action for gender equality within the UN system.

Objective

To produce a concise evidence-based synthesis identifying which aspects of coordination appear effective, which require improvement and what the implications of these findings may have for upcoming UN80 discussions at the Executive Board. This builds on the new Coordination Mandate Theory of Change finalized in 2025 and its further implementation in the context of the new Strategic Plan 2026–2029

Scope and conceptual framework

The rapid evidence review will focus on UN Women's UN system coordination mandate, which gives UN Women a unique capacity to lead by promoting coordination, norms and standard setting, accountability and gender mainstreaming across the UN system to ensure the UN system delivers on gender equality and women's empowerment. This is part of the UNDS reform – from which UN Women was also born – and of UN Women's commitment to ensure that its coordination mandate further enhances the reinvigorated Resident Coordinator system to deliver on national priorities. This exercise is situated within the context of UN80 as it aims to provide evidence on how UN Women's coordination mandate contributes, and can better contribute, to the objectives of a more coherent and effective UN system.

The synthesis will use the UN Women Coordination Mandate Theory of Change as the basis for its analytical framework, with key UN80 documents providing an additional frame for interpreting evidence. The Coordination Mandate Theory of Change provides the substantive basis, focusing on how UN Women's coordination leadership across its operational, normative and coordination mandates contributes to UN system accountability and results for gender equality. The UN system-wide GEAP provides the institutional incentive for accelerating any progress on gender equality and is now led by the Coordination Division. The UN80 Initiative Note provides an interpretive lens, emphasizing reform of system arrangements to improve coherence, efficiency, accountability and cross-pillar delivery. The synthesis will use these two frames to assess how coordination arrangements are working in practice and what the findings imply for current reform discussions on UN gender equality architecture, leadership, regional roles, shared services, financing and evidence systems.

Guiding questions

The rapid synthesis will be guided by several questions. Across all questions, the synthesis will attempt to understand what has worked well, what has not worked well and under what conditions in terms of strengthening UN system coherence and accountability for gender equality. These questions have not been specifically asked in evaluation reports and the ability to respond to the indicative areas to be covered will depend on the availability of evaluative evidence.

SYNTHESIS QUESTIONS	INDICATIVE AREAS TO COVER (DEPENDING ON EVIDENCE IDENTIFIED)
How has UN Women's coordination leadership within UNCTs – complemented by the Entity's two other mandates – contributed to strengthening results and enhancing accountability for gender equality?	→ Effectiveness of protecting and advancing gender equality and women's rights through UN Women's coordination mandate in politically contested environments. → UNCT-SWAP and Gender Marker performance, UNSDCF gender outcome quality, or gender mainstreaming. → Effectiveness and different approaches to country-level gender architecture, such as GTGs. → GEAP. → Gender Equality Accelerators and UN coordination.
What is the added value of UN Women's regional and global coordination roles in strengthening system-wide coherence, accountability and support to UNCTs on gender equality and women's empowerment?	→ Good practices delivered by regional and global coordination approaches. → Links between global and regional coordination work with country-level achievements. → Evidence on regional collaborative platforms/issue-based coalition engagement, regional normative follow-through.
To what extent has UN Women's internal capacity for UN system coordination been sufficient to deliver on its mandate?	→ Incentives and performance system in place. → Collaboration with programme and thematic areas of work. → Relationship between dedicated coordination capacity and coordination quality. → Good practice to strengthen gaps. → Innovative arrangements for coordination. → GTG functionality, Gender in Humanitarian Action leadership, Non Physical Presences. → Funding sources for coordination at global, regional and country levels.

Proposed methodology

The evidence review will draw on the identified sources; extract relevant findings against the conceptual framework; and synthesize findings in a short report, focusing on recurring patterns and presenting illustrative examples. Copilot will be used to support the first stage of extracting relevant findings, which will be cross-checked by the synthesis team for accuracy.

The rapid synthesis will rely on existing evaluation evidence rather than new primary data collection and will include the following evidence:

- IES-led evaluations finalized in 2025 (Country Portfolio Evaluations, Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluations, Corporate Evaluations).
- Formative Assessment of the Gender Equality Accelerators 2024.
- Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women 2021.
- UNCT-SWAP and CEDAW linked to Country Portfolio Evaluations finalized in 2025.

ANNEX 2: METHODOLOGY

This rapid evaluation synthesis draws exclusively on existing evaluative evidence to assess how UN Women's coordination mandate has contributed to UN system coherence, accountability and collective action for gender equality. The synthesis was designed to provide a concise, evidencebased overview of patterns across contexts, rather than to generate new evaluative findings or assess performance at Entity or country level.

Scope and sources

The synthesis reviewed **27 IES-led evaluations** published between January 2024 and March 2026, complemented by one earlier corporate evaluation (2021) included due to its specific focus on UN system coordination. Where relevant, the synthesis also drew on associated UN system documentation referenced within these evaluations (e.g. UNCTSWAP reports, UNSDCF evaluations and Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluations) to triangulate findings. No new primary data collection was undertaken.

Analytical framework

The synthesis was anchored in the UN Women Coordination Mandate Theory of Change (2025), which articulates how UN Women's coordination leadership, complemented by its normative and operational mandates, is expected to contribute to systemwide accountability and results for gender equality. This framework structured the analysis across four interrelated dimensions:

1. Coordination mandate (leading coordination and coherence within the UN system)
2. Normative mandate (advancing global and regional norms and standards)
3. Operational mandate (institutionalizing gender equality across UN planning, programming and delivery)
4. Capacity for coordination (human, institutional and financial enablers).

Relevant UN80 documentation and GEAP were used as contextual reference points, informing the interpretation of findings without serving as evaluative benchmarks.

Data extraction and synthesis process

Evaluations were systematically reviewed to extract findings relevant to the guiding synthesis questions, with particular attention to:

- what coordination approaches appeared to work well or less well;
- under what conditions coordination added value; and
- how leadership, accountability mechanisms and capacity shaped outcomes.

Initial extraction and thematic clustering were supported using Copilot tools to identify relevant passages across evaluation reports. All extracted material was reviewed, validated and interpreted by the synthesis team to ensure accuracy, consistency and appropriate contextualization. Findings were then synthesized to identify recurring patterns, convergent evidence and notable variations across country, regional and global levels.

Limitations

Several limitations should be noted. First, the synthesis relies on existing evaluations, and coordination is unevenly covered across evaluation products – limited evidence in some areas does not imply absence of coordination activity or effectiveness. Second, the evaluations reviewed were not designed to answer the synthesis questions directly, which constrained the depth of analysis in some thematic areas. Third, evidence on newer initiatives, particularly GEAP and the Gender Equality Accelerators, remains emergent. Findings should therefore be interpreted as indicative rather than conclusive. Finally, the synthesis emphasizes patterns and conditions rather than attribution or comparative performance.

ANNEX 3: LIST OF EVALUATIONS INCLUDED

UN WOMEN EVALUATIONS

OFFICE	TITLE	QUALITY RATING
CORPORATE EVALUATIONS		
Global	Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Political Participation: Insights from the Field	Very Good
Global	The Feminist Collaborative Evaluation of UN Women's Approach to Social Norms Change	Very Good
Global	Formative Evaluation of UN Women's Work in Sustainable Finance	Very Good
Global	Independent Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Approach to Violence Against Women Prevention and Response: Navigating changes in global and regional contexts	Very Good
Global	Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes	Very Good
Global	Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role In Ending Violence Against Women	Very Good
Global	Corporate Evaluation on UN Women's Support to Intergovernmental Processes 2022–2025	Unrated
Global	Formative Assessment of the Gender Equality Accelerators: Emerging findings and conclusions	N/A
Global	UN Women's Performance Against the 2022–2025 Strategic Plan	N/A
JOINT PROJECT EVALUATIONS		
African Union Liaison Office	UN Women African Union Commission Memorandum of Understanding Evaluation	Very Good
Colombia	Final evaluation of the joint programme: "Acceleration of rural women's economic empowerment in Colombia"	Very Good
Kyrgyzstan	Joint evaluation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) project capacitated women civil society organizations sustaining peace in Kyrgyzstan.	Good
REGIONAL STRATEGIC NOTE EVALUATIONS		
Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office	IES-led Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note Evaluation 2023-2025	Very Good
Arab States Regional Office	IES-led Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation 2022–2025	Very Good
Asia and the Pacific Regional Office	IES-led Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Strategic Note Evaluation 2023-2025	Very Good
East and Southern Africa Regional Office	IES-led East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025	Very Good
East and Central Europe Regional Office	IES-led East and Central Europe Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025	Not yet assessed

OFFICE	TITLE	QUALITY RATING
COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION		
Iraq	IES-led Iraq Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
South Africa Multi-Country Office	IES-led South Africa Multi-Country Office Strategic Note Evaluation	Very Good
Somalia	IES-led Somalia Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Bosnia and Herzegovina	IES-led Bosnia and Herzegovina Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Liberia	IES-led Liberia Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Timor-Leste	Timor-Leste Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Rwanda	Rwanda Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Niger	Niger Country Portfolio Evaluation	Good
Mali	Mali Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good
Burundi	Burundi Country Portfolio Evaluation	Very Good

UN SYSTEM REPORTS AND EVALUATIONS*

COUNTRY	UNCT-SWAP	UNSDCF/UNDAF EVALUATIONS
Rwanda	2024	2024
Burundi	2025	Only management response available
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2023	2024
Iraq	N/A	Not available. CF evaluation management response and Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation (2020) reviewed.
Liberia	2024	2025
Niger	2024	2022
Somalia	2024	2025
Timor Leste	2024	2024
Botswana	2022	2026
Namibia	2023	2023
Lesotho	2021	2023
Eswatini	2023	2024
Mali	2023	2023
South Africa	N/A	2025

* For countries covered by the Country Portfolio Evaluations included in the synthesis, relevant UNCT-SWAP reports and UNSDCF/UNDAF evaluations were also reviewed to complement the evaluation evidence and triangulate findings.

ENDNOTES

- 1 One evaluation published in 2021 was also included given its focus on coordination, UN Women's Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women.
- 2 The names of these groups by region are: Gender Justice and Equality in ASRO (with UNFPA); Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in APRO; Gender Equality in ECARO; Gender Issue-based Coalition in ACRO; Gender Equality in ESARO.
- 3 UN Women, Evaluation of the Strategic Note: UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (2026), 33.
- 4 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 22.
- 5 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Liberia (2025), 23.
- 6 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 36.
- 7 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 49; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Burundi (2024), 81; Lesotho UNDAF evaluation, 60-61; Botswana 2022 scorecard, 12-13.
- 8 UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 46; UN Women, Evaluation of the Strategic Note: UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (2025), 24.
- 9 UN Women, Evaluation of the Strategic Note: UN Women Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia (2026), 33.
- 10 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 26.
- 11 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 27.
- 12 UN Women, East and Central Europe Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2026), 33.
- 13 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 27.
- 14 UN Women, Evaluation of the Strategic Note: UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (2025), 23.
- 15 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 27.
- 16 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 38.
- 17 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Somalia (2025), 23.
- 18 UN Women, UN-Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Strategic Note Evaluation 2023-2025 (2025), 23.
- 19 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 5, 19, 25.
- 20 UN Women, Formative Evaluation of UN Women's Work in Sustainable Finance (2025), 7, 37.
- 21 UN Women, UN-Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Strategic Note Evaluation 2023-2025 (2025), 26.
- 22 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Iraq (2025), 24.
- 23 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 36.
- 24 UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 47.
- 25 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 49.

- 26 Lesotho UNDAF Evaluation (2022), 60-61.
- 27 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Mal (2024), 21.
- 28 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 28.
- 29 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role In Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 27.
- 30 UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 47.
- 31 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Liberia (2025), 23.
- 32 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 28.
- 33 UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 48, 59; UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 27; UN Women, Evaluation of the Strategic Note: UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (2025), 48; UN Women, UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note Evaluation 2023–2025 (2026), 51.
- 34 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 23.
- 35 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Iraq (2025), 28.
- 36 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Somalia (2025), 22; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 48.
- 37 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 26; UN Women, UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note Evaluation 2023–2025 (2026), 50; UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 47.
- 38 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Iraq (2025), 27.
- 39 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Bosnia and Herzegovina (2025), 33; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation - Liberia (2025), 23.
- 40 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Niger (2024), 20.
- 41 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – South Africa Multi Country Office (2025), 21.
- 42 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 36.
- 43 Iraq Inter-Agency Humanitarian Evaluation on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls, Iraq Case Study (2020), 42-43.
- 44 Lesotho UNDAF evaluation (2022), 60-61.
- 45 Corporate Evaluation on UN Women's Support to Intergovernmental Processes 2022–2025 (draft), 24 and 43.
- 46 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 31; UN Women, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note Evaluation 2023–2025 (2026), 50.
- 47 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 24, 31.
- 48 Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Participation in Peace Processes (2025), 24, 31.
- 49 Corporate Thematic Evaluation of UN Women's Support to Women's Political Participation (2025), 5.
- 50 UN Women, East and Southern Africa Regional Office Strategic Note Evaluation 2022-2025 (2025), 43–44.
- 51 UN Women, Regional Office for the Arab States Strategic Note Evaluation (2025), 31; UN-Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Strategic Note Evaluation 2023-2025 (2025), 28.
- 52 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Somalia (2025), 22.
- 53 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Bosnia and Herzegovina (2025), 33.

- 54 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 33.
- 55 Getting there together – a synthesis of interagency programme evaluations on Sustainable Development Goal 5 – Companion Report (2024).
- 56 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Bosnia and Herzegovina (2025), 53.
- 57 UN Women. Joint evaluation of the UN Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) Gender Promotion Initiative (GPI) project capacitated women civil society organizations sustaining peace in Kyrgyzstan (2026), 14-15, 22-24.
- 58 UN Women, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean Strategic Note Evaluation 2023–2025 (2026), 37.
- 59 UN Women, Corporate Evaluation of UN Women's UN System Coordination and Broader Convening Role in Ending Violence Against Women (2021), 23.
- 60 UN Women, Formative Assessment of the Gender Equality Accelerators: Emerging findings and conclusions (2024), 6.
- 61 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Bosnia and Herzegovina (2025), 32.
- 62 UN Women, Final Evaluation of the "Transformative Approaches to Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute Unpaid Care work in Women's Economic Empowerment Programming in Rwanda and Senegal" (2026, forthcoming).
- 63 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Niger (2024), 30.
- 64 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – South Africa MultiCountry Office (2025), 24.
- 65 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Somalia (2025), 43 and 45; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Iraq (2025), 42 and 49; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Rwanda (2024), 39-40; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 40 and 45; UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Burundi (2024), 80 and 92.
- 66 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Timor-Leste (2024), 38.
- 67 UN Women, Country Portfolio Evaluation – Somalia (2025), 54.
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UN WOMEN EXISTS TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

As the lead United Nations entity on gender equality and secretariat of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, we shift laws, institutions, social norms and services to close the gender gap and build an equal world for all women and girls. Our partnerships with governments, women's movements and the private sector, coupled with our coordination of the broader United Nations, deliver lasting changes. We make strides in four areas: leadership, economic empowerment, freedom from violence, and peace, security and humanitarian action.

UN Women keeps the rights of women and girls at the centre of global progress – always, everywhere. Because gender equality is not just what we do. It is who we are.



220 East 42nd Street
New York, New York 10017, USA
Tel: 212-906-6400
Fax: 212-906-6705

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