



COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION

COUNTRY PORTFOLIO EVALUATION CÔTE D'IVOIRE STRATEGIC NOTE

2021–2025



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**UN Women Independent Evaluation,
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The evaluation team included Komi Grätias Gligbe (Senior Evaluation Consultant), Hippolyte M'banan Kone (Evaluation Consultant) and Romain Diatta (M&E Analyst). The evaluation team was led by Cyuma Mbayiha (Regional Evaluation Specialist).

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ACRONYMS

AFAWA	Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIV	Côte d'Ivoire
CPE	Country Portfolio Evaluation
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRF	Development Results Framework
EVAW	Ending Violence Against Women
G&PPL	Governance and Women's Participation in Public Life
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IEAIS	Independent Evaluation, Audit and Investigation Services
IES	Independent Evaluation Service
KOAFEC II	Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation Fund II
LEAP	Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection in Humanitarian Action
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOWIP	Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations
NSCGBV	National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence
PND	National Development Plan (Plan National de Développement)
UBRAF	Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework
UN	United Nations
UNCT-SWAP	United Nations Country Team System-Wide Action Plan
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WEE	Women's Economic Empowerment
WHO	World Health Organization
WPP	Women's Political Participation
WPS/HA	Women, Peace and Security/Humanitarian Action

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the main findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) conducted by the Independent Evaluation Service (IES) of the UN Women Country Office in Côte d'Ivoire. The evaluation was conducted from November 2024 to December 2025 and covered implementation of the Country Office's Strategic Note 2021–2025.

Purpose, objectives and scope

The purpose of the evaluation is to support learning, strategic decision-making and accountability for results for the UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Country Office and its key stakeholders. Specifically, the evaluation aims to:

- assess the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and integration of human rights and gender equality principles in the design and implementation of the Country Office's Strategic Note 2021–2025;
- generate actionable lessons and recommendations to inform development of the next Strategic Note (2026–2030); and
- contribute to organizational learning on UN Women's strategic positioning and delivery modalities in a lower-middle-income, politically stable but socially unequal context.

The CPE covered the Strategic Note's four programmatic impact areas: Women's Political Participation (WPP), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) and Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS/HA), as well as results under the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework. The CPE examined interventions implemented between January 2021 and early 2025 at national level and in selected regions.

Primary intended users of the evaluation include the UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Country Office, the UN Women Regional Office for West and Central Africa, headquarters divisions and IES. Secondary intended users include government counterparts, civil society organizations (CSOs), donors and UN system partners.

The evaluation is intended to inform:

- accountability for results and resource use under the current Strategic Note;
- coordination and advocacy within the UN system; and
- resource mobilization and partnership engagement.

The evaluation results will be made publicly accessible through UN Women's Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation employed a theory-based, mixed-methods approach aligned with UN Women's evaluation principles, including gender responsiveness, participation and respect for human rights. Contribution analysis was used to assess the plausibility of UN Women's contributions to observed changes. A reconstructed theory of change provided the analytical framework.

Data collection methods included document review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and an online survey. Stakeholders consulted included UN Women staff, government partners, CSOs, donors and UN agencies. While efforts were made to ensure inclusive participation, engagement of persons with disabilities and some marginalized groups was limited, constraining the depth of the CPE's leave no one behind analysis.

Context

Côte d'Ivoire has experienced sustained economic growth and relative political stability since 2011, alongside persistent gender inequalities. Women remain under-represented in political decision-making; concentrated in informal and low-productivity economic activities; and disproportionately affected by gender-based violence (GBV). Structural constraints related to social norms, uneven decentralization and limited institutional capacity continue to affect the translation of national commitments into tangible outcomes for women and girls.

The Strategic Note 2021–2025 was aligned with the country's National Development Plan (PND 2021–2025), the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) and international normative frameworks such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and Sustainable Development Goal 5.

Key findings

RELEVANCE

The Country Office's Strategic Note and project portfolio were well aligned with national priorities, UN system frameworks and international gender equality commitments. UN Women's focus on governance, women's leadership, prevention of GBV and WEE responded to clearly articulated national needs. Relevance was strongest at the institutional and policy levels. However, emerging and persistent issues, including the sustainability of women's livelihoods and uneven access to services for marginalized groups, were not consistently addressed through dedicated indicators or targeted interventions.

COHERENCE

UN Women played a central coordination role on gender equality within the UN system, particularly through leadership of the Gender Thematic Group and engagement under the UNSDCF. Joint programming and inter-agency collaboration were evident, particularly in ERAW and

humanitarian contexts. However, portfolio coherence was largely cumulative and adaptive rather than deliberately engineered from the outset. Many connections across thematic areas emerged retrospectively through shared normative frameworks and recurring institutional partnerships, rather than through explicit ex-ante design. Internal portfolio coherence was further constrained by fragmented funding, parallel projects with similar objectives and limited sequencing across impact areas. Links between normative work, capacity development and community-level outcomes were not always explicit.

EFFECTIVENESS

The portfolio delivered most planned outputs and contributed to institutional and normative changes, including support to electoral processes, policy development, coordination mechanisms and GBV response frameworks. Effectiveness was strongest where interventions combined technical assistance, capacity development and sustained engagement with national institutions. However, evidence of outcome-level change for women and girls was often insufficient to determine its extent consistently across interventions. Many interventions relied primarily on output-level indicators, such as numbers trained or reached, with limited verification of behavioural change, income sustainability or shifts in decision-making power.

Partnerships and coordination emerged as an important cross-cutting feature of the portfolio. UN Women engaged extensively in joint programming and inter-agency coordination, while also relying on a wide range of civil society actors for advocacy, capacity-building and implementation. However, the breadth of these arrangements, combined with the investment required to sustain them, points to the need for more deliberate joint planning, clearer partnership frameworks and stronger use of coordination platforms for follow-up and accountability.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability prospects varied across programmatic areas. Institutional anchoring was relatively stronger in governance and WPP, where capacities built within electoral and government bodies are likely to persist. In WEE and ERAW, sustainability was weaker due to limited government budget allocations, absence of exit strategies and continued dependence on external funding. Few projects included explicit plans for institutional or financial handover, constraining prospects for scaling or continuation beyond the project cycle.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The Strategic Note articulated commitments to human rights-based approaches and leave no one behind principles. In practice, implementation focused primarily on women as a homogeneous group. Disability, age, location and other intersecting vulnerabilities were inconsistently reflected in project design, indicators and budgets. Monitoring frameworks rarely captured differential outcomes across groups, limiting accountability for inclusiveness and equity.

EFFICIENCY

The Country Office demonstrated adaptability in managing a complex portfolio of small, donor-earmarked grants. However, this funding structure increased transaction costs and was reportedly labour intensive. Short implementation cycles, together with the repeated need to undertake project start-up (including recruitment, partner selection, work planning and administrative set-up) and staff capacity constraints limited opportunities for economies of scale and structured sequencing. Staffing gaps and turnover affected continuity, institutional memory and monitoring capacity, particularly in results-based management.

Conclusion

The Country Office has made credible contributions to advancing gender equality through policy influence, coordination and institutional capacity development during the 2021–2025 Strategic Note period. The Country Office's role as a trusted technical and convening actor within the UN system and with national counterparts is a clear strength.

At the same time, the portfolio's heavy reliance on small, short-term, donor-earmarked funding constrained coherence, efficiency and sustainability. While outputs were largely delivered, the translation of these outputs into demonstrable, sustained outcomes for women and girls remains limited in several areas.

The Country Office demonstrated proactiveness in advancing priority areas where opportunities arose, but evidence points to a persistent misalignment between strategic ambitions and a fragmented, donor-driven funding structure.

Weaknesses in outcome-level indicators, monitoring systems and leave no one behind targeting limited the Country Office's ability to track results consistently and use evidence for learning, accountability and strategic adaptation.

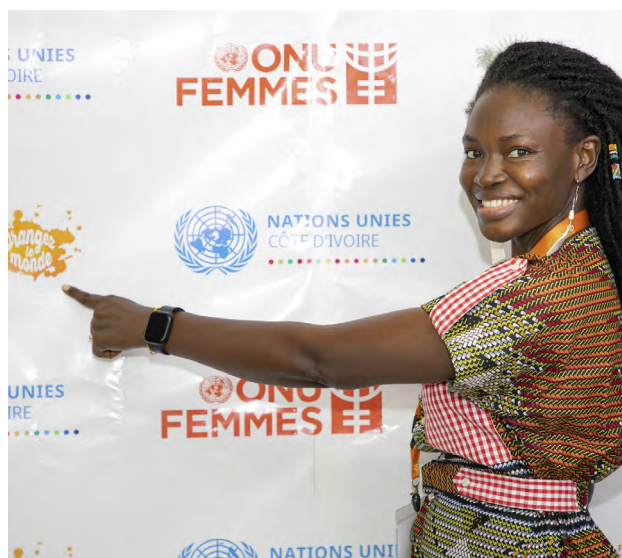


Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

Recommendations to UN Women Côte d'Ivoire

RECOMMENDATION 1:

Clarify strategic focus and strengthen portfolio management.

The Country Office should clarify its strategic focus and strengthen portfolio management to enhance impact and efficiency.

The Country Office should concentrate resources on a limited number of core interventions that provide a clear organizing framework for the portfolio. Annual portfolio reviews should strengthen synergies and sequencing across impact areas. A multi-year resource mobilisation strategy should seek fewer, larger and more flexible grants, including pooled funding opportunities within the UN Country Team.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

Link normative work to measurable community-level outcomes.

The Country Office should strengthen programme design by explicitly linking normative work to measurable community-level outcomes.

New interventions should establish explicit theories of change and monitorable pathways between normative work and community-level outcomes. Designs should include realistic sequencing, adequate preparation, costed sustainability assumptions and dedicated monitoring and evaluation resources.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

Formalize coordination and partnership structures

The Country Office should build resilience and amplify impact by strengthening the Gender Thematic Group's role in joint analysis and programming and establishing continuity arrangements that reduce dependence on individual personnel. Structured engagement and capacity development for civil society partners should strengthen accountability, participation and broader ownership of results

RECOMMENDATION 4:

Revitalize results-based management to focus on outcomes, learning and adaptive management.

The Country Office should include in its Strategic Note a limited set of outcome-level indicators that capture empowerment, access and inclusion, with feasible disaggregation by location and disability. Semi-annual portfolio reflection exercises should use quantitative and qualitative evidence to support learning and programme adaptation.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

Optimize operational processes to prevent inefficiencies and safeguard delivery quality.

The Country Office should address prolonged staffing gaps in operations and finance to ensure adequate oversight, reduce operational risks and protect programme delivery quality.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

Develop and execute distinct sustainability and transition strategies for each impact area.

The Country Office should ensure that each impact area is supported by a tailored sustainability and transition plan. These plans should set out formal handover arrangements, domestic financing pathways and concrete measures for integration into government planning and budgeting systems, with continued attention to inclusion and accessibility.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

IEAIS conducted this Country Portfolio Evaluation (CPE) to (a) assess UN Women's contributions to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in Côte d'Ivoire over the course of its Strategic Note 2021–2025; and (b) support enhanced accountability for development effectiveness and learning from experience.

The CPE provides an independent and systematic assessment of the Country Office's contributions towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the country to feed into learning on what strategies worked well and what needs strengthening. The primary intended uses of this evaluation are to:

- ensure accountability to key stakeholders for UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment; and
- support decision-making to inform normative, operational and coordination work.

Lessons drawn from this CPE will be used to inform the country programme's new direction.

The primary intended users of this evaluation are the UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Country Office and its key stakeholders, including the government, CSOs, development partners and other UN agencies, as well as the UN Women Regional Office for Western and Central Africa, UN Women headquarters, including the Senior Management Team and IEAIS. The UN Country Team in Côte d'Ivoire may also use the findings of this evaluation as key inputs in development of the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).

Evaluation objectives and scope

The CPE's specific objectives were to:

- **Examine the relevance and coherence** of the Country Office's strategic positioning, including its alignment with national frameworks, the UNSDCF, the African Union Agenda 2063 and international gender norms.

- **Assess the efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability** of UN Women's contribution to gender equality and women's empowerment in Côte d'Ivoire.
- **Analyse how human rights, gender equality and inclusion principles have been integrated** into programming and partnerships.
- **Identify lessons learned and actionable recommendations** to support strategic planning, coordination and resource mobilization for the next Strategic Note.

The evaluation is both formative and summative. It provides forward-looking recommendations to strengthen strategic positioning, programming and coordination efforts, while also offering retrospective analysis of what has worked, what has not and why. The evaluation's findings and recommendations are intended to inform the Country Office's Strategic Note 2026–2030 and contribute to wider organizational learning and partnership decisions. The results of the evaluation will be publicly accessible through UN Women's Global Accountability and Tracking of Evaluation Use system.

The scope of the evaluation is thematic, geographical and chronological. The evaluation covers the Strategic Note implementation period from 1 January 2021 to 31 August 2025. The Country Office's workplan and integrated mandate were assessed, including UN Women's contributions in operational, coordination and normative areas. While the geographic scope of the evaluation includes all regions of Côte d'Ivoire, the selected interventions included within the scope of the evaluation are those designed to contribute to the Strategic Note 2021–2025 Development Results Framework and the UN Women Strategic Plan 2021–2025.

1.2 EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The CPE employed a mixed-method, theory-based approach guided by UN Women's Evaluation Handbook and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee's criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, organizational efficiency and sustainability, complemented by UN Women criteria concerning human rights, gender equality and disability inclusion. Contribution analysis was applied to assess UN Women's added value against the reconstructed theory of change (see Annex 3), and data were analysed using the evaluation matrix (see Annex 6).

A large and diverse range of stakeholders was engaged throughout the process. To safeguard independence and avoid conflicts of interest, the evaluation team adhered to IEAIS norms and standards and the United Nations Evaluation Group's Ethical Guidelines, acting with integrity and professionalism. Feedback on evaluation products was systematically tracked to ensure transparency.

Regarding data quality, the team worked closely with the Country Office to secure timely access to project documentation. Preliminary consultations were held to reconstruct and validate the theory of change as a robust tool for the evaluation.

To assess effectiveness, the evaluation examined the plausibility of contribution pathways linking UN Women's interventions to observed changes in a subset of results for which outcome-level evidence was sufficiently documented. This approach focused on understanding how UN Women's interventions may have contributed to observed outcomes, based on the available evidence. Contribution pathways¹ were (a) reconstructed based on the Strategic Note results framework, project documentation and stakeholder accounts; and (b) examined through the lens of whether the sequence of actions, intermediate changes and observed results were logically connected and supported by available evidence. The approach was applied selectively where

the evidence documented a plausible sequence from UN Women's support to changes in institutional practices, policy processes or conditions at community level.

The evaluation relied on triangulation across multiple sources of evidence, including document review, interviews and comparative patterns across time and actors, to assess whether observed results were consistent with the expected pathways of change. Particular attention was paid to the timing of interventions relative to reported changes; the role attributed to UN Women by different stakeholder groups; and the consistency of findings across data sources.

Data collection combined field visits to Bouaké, Béoumi, Sakassou, Ferkessedougou and Korhogo; focus group discussions with project participants; and an online survey of UN Women personnel, personnel from other UN entities and external stakeholders. A total of 308 documents were reviewed, including project-specific documentation across WPP, WEE, EVAW, WPS, humanitarian and cross-cutting initiatives (see Annex 5). Triangulation across sources strengthened validity and reliability.

Given the CPE's scope and time constraints, it was not feasible to undertake a systematic assessment of all concurrent interventions by other development partners. Instead, based on available evidence, the CPE focused on examining broader national reforms and contextual factors, including political cycles and macro-level policy shifts, to assess whether these factors offered more plausible explanations for the observed changes than UN Women's documented contributions.

The evaluation adopted an inclusive, gender-responsive and rights-based approach, ensuring the participation of diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups and persons with disabilities. Stakeholder mapping supported equitable representation and addressed barriers to participation (see Annex 4). Ethical standards were upheld through informed consent, confidentiality and respect for participants' dignity.

To enhance credibility, findings were validated through a stakeholder workshop, enabling collective reflection and addressing remaining gaps.

¹ Illustrated in Annex 14

1.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The evaluation team conducted a comprehensive desk review of documents on the country context and gender equality progress, starting in the inception phase and continuing throughout the evaluation. This review established a baseline understanding of UN Women's intended outcomes and strategic priorities, drawing on internal documentation (Strategic Note, annual reports, project documents, monitoring data) and relevant national policies and frameworks. It also contributed to data triangulation alongside primary data collection.

The sampling strategy for site visits ensured representation from at least one project in each thematic area: EVAW – two projects, WPS/HA – one project, WEE – one project, WPP – one project, and cross-cutting – one project. Locations were selected based on accessibility and security considerations. Desk review, interviews and surveys covered the full portfolio across all thematic areas. As such, the scope of the analysis extended beyond the sites visited.

Data collection tools (see Annex 9) were tailored for different stakeholder categories. Interviews were conducted with UN Women personnel, programme partners, UN system representatives, government officials, local authorities and civil society members. Focus group discussions and an online survey engaged UN Women personnel, project participants, implementing partners, donors and UN personnel. In total, 61 interviews were conducted in Abidjan, 4 in Bouaké and 4 in Ferkessedougou. There were 4 focus groups in Bouaké, 1 in Korhogo and 3 in Ferkessedougou. The online survey received responses from 23 partners, 27 UN Women personnel and 9 UN system personnel.

1.4 EVALUATION CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

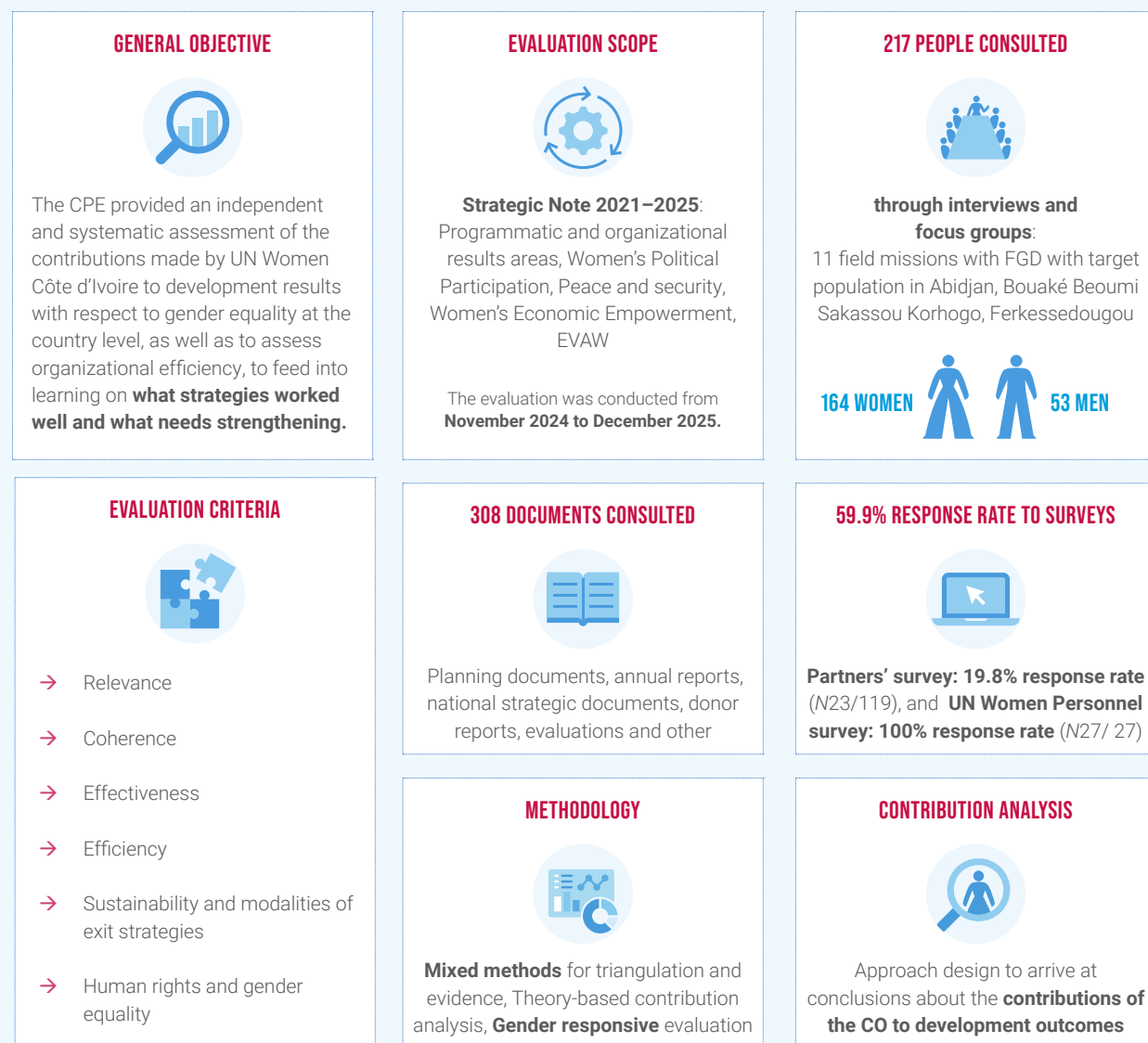
As with other CPEs, this evaluation faced several limitations, including uneven availability of outcome-level data across thematic areas and reliance on self-reported information from stakeholders. These limitations were mitigated through systematic triangulation and cautious interpretation of effectiveness, particularly with respect to contribution. A key risk anticipated during the inception phase was the difficulty in securing interviews with external stakeholders. Proactive scheduling efforts and an in-country mission allowed the team to conduct a substantial number of interviews. Potential recall bias in interviews was addressed by (a) triangulating data across multiple sources and methods; and (b) validating findings with the Country Office and the Evaluation Reference Group to ensure reliability. Where data gaps, short implementation timelines or the absence of observable outcome-level change prevented robust causal analysis, the evaluation focused on outputs, intermediate effects and enabling conditions. These limitations are reflected in the careful wording and expressed confidence levels within the Effectiveness findings. While survey response rates were high among UN Women personnel, they were lower among external partners, which posed challenges for interpretation. This limitation was offset through strong triangulation with key informant interviews and the desk review.

1.5 CPE GOVERNANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

UN Women evaluations follow established mechanisms to ensure high-quality evaluation processes and products in line with the UN Women Evaluation Policy and Handbook and in accordance with the United Nations Evaluation Group's established norms and standards. All products are subject to quality review by the Director, IEAIS and Chief, IES; a peer reviewer; and the Evaluation Reference and Evaluation Management Groups. The Evaluation Reference Group included UN Women programme staff, national government and UN agencies.

FIGURE 1.

Snapshot of sources and methods



Source: Evaluation team.

2. EVALUATION CONTEXT

Côte d'Ivoire is a lower-middle-income country in West Africa, covering 322,462 km². The population was estimated at 32.5 million in 2025 based on the 2021 national census, with an almost equal gender distribution of 51.02 per cent men and 48.98 per cent women.² Côte d'Ivoire plays a significant economic and political role in the subregion as a member of the Economic Community of West African States, West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Mano River Union.

After two decades of political and military crises, since the mid 2010s, Côte d'Ivoire has experienced relative stability. Although tense, the 2020 presidential election did not result in widespread violence.

The 2025 presidential election was largely peaceful, with incumbent President Alassane Ouattara re-elected for a fourth term with nearly 90 per cent of the vote. However, political polarization and insecurity in northern border areas remain concerns despite the calm electoral process. Security risks are amplified by instability in the Sahel and the presence of 73,676 asylum seekers as of April 2025, 82 per cent³ of whom are women and children. The forthcoming National Development Plan (PND) 2026–2030 includes commitments to gender equality, and the new UNSDCF is expected to mainstream gender across outcomes.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

² National Institute of Statistics, population by gender, 2025

³ PND 2021–2025, [archives du REDENACI](#), Ministère du Plan et du Développement, 2020

Economically, Côte d'Ivoire remains one of the fastest growing economies in sub-Saharan Africa. National accounts indicate average growth of 6.5 per cent between 2021 and 2023, with projections of about 7 per cent in 2025.⁴ Despite this performance, growth remains insufficiently inclusive. Women in rural areas and in the informal economy continue to face limited access to land, credit and productive training, and inflation has eroded purchasing power. Heavy reliance on cocoa, coffee and other commodities exposes the economy to external shocks, as evidenced during the COVID-19 pandemic and Ukraine conflict.

Côte d'Ivoire is a signatory to CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol, the Beijing Platform for Action and UNSCR 1325.⁵ National commitments include the 2016 Constitution enshrining equality, the 2019 quota law (Law 2019-870) promoting women's representation and legal measures against child marriage and female genital mutilation. Despite legislative progress, gender inequalities remain. According to the Independent Electoral Commission, women represented 32.7 per cent of municipal councillors and 32.4 per cent of regional councillors in 2024, while representation in the National Assembly remains below 30 per cent. Structural barriers such as restrictive social norms, unpaid care burdens, limited financial autonomy and constrained access to justice continue to impede women's participation.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains widespread. Approximately 30 per cent of women reported experiencing violence in 2024, compared with 32 per cent in 2021.⁶ Although Côte d'Ivoire's human rights institutions have strengthened the country's compliance with international human rights standards, uneven enforcement and gaps in service availability weaken the overall protection framework.

Economically, women constitute 60 to 80 per cent of the agricultural labour force⁷ but remain disadvantaged in access to land, credit, technology and formal employment. Care burdens and vulnerability to economic shocks further constrain their empowerment. Policy dialogue on the care economy has intensified, supported by UN Women's convening efforts.

Côte d'Ivoire has adopted several frameworks to advance the WPS/HA agenda. UN Women's contributions have included strengthening women's networks, supporting coordination mechanisms and facilitating local awareness activities.

This CPE is situated within this dynamic socio-political and economic landscape. It examines how the Country Office has responded to national priorities; supported normative commitments; and addressed persistent gender inequalities in a period shaped by strong economic performance, evolving political transitions and emerging security pressures.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

⁴ World Bank: Côte d'Ivoire [Country Profile](#), consulted on 21 Oct 2025

⁵ CEDAW establishes states' obligations to eliminate discrimination against women; the Maputo Protocol sets out legally binding commitments on women's rights within the African Union framework; the Beijing Platform for Action provides a global policy blueprint for advancing gender equality across 12 critical areas; and UNSCR 1325 anchors the WPS/HA agenda, emphasizing women's participation and protection in conflict and post-conflict contexts.

⁶ Independent Electoral Commission, 2024.

⁷ UN Women. (2021). *Côte d'Ivoire Strategic Note 2021-2025*.

3. PORTFOLIO ANALYSIS

3.1 STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Note 2021–2025 is the primary planning instrument guiding the Country Office's normative, operational and coordination mandates. It is aligned with the country's PND 2021–2025, the UNSDCF, the Sustainable Development Goals (with particular emphasis on Sustainable Development Goal 5) and international normative commitments such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. The Strategic Note also reflects the direction of UN Women's global Strategic Plan and the priorities of the West and Central Africa Regional Office.

The Strategic Note articulates four strategic impact areas: Women's Political Participation (WPP), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), Ending Violence Against Women (EVAW) and Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action (WPS/HA).

The Strategic Note also contributes to the Organizational Effectiveness and Efficiency Framework, including knowledge management, partnerships, coordination and internal systems. The Country Office formulated 21 initiatives across these impact areas during the Strategic Note period (see Annex 5): six under WPP; six under WEE; six under EVAW; and three under WPS/HA.

A joint programme on peace and security intersects three thematic areas (G&PPL, WEE and EVAW) and contributes to integrated results. Informed by national consultations, the project portfolio focuses on gaps in the PND and UNSDCF related to governance reforms, women's economic inclusion, GBV prevention and response, and resilience in fragile northern regions.

3.2 HUMAN RESOURCES

The Country Office's human resource structure reflects a continued reliance on short-term and project-funded positions. As of November 2025, the workforce consisted of 6 staff members (20 per cent), 7 service contractors (23 per cent), 13 personnel under Service Agreements (44 per cent) and 4 United Nations Volunteers (13 per cent). While the proportion of staff appears slightly higher than earlier in the Strategic Note cycle, the overall contractual mix remains weighted towards short-term and non-core staffing arrangements. This composition may constrain flexibility in staff allocation; create risks related to turnover; and affect the predictability and continuity of programme implementation.

Operational capacity is also affected by critical vacancies. The Operations Analyst position remains unfilled (see Annex 13), requiring interim arrangements or the use of shared services to maintain operational continuity. The Programme Support Management Unit position was scheduled to lapse in the third quarter of 2025, risking reduced programme oversight and quality assurance as responsibilities shifted to the Financial Analyst and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officer.

3.3 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The total approved budget for the Strategic Note period (2021–2025) amounted to **US\$ 8.15 million**, of which **US\$ 6.08 million** was expended between 2021 and the first quarter of 2025. However, financial delivery rates show a downward trend over the period, declining from **98.2 per cent in 2021** to **72 per cent in 2024**. This pattern contrasts with the early years of Strategic Note implementation and suggests contextual or operational factors, examined in the Efficiency section of this report.

Performance in resource mobilization also fluctuated. Targets were exceeded in 2021 and 2022, with achievement rates of 104.2 per cent and 109.5 per cent, respectively. However, since 2023, resource mobilization has remained below target. In 2023, UN Women mobilized US\$ 2.62 million against a target of US\$ 3.30 million, corresponding to 79.4 per cent achievement and a 20.6 per cent shortfall. In 2024, US\$ 3.65 million was mobilized against a target of US\$ 3.90 million, corresponding to 93.6 per cent achievement and a 6.4 per cent shortfall. In 2025, US\$ 2.73 million was mobilized against a target of US\$ 3.40 million, corresponding to 80.3 per cent achievement and a 19.7 per cent shortfall. This points to a continued gap between projected and actual resource inflows.

The Country Office relies heavily on non-core resources, which represented approximately 57 per cent of total funding over the period, compared to 26 per cent core resources, 16 per cent Institutional Budget and 1 per cent other extrabudgetary funds. The top donor over 2021–2025 was the African Development Bank (US\$ 3.36 million), followed by the Government of Japan (US\$ 0.92 million), the Multi Donor Trust Fund Office (US\$ 0.66 million), UNAIDS (US\$ 0.57 million) and the UN Trust Fund for Human Security (US\$ 0.50 million). Additional contributions were received from the Government of France (US\$ 0.34 million), UNICEF (US\$ 0.26 million), La Fondation Endeavour Mining (US\$ 0.22 million), the Swedish International Development Cooperation (US\$ 0.13 million), the Peacebuilding Fund (US\$ 0.11 million) and several bilateral partners with smaller envelopes ranging from US\$ 0.02 to US\$ 0.05 million. This distribution indicates both a strong partnership with the African Development Bank and a concentration of funding among a limited number of donors.

In 2022, the WEE portfolio had received the highest allocation of funding (**US\$ 0.55 million**), followed by WPP/G&PPL (**US\$ 0.40 million**) and **EVAW (US\$ 0.20 million)**. This distribution reflects both donor interest and national priorities, although it also contributed to imbalances in the portfolio.

Figure 2 below summarizes the Country Office's human resources and financial resources portfolio during the Strategic Note period (2021–2025).

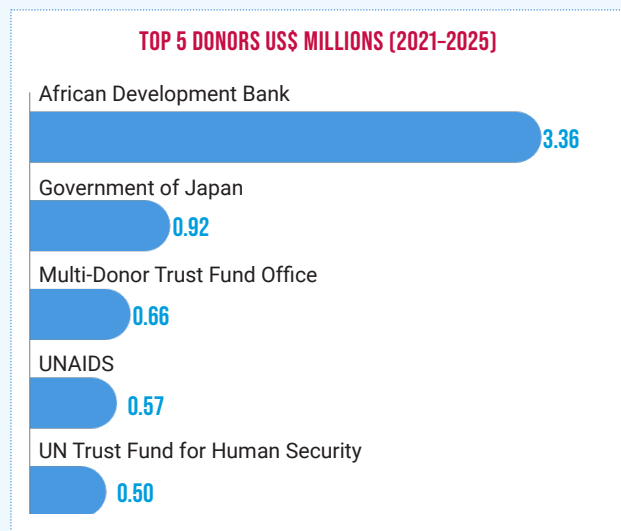
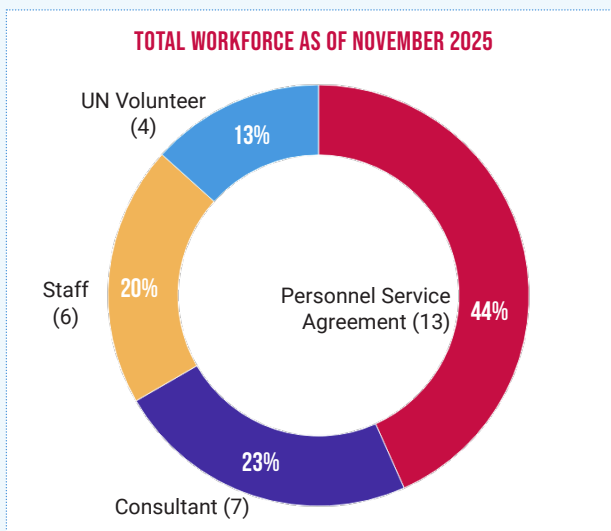
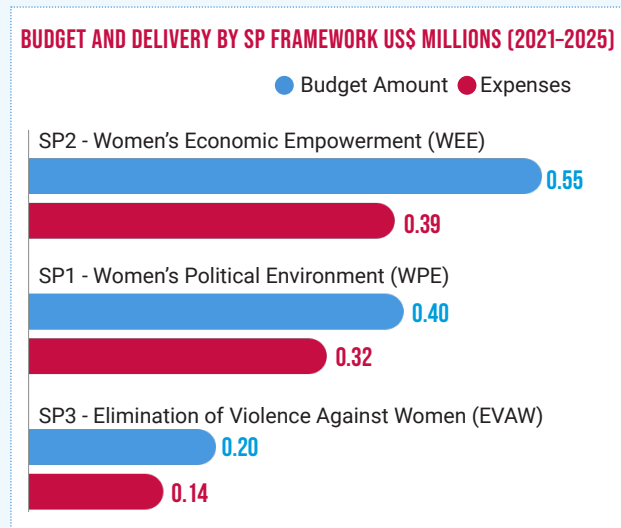
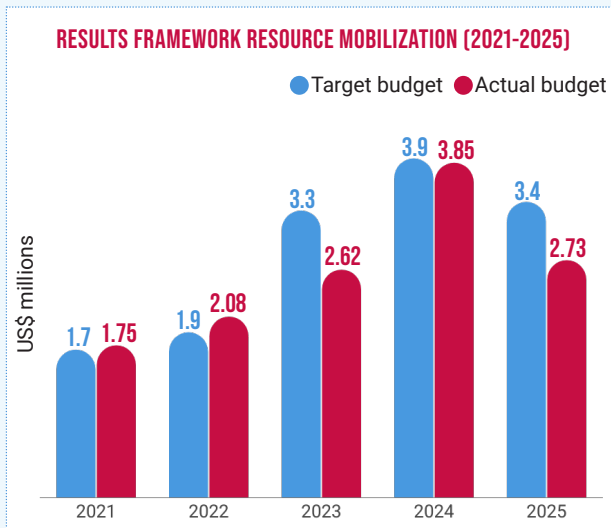
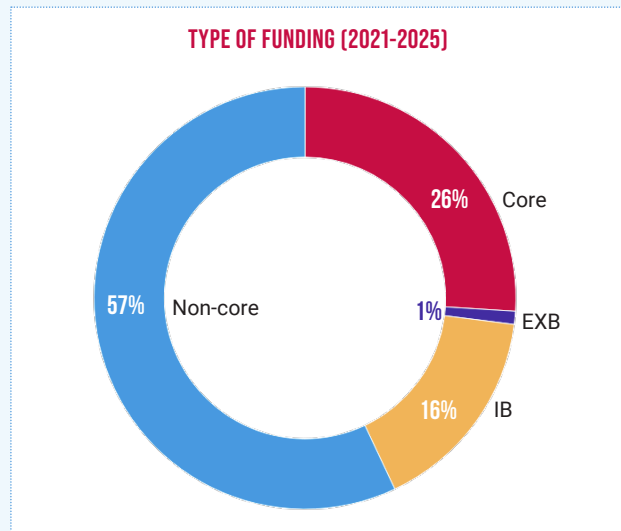
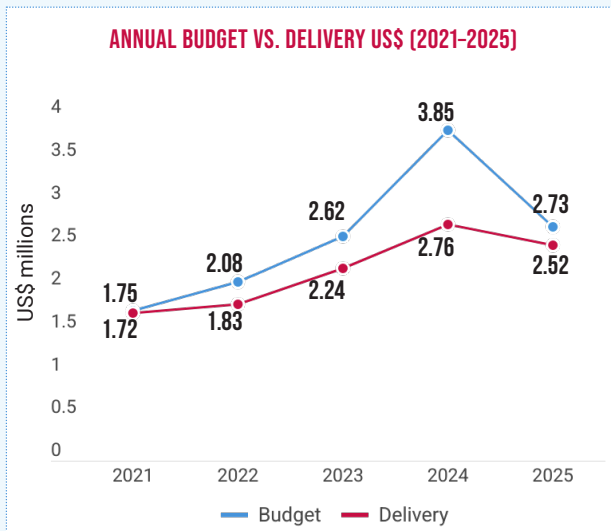
3.4 KEY PARTNERS

The Country Office engages a broad range of stakeholders across its normative, coordination and operational mandates. The main stakeholder groups are:

- **Government partners**, including the Ministry of Women, Family and Children as the primary counterpart, along with sectoral ministries, the National Assembly and Senate, and the National Human Rights Council, all contributing to gender-responsive policymaking, implementation and oversight.
- **CSOs**, including women's rights networks and youth associations such as the Monitoring Committee for Gender in Electoral Processes, the Network of Women Peace Mediators and the Platform of Youth Organizations for the Affirmation of Women, engaged in advocacy, capacity development and community level action.
- **UN Women headquarters and its West and Central Africa Regional Office**, providing technical backstopping and strategic support to the Strategic Note.
- **UN agencies**, including UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNODC and OHCHR, collaborating with UN Women through joint programming and coordination mechanisms under the UN Country Team.
- **Donors and multilateral partners**, comprising bilateral and multilateral institutions partners (various European partners, the African Development Bank, World Bank, Korea International Cooperation Agency and others) which finance and support gender equality and the empowerment of women priorities in Côte d'Ivoire.

FIGURE 2.

Portfolio analysis 2021–2025



Source: Prepared by the evaluation team. Data sourced from Quantum



4

FINDINGS

4.1 RELEVANCE

Are UN Women's programme interventions aligned with national policies, international human rights standards and gender equality objectives?

FINDING 1

UN Women's portfolio is well aligned with Côte d'Ivoire's national frameworks and international human rights standards, reflecting a consistent understanding of the structural barriers facing women and girls. The alignment is most evident in governance reforms, economic inclusion initiatives, support to the national GBV strategy and implementation of UNSCR 1325. Relevance was enhanced by the Country Office's adaptive approach during periods of heightened insecurity, although several interventions remained narrowly scoped relative to the scale of national needs. Overall, programming responds to priority gender challenges, but the depth of adaptation to diverse groups of women varies across impact areas.

The Country Office's Strategic Note for 2021-2025 is closely aligned with the Government's National Development Plan (PND) for the same period. The Strategic Note positions gender equality and women's empowerment as both a cross-cutting principle and a development goal, leveraging UN Women's triple mandate (normative, coordination, operational).

UN Women's ambitious outcomes and outputs reflect elements of the PND's objectives, especially around inclusive growth, human capital, governance and structural transformation, while also addressing cross-cutting commitments.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

GOVERNANCE AND WPP

The shared vision of inclusive governance and strengthened democratic institutions is evident in the frameworks mentioned above. UN Women advances these priorities by promoting women's representation in elected bodies and embedding gender-responsive governance practices.

Key interventions include support for the effective application of the 2019 quota law mandating 30 per cent representatives in elected assemblies be women. UN Women's target of 30 per cent representation in both national and local governments by 2025 exceeds the PND's parliamentary target of 21 per cent. Initiatives such as the *Pépinière des jeunes femmes en politique* (or Incubator for young women in politics) and "Gender Clubs" in universities expand the pool of qualified female candidates. UN Women also works to transform social norms by engaging political parties, the Independent Electoral Commission and the media. The Monitoring Committee on Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Processes creates a platform for accountability, aligning with the PND's emphasis on consolidating democratic institutions.

WEE

Economic transformation and inclusive growth are central to the PND, and UN Women's explicit emphasis on enhancing women's access to productive resources, markets and decent work is tightly connected to Pillar 1 (economic transformation), Pillar 2 (human capital) and Pillar 3 (private sector development) of the PND.

Projects such as *Empowering Women through Climate-Smart Agriculture* and the *BuyFromWomen* ICT platform connect women farmers to markets, finance and training, echoing the PND's objective of integrating tens of thousands of women into agricultural value chains. The *Second Chance Education* programme aims to enhance education and vocational opportunities for out-of-school girls and young women, directly supporting the creation of a skilled workforce. UN Women's work to formalize women's employment, through partnerships with Côte d'Ivoire Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises and affirmative procurement reforms, aims to reduce women's overrepresentation in the informal sector (94.5 per cent to 82 per cent by 2025).

While modest in scale compared to the PND's macro-economic ambitions, these interventions were designed to address structural constraints affecting women's economic participation, including land tenure insecurity, informal employment and limited access to productive resources. Evidence on economic results and the depth of catalytic effects is discussed under the Effectiveness section of this report.

EVAW

Ending violence against women and girls is recognized as a national priority and is central to the Strategic Note. UN Women contributes to this commitment (PND's Pillar 4: strengthening inclusion and social action) by strengthening both state and community responses.

Through support to implementation of the national GBV Strategy and by working closely with government and other UN agencies, the Country Office helps

operationalize policy commitments. This includes joint programming such as the Muskoka projects on sexual health and partnerships with UNAIDS. Prevention efforts are pursued through large-scale campaigns such as *HeForShe* and *16 Days of Activism*, while the *Safe City* programme addresses violence in public spaces, supporting the PND's safe urban development objectives. Ambitious targets, such as reducing intimate partner violence to 14 per cent by 2025, reflect UN Women's determination to push beyond existing benchmarks.

WPS/HA AND DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

The PND highlights peace, security and resilience as preconditions for development, with a focus on the fragile northern and border regions. UN Women's interventions in this area directly align with PND Pillar 6 (peace and security) and Pillar 5 (regional development and environment). UN Women contributes by supporting implementation of Côte d'Ivoire's National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and building the capacity of women's networks and community mediators for conflict prevention and resolution. In keeping with the fourth pillar of the WPS/HA agenda,⁸ humanitarian projects in the northern regions (e.g. Tchologo, Bounkani) respond to the urgent needs of women and girls, while also linking immediate aid with longer-term socioeconomic⁹ recovery, bridging the humanitarian–development nexus. UN Women also advances gender-responsive disaster risk management, in line with the PND's emphasis on climate change adaptation and resilience.

CROSS-CUTTING ALIGNMENT

Beyond thematic impact areas, the Strategic Note aims to reinforce the PND's commitments to evidence-based planning and inclusive governance. It includes outputs on strengthening gender statistics, gender-responsive budgeting and inter-institutional coordination. These contributions, though less visible, are important to embedding gender equality and the empowerment of women across all sectors and ensuring evidence-based planning and public accountability.

⁸ In line with UNSCR 1325, the WPS/HA agenda's pillars are prevention, protection, participation and relief/recovery.

⁹ The [Windhoek-25 Declaration](#) echoed this theme by calling for sustainable financing and gender-responsive budgeting, measures that go beyond the concomitant [Outcome Document](#), which specifically highlighted the commitment of Great Lakes women to "support Women Economic empowerment and cross-border trade initiatives".

The previous sub-section assessed alignment with national policies and international standards. This sub-section examines a distinct but related question: whether UN Women's programme interventions are adapted to the needs of women and girls in Côte d'Ivoire, including in contexts of insecurity and humanitarian crisis.

TARGETED PEACE AND SECURITY INTERVENTIONS

Interviewed participants, both from the Country Office and national partners commended the flexibility of UN Women when it was clear that the security environment in Côte d'Ivoire was rapidly evolving. The Country Office demonstrated programming agility by skillfully incorporating rapid WPS/HA interventions. Initially, the Strategic Note broadly programmed support for implementation of UNSCR 1325 through institutional strengthening and the adoption of a national action plan¹⁰. However, the deterioration in regional security, including spillover risks from Mali and Burkina Faso, combined with a tense pre-electoral climate in Côte d'Ivoire, reportedly created pressures for targeted action. UN Women accelerated advocacy for the adoption of the second-generation National Action Plan 1325, facilitated training for women diplomats and worked with the Ministry of National Cohesion and the Network of Women Peace Mediators to contribute to violence prevention, both in relation to election processes and broader peacebuilding efforts.¹¹ These actions were not originally specified in the Country Office's Development Results Framework but appear to have been introduced in response to both subregional insecurity and domestic electoral tensions. During consultations conducted for this CPE, officials from the Ministry of Women, Family and Children identified the second-generation National Action Plan 1325 as a result of support by UN Women and other partners.

ENTRY INTO HUMANITARIAN ACTION

The Development Results Framework primarily emphasized development interventions and contained no explicit humanitarian component¹². However, by 2023, the reported arrival of over 44,000 asylum seekers in northern Côte d'Ivoire prompted the government to request UN support. At this juncture, the Country Office accessed Japan's Supplementary Budget, mobilizing approximately US\$ 548,000 to launch a humanitarian project¹³ in the North-East, thereby ensuring women's participation in humanitarian assessments and response mechanisms. While tapping into Japan's funding window can be viewed as timely, it should be noted that this pattern appears partly structural, reflecting the Country Office's high reliance on non-core and short-term project funding, which influenced programme design through evolving financing opportunities and partnership dynamics. Emergent coherence allowed the portfolio to adapt to national priorities and progressively build linkages across impact areas. In several instances, synergies became visible after funding had been secured and projects were under way, rather than being explicitly structured at the outset through a consolidated financing architecture. As a result, coherence was identifiable retrospectively by the evaluation, and not always systematically leveraged or tracked at outcome level.

¹⁰ Development Results Framework 2021, p.9

¹¹ Annual reports, 2022 and 2023

¹² Development Results Framework 2021, pp.6-11

¹³ Project title: *Meeting the urgent needs of women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis in northern Côte d'Ivoire and ensuring their full participation in the humanitarian response.*

Across impact areas, interventions aligned around shared normative frameworks, recurrent engagement with the same institutional counterparts and a broadly consistent problem diagnosis, even when funding windows or donor priorities shaped sequencing. There is clearer intentionality in the WEE portfolio, where the *BuyFromWomen* platform served as a unifying backbone for subsequent projects. In WPP, coherence became more visible over time through complementary engagements with electoral bodies, parliament and youth constituencies, which is consistent with the portfolio's intention, although this alignment was not anchored in an explicit portfolio logic from the outset.

EVAW efforts also reflected deliberate attempts to minimize duplication, particularly through joint programming. However, parallel funding streams and heterogeneous implementation arrangements meant that coherence often had to be actively built and maintained through coordination rather than being structurally embedded from the start. The WPS/HA portfolio appears coherent largely because successive projects drew on common national frameworks (UNSCR 1325 and the National Action Plan) and accumulated technical experience over time, even though funding remained fragmented and opportunistic. The subsequent sections detail how these dynamics unfolded within each thematic area.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

4.2 COHERENCE

Coherence by Impact Area

How coherent is the portfolio in avoiding duplication and fostering internal synergies across impact areas?

FINDING 2

The portfolio exhibits a coherence that is largely cumulative rather than deliberately engineered. Overall, the Country Office's interventions form a body of work that is broadly coherent in intent and practice, although variable in the extent to which this coherence was planned ex ante or took shape progressively in response to contextual shifts, donor opportunities and institutional partnerships.

COHERENCE OF THE WPP PORTFOLIO

The WPP portfolio presents a pattern of coherence. While WPP projects differed in scope and focus, their combined and cumulative effect contributes to multi-dimensional engagement. Although not grounded in a unified strategic framework from the outset, this coherence may stem from a combination of contextual factors, donor-driven priorities and institutional momentum.

Under the WPP impact area, the Country Office implemented three projects between 2021 and 2025: *Electoral Support Project*,¹⁴ *Increasing and Enhancing WPP*¹⁵ and *University Gender Clubs*.¹⁶ These projects, while distinct¹⁷ in scope and timing, exhibit a degree of thematic and operational coherence when viewed retrospectively.

Across the three projects, differences in institutional counterparts, thematic focus and geographic coverage appear to have limited the risk of duplication. The *Electoral Support Project* worked with electoral bodies and government agencies, *Increasing and Enhancing WPP* with parliament and mediation networks, and *University Gender Clubs* with academic institutions and youth associations. Thematically, the

projects addressed electoral governance, civic participation and educational empowerment, respectively. Geographically, while the *Electoral Support Project* and *Increasing and Enhancing WPP* concentrated on urban centers such as Abidjan, Yamoussoukro and Bouaké, the *University Gender Clubs* operated in university communities including Daloa and Korhogo. Although all three projects included sensitization and training components, their audiences and framing differed. This reduced the likelihood of overlapping activities.

Some synergies are observable across the WPP portfolio. The projects rely on key advocacy networks, such as the Women Mediators Network, and appear to build on one another in terms of institutional engagement, moving from electoral bodies to legislative institutions and then to educational settings. However, these linkages are only observed *a posteriori*. Their emergence may reflect opportunistic alignment rather than strategic planning, as the links are not always formally articulated in project design documents. This suggests that the Country Office built on existing partnerships and synergies over time, although ex ante portfolio coherence was not always articulated in project design documents.

¹⁴ Or "Support for increased participation of women in the electoral process", in full

¹⁵ Or "Increasing and Enhancing Women Political Participation in electoral processes in Côte d'Ivoire", in full

¹⁶ Or "Support for strengthening the leadership of young girls and promoting their access to and participation in scientific fields, through University Gender Clubs", in full

¹⁷ See Annex 15: Key features of WPP projects

COHERENCE OF THE WEE IMPACT AREA

The WEE portfolio articulated a coherent design anchored in the BuyFromWomen model, intended to establish a core operational and conceptual foundation that would be expanded, strengthened and adapted through interlinked initiatives. However, in practice, the WEE portfolio only partially delivered an integrated and synergistic programme.

Coherence in the WEE portfolio is primarily structured around the *BuyfromWomen initiative*,¹⁸ which functions as an anchoring reference point for a series of related interventions. Rather than operating as a tightly integrated programme, the portfolio appears to have evolved through a sequencing of projects that build conceptually on earlier work, particularly in digital market access and cooperative strengthening.

Subsequent initiatives were designed with reference to the *BuyFromWomen* platform, extending its logic into areas such as agricultural value chains, affirmative procurement, education and mining-related economic inclusion. This has contributed to a degree of conceptual alignment across interventions, particularly in their shared focus on improving women's access to markets, information and productive resources.

Evidence¹⁹ suggests that coherence is largely driven by the reuse of an initial model and its adaptation across different contexts rather than by a formally integrated programme architecture. While this has supported continuity of approach, linkages across interventions vary in strength depending on funding streams, implementation arrangements and sectoral focus.

Coordination mechanisms, including steering arrangements, are reported to have helped manage potential overlap, particularly in relation to cooperative engagement and training activities. However, the portfolio still reflects a set of partially connected interventions rather than a fully integrated programme structure, with varying degrees of alignment across projects.

COHERENCE OF THE EVAW IMPACT AREA

Coherence was maintained through inter-agency collaboration and formal coordination mechanisms in EVAW programming, contributing to reduced risks of duplication. However, multiple funding streams within UN Women's EVAW portfolio supported similar GBV service-delivery gaps, particularly in the establishment of support centres, training of local frontline personnel and equipping of facilities, creating a risk of overlap.

Coherence is strongest within the joint *Reproductive Rights and Nutrition*²⁰ project, which embeds GBV within a broader reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health and nutrition framework. This initiative brings together the complementary mandates of UN Women, UNICEF, UNFPA and WHO and was conceived as the principal mechanism through which synergy in the EVAW portfolio could be achieved. In practice, coherence is operationalized through the pooling of financial resources, shared geographic prioritization and specialized delegation based on comparative advantage. For example, under the UNICEF–UN Women agreement, UN Women's expertise in GBV survivor support and socioeconomic reintegration is explicitly leveraged to fill identified programmatic gaps in the North-East, thereby reducing the likelihood of parallel interventions and strengthening the overall intervention logic.

Despite this structure, risks of duplication persist. The joint *Reproductive Rights and Nutrition* project and the *Service & Resilience for GBV Survivors* project²¹ implement similar lines of work, including the establishment or reinforcement of GBV support centres and the training of healthcare personnel on GBV response. The Gbêkê coordination platform was intended to promote complementarity, yet multiple annual funding streams addressed the same bottlenecks, specifically by training personnel and equipping facilities. This creates a risk of overlap. While inter-agency coordination appears to have reduced duplication risks at the broader programme level, a separate coordination issue

¹⁸ Or "Empowering Women in Agriculture through Access to ICT"

¹⁹ See Annex 16

²⁰ Full title: "Contribute to reducing maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent mortality and morbidity."

²¹ The first is jointly implemented by UNICEF and UN Women, while the latter involves six partners: UNFPA, World Bank, WHO, UN Women, UNAIDS and UNICEF

remained across parallel ERAW projects and funding streams. In that respect, overlap risks persisted where it was not clearly established which personnel were trained, which facilities were supported and how content differentiation was managed. Without such safeguards, operational efficiency may be reduced and resources diluted. Furthermore, although conceptually positioned as deepening the supply-side model pursued under *Reproductive Rights and Nutrition*, the *Service & Resilience* project operates through parallel institutional arrangements, involving six implementation partners and separate reporting lines. If not anchored under the National GBV Platform's coordination mechanisms, these dual structures may inadvertently contribute to fragmentation.

Some initiatives within the ERAW portfolio also missed opportunities for synergy. The 16 Days of Activism campaign remained a stand-alone global awareness effort and was not strategically linked to ongoing service-delivery initiatives. Its visibility did not translate into strengthened referral pathways or increased utilization of GBV services, such as those provided in the North-East under the *Service & Resilience* project. Greater cross-referencing between the global campaign and local service delivery could have amplified both outreach and impact.

The inclusion of HIV-related activities within the ERAW portfolio raises a separate coherence consideration. While the Strategic Note's ERAW outcome focuses on freedom from violence and does not explicitly reference HIV or sexual and reproductive health, placing HIV-related interventions within ERAW is conceptually defensible. GBV and gender inequality are well-established structural drivers of the HIV epidemic, and comprehensive survivor-centred services appropriately include components such as Post-Exposure Prophylaxis. Furthermore, under the UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), GBV is treated as both a cause and consequence of HIV-related inequalities, reinforcing the normative link between HIV prevention and gender equality. The integration of HIV-related interventions within the ERAW portfolio therefore reflects global normative guidance, even if it extends beyond the formal phrasing of the Strategic Note's ERAW outcome.

Overall, while the ERAW portfolio has made deliberate efforts to mitigate duplication through joint programming and specialization of roles, some coherence challenges persist where parallel funding streams, institutional arrangements or stand-alone initiatives are not fully harmonized under national and inter-agency coordination structures. Strengthening these linkages would better consolidate the portfolio's collective contribution to ERAW in Côte d'Ivoire.

COHERENCE OF THE WPS/HA IMPACT AREA

Coherence was achieved across the WPS/HA portfolio through adaptive alignment despite funding unpredictability, which largely determined sequencing. Shared reference points, especially UNSCR 1325, the National Action Plan, recurring institutional partnerships and consistent emphasis on women's participation and protection generated a cumulative body of coherent interventions. Duplication appears to have been limited through coordination, differentiated project geography, institutional partnerships and thematic focus, as well as through the Country Office's ability to build conceptually on prior experience as new funding windows became available.

Over time, coordination mechanisms (including steering committees with government participation and consultation within humanitarian clusters) appear to have helped strengthen complementarity even under time-bound funding cycles. This improvement is linked to a gradual consolidation of approaches and a clearer demarcation of institutional, geographic and thematic scopes across projects.

Interviewed participants noted that over the last programming cycle, UN Women's interventions have shown greater complementarity, both internally within the WPS/HA portfolio and across UN agencies through coordination with the National Security Council, the Ministry of Women, Family and Children, and the United Nations Country Team. Prior to 2020, WPS/HA programming showed instances of overlapping community mediation and conflict-prevention activities, particularly where multiple partners supported similar interventions within the same localities.²²

²² Evaluation of the "Women Actors of Conflict Prevention" Initiative, 2019, p.27-28

An analysis of four WPS/HA-related projects implemented by the Country Office reveals that conceptual linkages and complementarity progressively emerged over time, even though programming at the project level depended largely on the availability and timing of external funding. While the Strategic Note provided an overarching direction grounded in UNSCR 1325, much of the actual implementation evolved through donor-funded windows that were not necessarily pre-planned. Nonetheless, when examined collectively, these initiatives form a coherent body of work that progressively connects local peacebuilding, institutional reform and humanitarian action.

The *Gbêkê Peace and Local Development* project, financed by the UN Trust Fund for Human Security²³, was designed to establish local peace infrastructures and strengthen the participation of women mediators and civil society leaders in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes in the Gbêkê region. Later projects would then draw upon this valuable base of experience in community mediation, even if not by design, as they expanded UN Women's engagement from local peacebuilding to institutional reform and humanitarian action.

During the same period, the *Barrier Assessment on Women's Participation in Peacekeeping* was funded through the Elsie Initiative Fund. Its focus differed in scope and level, aiming to identify institutional barriers to the recruitment and deployment of women in the national police and peacekeeping operations. The assessment aimed to generate empirical data that would inform the second-generation National Action Plan (2023–2027) for UNSCR 1325. Although the *Barrier Assessment* was not conceived as a continuation of the Gbêkê project, the two initiatives reinforced one another across governance levels: the first anchoring women's participation locally, the second informing national institutions.

Later, the Japan Supplementary Budget-funded project *Meeting the Urgent Needs of Women and Girls Affected by the Humanitarian Crisis in Northern Côte d'Ivoire* extended the WPS/HA agenda into the humanitarian domain. The project drew on UN Women's global *Leadership, Empowerment, Access and Protection* (LEAP) approach and sought to mainstream gender in the national humanitarian response and promote the leadership and protection of women and girls. It was positioned within the government's request for urgent support in the Bounkani and Tchologo regions following a surge of asylum seekers arriving from Burkina Faso. While this was an ad hoc response to an emerging crisis, its alignment with WPS/HA principles allowed it to connect conceptually with ongoing peace and governance efforts.

Two years later, the Japan Supplementary Budget-funded project *Emergency Support to Vulnerable Women and Youth in Asylum-Hosting Communities* consolidated this shift towards the humanitarian-peace-development nexus. This follow-up project operated in the same northern regions and in parts of Nawa and Haut-Sassandra. However, it was designed to combine emergency support with livelihood restoration and social cohesion measures. Rather than repeating earlier actions, it was intended to extend efforts beyond crisis response towards resilience and recovery.

Overall, these projects display an emergent rather than predetermined coherence. Each originated from separate funding opportunities: the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, the Elsie Initiative Fund and successive tranches of the Japan Supplementary Budget, whose modalities and timing were largely outside the control of the Country Office. Nevertheless, common normative frameworks (UNSCR 1325, the National Action Plan and the WPS/HA framework) and a consistent focus on women's leadership and protection produced conceptual intersections across initiatives.

²³ The UNTFHS is a UN financial mechanism established in 1999 to fund field-level programs that address complex, multidimensional threats to people's survival, livelihood, and dignity.

Thematic convergence within this programmatic area also benefitted from relative continuity among some key interlocutors and long-standing institutional partnerships, such as the Ministry of Women, Family and Children and the National Security Council, even though staffing continuity remained a challenge for the Country Office.

Geographic differentiation further reduced the risk of duplication. While the *Gbêkê* and *Barrier Assessment* projects operated at national and institutional levels, the Japan Supplementary Budget-funded interventions concentrated in the north-eastern part of the country (Bounkani and Tchologo), where security and

displacement pressures were most severe. Coordination mechanisms, such as steering committees with government participation and consultation within humanitarian clusters helped ensure complementarity even under time-bound funding cycles.

Overall, the coherence of the WPS/HA portfolio is best understood as adaptive and cumulative, shaped by shifting donor opportunities and contextual demands rather than by a deliberate *ex ante* design. Nevertheless, each project added a new conceptual layer (local peace-building, institutional reform, humanitarian action or recovery) that aligned naturally within UN Women's broader mandate and normative frameworks.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

UN system coordination on gender

In what ways did UN Women contribute to the coherence of the UN's work in Côte d'Ivoire on gender equality and the empowerment of women?

FINDING 3

UN Women's leadership of the UN Gender Thematic Group and Outcome Groups 6 and 8 helped anchor gender equality within collective planning under the UNSDCF and strengthen role clarity and accountability through tools such as UNCT-SWAP and the Gender Scorecard. However, coherence was stronger in coordination processes, role clarification and reporting than in sustained implementation-level coordination across agencies. Periods of inactivity within the Gender Thematic Group exposed the fragility of coordination arrangements dependent on staffing continuity, indicating the need for more resilient and collectively owned governance models.

The 2021–2025 UNSDCF positioned gender equality and women's empowerment both as a stand-alone priority and a cross-cutting theme across all outcome areas. Within this architecture, UN Women's Strategic Note and Development Results Framework treated coordination as a result in itself, reflected in indicators on the functionality of inter-agency gender mechanisms and UN entities' performance under UNCT-SWAP. This gave the Country Office a dual role within the UN Country Team, combining convening authority on gender equality with technical oversight of accountability tools. In practice, the Country Office chaired the Gender Thematic Group, led Outcome Group 6 on gender equality and co-led Outcome Group 8 on governance, making the Country Office a central reference point for gender policy guidance, quality assurance and system-wide coordination.

To address earlier concerns related to duplication and unclear accountability, the Gender Thematic Group was restructured in 2021 to distinguish policy-level dialogue within the group from operational delivery through the UNSDCF results groups. This restructuring improved procedural clarity, particularly around work planning, reporting and accountability tools. However, coherence remained stronger in coordination processes and reporting than in the operationalization of joint financing arrangements and outcome-level delivery across agencies. Members of the Gender Thematic Group reported a four-to-six-month period of inactivity in 2025, largely linked to the temporary absence of a key UN Women staff member. This exposed the mechanism's reliance on a single convening entity and highlighted the limited resilience of coordination arrangements in the absence of routine co-leadership or decentralized facilitation.

Despite these limitations, stakeholders consistently emphasized that UN Women's leadership remains central to sustaining coherence in the UN's gender architecture. Coordination gains were most visible where they were linked to concrete joint programming platforms. Joint peacebuilding and resilience initiatives with UNICEF and UNFPA in the northern regions benefitted from pooled expertise, shared planning processes and clearer thematic alignment. The joint UNDP–UN Women project in the Gbêkê region similarly illustrated how pooled procurement, recruitment, monitoring and regular coordination with the Resident Coordinator's Office could reduce duplication, clarify division of labour and strengthen complementarity between agencies, offering a replicable model for future multi-agency programming.

Beyond the UN system, UN Women also contributed to broader multi-stakeholder coherence on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Country Office co-chaired the Sectoral Working Group on Gender with the European Union Delegation, bringing together UN agencies, bilateral partners and international financial institutions. The Country Office also served as vice-chair and secretariat of the national GBV coordination mechanism led by the Ministry of Women, Family and Children. While these platforms primarily generated procedural outputs (such as regular meetings, joint reviews and shared data tools), they supported policy alignment, strengthened joint monitoring and increased the visibility of gender equality and women's empowerment across national reform agendas.

4.3 EFFECTIVENESS

What are the key results of UN Women's work in Côte d'Ivoire? What factors promote or hinder the achievement of observed results?

FINDING 4

The Country Office contributed to strengthening gender-responsive laws and institutions and supported gains in women's political representation. Performance was strongest where long-standing partnerships and clear institutional entry points enabled technical assistance to translate into identifiable policy and institutional reforms. However, evidence of large-scale, tangible improvements in women's daily lives, including participation, economic security and physical safety, remains limited, reflecting constrained funding envelopes, short project cycles and weak outcome-level measurement. As a result, several interventions operated at modest scale and relied primarily on self-reported data, making community-level change difficult to verify.

Through sustained technical and advisory engagement, the Country Office supported the adoption and institutionalization of key gender-responsive reforms in WPP, most visibly in the operationalization of the 30 per cent quota framework and strengthening of gender mechanisms within electoral governance. These reforms were accompanied by measurable gains in women's representation in the 2023 local elections, where women's participation exceeded 32 per cent compared to approximately 15 per cent in 2018.

Structural reforms and representation gains are clearly documented, especially where technical support was anchored in formal institutional processes and sustained partnerships. However, evidence regarding the depth and sustainability of downstream empowerment effects for women candidates and community actors remains more limited.

A central contribution of the portfolio lies in its support to national normative frameworks. The Country Office provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Women, Family and Children on priority documents, including the Second National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and the National Plan for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. UN Women also supported mainstreaming

gender within major national planning instruments (including the National Development Plan 2021 to 2025 and the UNSDCF) by providing gender expertise and facilitating inter-agency processes. Support to the Independent Electoral Commission produced another visible institutional gain, culminating in the formal creation of the Commission on Gender by decree in January 2021, which stakeholders described as a durable structural development.

Capacity development remained a core modality. National and local partners received training and advisory support on gender analysis, gender-responsive planning and budgeting, leadership, GBV response and gender data, with Regional Office support. The Country Office also generated or commissioned assessments that informed programmatic choices.²⁴ Civil society partners, particularly women's groups and youth networks, reportedly strengthened capacities in advocacy, early warning, prevention of electoral violence and community mobilization. Interventions often relied on early engagement with community leaders, which partners viewed as facilitating acceptance and uptake among women's groups.²⁵

²⁴ Including the COVID-19 impact study, which revealed the acute vulnerability of women-led businesses and guided recovery assistance, while the BuyfromWomen deployment assessment and cassava value chain analysis defined the contextual and educational barriers (especially illiteracy) that needed to be addressed to successfully integrate rural women into the digital marketplace via the BuyFromWomen platform.

²⁵ Shea value chain project evaluation, pp.25, 36-37; see also the evaluation of the project Women and Girls as Actors in Conflict Prevention, pp. 22, 66.

At community level, results present a mixed pattern. The 16 Days of Activism campaigns, implemented with government and civil society partners, reportedly reached close to 10,000 people²⁶ across Abidjan, Bélier and Gbêkê. Joint action with the Ministry of Health and community-based partners contributed to strengthened referral pathways for GBV services, while equipment provided to platforms in Man and Daloa were said to have enhanced operational capacity for survivor support.²⁷

In terms of economic empowerment, digital literacy and platform use improved among targeted groups through the *BuyFromWomen* initiative, although delays in key components and limited coverage constrained broader effects. Youth engagement initiatives reportedly trained 175 young leaders on peaceful elections, violence against women in politics and misinformation.²⁸

Despite these reported contributions, the portfolio faced recurrent limitations in verifying outcome-level change. Monitoring arrangements varied across projects, and many relied on activity-level indicators or self-reported figures which do not capture behavioural change, service quality or institutional practice. Implementation was often constrained by short funding cycles, small financial envelopes and delays caused by partner capacity gaps. As a result, evidence of change at household or community level remains partial, especially for WEE, GBV prevention and youth civic engagement.

UN Women's coordination role continued to provide discernible added value. Even when intermittently active, the Gender Thematic Group generated several substantive outputs. Members highlighted its contribution to finalization of the forthcoming National Gender Policy and its coordination of the 2023 Gender Scorecard exercise in collaboration with the Resident Coordinator's Office. The Gender Scorecard showed an increase in the

proportion of UN entities meeting or exceeding UNCT-SWAP minimum standards, from 33 per cent in 2022 (5 of 15 entities) to 46.7 per cent in 2023 (7 of 15 entities), approaching the Strategic Note target of 50 per cent by 2025. At the same time, the exercise identified persistent challenges related to gender parity within the UN system; limited investment in gender-capacity development; and insufficient tracking of gender integration in country analyses. These findings suggest that coordination mechanisms were an important contributor to system-wide improvement, but that progress also depended on other factors, including corporate requirements, agency-level leadership and donor expectations.

As chair of the Gender Thematic Group and facilitator of UNSDCF Outcome Group 6, the Country Office helped unify UN system contributions on gender, although continuity was affected during staffing transitions. Joint programming emerged prominently in peacebuilding and resilience efforts with UNICEF and UNFPA, such as the *Resilience Project 2025*,²⁹ supporting more coherent interventions in the northern regions. The Development Partners' Gender Thematic Group offered an additional platform for harmonizing perspectives across government and technical partners. While these mechanisms produced procedural gains and strengthened gender mainstreaming in collective frameworks, stakeholders noted that deeper thematic integration and more consistent convening would further enhance effectiveness.

Overall, the effectiveness of the portfolio reflects a pattern of solid institutional influence paired with modest and uneven progress in translating these gains into measurable outcome-level change for women and girls. The thematic segments that follow examine this pattern in greater depth for WPP, WEE, EVAW and WPS/HA.

²⁶ The broad reach to the general public was noted in the 16 Days of Activism campaign report (2024) which focused on media and university engagement.

²⁷ UBRAF Annual Report 2021, p.1

²⁸ Annual Report 2024, p.13

²⁹ Strengthening resilience in the North-East of Côte d'Ivoire

EFFECTIVENESS IN WPP

UN Women's Governance and WPP portfolio was at its most effective in advancing normative and institutional reforms, resulting in measurable gains in women's political representation. The portfolio was less able to demonstrate outcome-level change at grassroots and operational levels, largely because limited scale, constrained resources and weak outcome monitoring reduced the visibility of transformation beyond institutional and electoral gains.

The WPP portfolio's most significant contributions lie in electoral and governance reform, reflecting the strategic ambition that women fully and equally participate in leadership and decision-making and benefit from gender-responsive governance. Technical assistance to the Independent Electoral Commission played a catalytic role in harmonizing the electoral code with Law 2019-870 and Decree 2020-941 enabling the effective enforcement of the 30 per cent quota for women candidates. This support contributed to a substantial rise in women's representation in the 2023 local elections, where women secured 32.71 per cent of municipal council seats and 32.40 per cent of regional council seats, compared with 15.43 per cent and 12.63 per cent respectively in 2018.³⁰ These gains illustrate how upstream normative engagement translated into concrete improvements in the gender balance of elected bodies.

Institutionalizing gender within electoral governance further deepened these reforms. The establishment of the Gender Thematic Commission, created under Independent Electoral Commission Ordinance No.

029/CEI/PDT (2020), provided a formal mechanism for integrating gender into electoral governance and was described³¹ by participants as a turning point for systematizing accountability. Complementary support to parliament – including a gender audit, the drafting of a gender strategy and capacity-building for 25 MPs and 19 local officials – helped extend gender responsiveness from the electoral body to the legislative branch. Together, these reforms demonstrate how UN Women's technical engagement contributed to embedding gender equality within Côte d'Ivoire's governance architecture.

At the project level, the WPP portfolio operationalized this strategic intent through three flagship initiatives, although the degree of outcome documentation varied. The first, *Increasing Women's Political Participation*,³² provided the technical foundation for the Independent Electoral Commission's Gender Thematic Commission and supported the development of parliamentary gender instruments. Its design was strongly aligned with national and international gender norms.³³ However, evidence of sustained institutionalization remains limited, and the project's longer-term effects will only become observable during future electoral cycles.

The second initiative on *Election Support*,³⁴ delivered sensitization and civic engagement activities in seven regions and reportedly trained 175 community leaders, including 77 women, on civic participation and preventing violence against women in elections.³⁵ While these activities broadened outreach, the available reporting did not document measurable effects on voter registration, female candidacy or women's electoral turnout. Evidence remained centred on outputs rather than behavioural or systemic outcomes.

³⁰ [Election-Des-Conseillers-Municipaux](#) accessed on 3 October 2025

³¹ Also echoed by the 2020 Annual Report and the January 2022 donor report of "Increasing and enhancing women political participation in electoral processes in Côte d'Ivoire" project

³² "Increasing and enhancing women political participation in electoral processes in Côte d'Ivoire"

³³ Annex 11: Strategic Note Result Framework 2021-2025

³⁴ Election Support Project in Côte d'Ivoire

³⁵ The project reportedly trained 175 community leaders (including 77 women) in Abidjan, Tonkpi, Gontougo, Haut-Sassandra, Poro, Béré, and Sud-Comoé

The third project, *University Gender Clubs*,³⁶ was well implemented and contributed to strengthening leadership among young women by creating Gender Clubs in universities; producing procedural and financial management manuals; and promoting girls' participation in science and leadership fields. While outputs were reported as fully delivered,³⁷ it is too early to expect evidence of lasting influence, such as sustained leadership pathways or continued engagement beyond the project cycle.

Across these three initiatives, the WPP portfolio presents coherent strategic intent: institutional support to the Independent Electoral Commission; community sensitization around women's civic participation; and investments in emerging young leaders. However, the results chain remains largely output based. Transformational outcomes, such as increases in women's electoral candidacy, leadership retention or strengthened accountability mechanisms were not systematically documented. No consolidated data were found on women's representation in the judiciary, police, military, prosecution or correction services, despite these being relevant indicators under *SP_D_1*.³⁸ Evidence related to the implementation of parliamentary gender strategies or post-training engagement by project participants was also limited.

Overall, these elements depict a portfolio that was highly effective in advancing structural reforms. The enforcement of the quota law and the increase of women's political representation in the 2023 local elections constitute major achievements. The establishment of gender mechanisms within the Independent Electoral Commission and parliament, and the adoption of the new National Action Plan 1325, represent institutional legacies which are likely to endure. However, evidence remains more limited on the extent to which these upstream gains translated into downstream

empowerment of women candidates, aspirants and community actors. The available evidence is not sufficient to confirm whether these normative reforms have yet generated broader and sustained change at individual or community level.

The Governance and WPP portfolio illustrates that strategic engagement in gender-responsive governance can yield tangible political dividends. To consolidate these gains, future programming will need to strengthen monitoring systems and move beyond one-off capacity-building efforts towards more sustained pathways that connect institutional reforms with measurable empowerment outcomes for women across Côte d'Ivoire.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

³⁶ Or "Strengthening young girls' leadership and promoting their access to and participation in scientific fields through university Gender Clubs"

³⁷ See Project "University Gender Clubs" report of September 2023

³⁸ Namely on Strategic Plan indicators related to the percentage share of women in the police, judiciary, prosecution, military, correction services.

EFFECTIVENESS IN WEE

The WEE portfolio performed more strongly in terms of strategic relevance and normative positioning than in generating large-scale economic outcomes. Investments in digital infrastructure and adapted literacy tools addressed key structural barriers, while targeted affirmative procurement support reportedly benefitted some women entrepreneurs. However, persistent underfunding, limited scale and implementation delays constrained the extent to which these innovations translated into broader economic autonomy. The WEE portfolio strengthened UN Women's convening role in economic governance, but several stalled or incomplete components reduced downstream impact, leaving the Strategic Note's ambition only partially realized.

The WEE portfolio sought to expand economic opportunities for rural women farmers and young women entrepreneurs in alignment with *Outcome CIV_D.2.1*.³⁹ It aimed to improve women's access to productive resources, markets and decent work, using digital solutions, strengthened value chains, entrepreneurial training, affirmative procurement and partnerships with both public and private actors. Across five core initiatives⁴⁰, the portfolio demonstrated strong conceptual grounding and addressed structural barriers that influence women's participation in economic life. However, its capacity to translate innovation into broad-based empowerment was constrained by resource scarcity, implementation delays and gaps in systematic outcome monitoring.

The digital inclusion and agricultural value chain interventions, centred on the *BuyFromWomen* project, were designed to empower rural women producers through a digital platform capable of linking them to markets and

climate information. Recognizing that approximately 55 per cent of rural women in the target areas were illiterate, UN Women reportedly supported the adaptation of a digital application and associated functional literacy module, training 29 endogenous literacy trainers and 30 teachers.⁴¹ The development and regional launch of the platform in 2021 fulfilled a key planned output, and training was delivered to 60 organizations of producers in agriculture.⁴² However, the literacy materials intended to complement the ICT modules were delivered nearly two years later, limiting their pedagogical value and delaying women's ability to effectively use the platform. The Evaluation of the women empowerment through ICT project confirmed the platform as a "manifest proof of the project's effectiveness",⁴³ but also made clear that its actual economic impact remains unverified. Utilization was reportedly low due to connectivity challenges; the high cost of smartphones; and, critically, the non-functionality of the climate-resilience information system, a core component meant to enable climate-smart decision-making. Budget execution patterns contributed to this imbalance, with overspending on technological development and underspending on direct support to women farmers. While training reportedly reached 60 organizations of producers in agriculture as planned, only 1,945 women engaged with the platform, against an original target⁴⁴ of 25,000, revealing a major performance gap. The failure to operationalize the climate-resilience information system, attributed to insufficient resources, technical delays and unclear institutional anchoring, significantly reduced the coherence of the digital strategy; and curtailed the project's ability to support climate-resilient livelihoods. Collectively, these elements suggest that digital infrastructure, although necessary, is insufficient without parallel investment in connectivity, timely delivery of complementary materials and support for community-level adoption that is both timely and sustained, as delays can significantly undermine uptake.

³⁹ Women and girls have greater access to socioeconomic and technological opportunities for their empowerment

⁴⁰ Projects 12640, 13794, 13982, 13880, 14670

⁴¹ UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Progress Note, Work Plan Progress Report, Sept 2024, p.3

⁴² Evaluation of the Women Empowerment through ICT project, 2023, p.10

⁴³ Ibid., p.14

⁴⁴ Strategic Note Indicator "CIV_D.2.1.1A"

The portfolio's work with women-led agrifood cooperatives through the AFAWA project further sought to strengthen market linkages and enterprise competitiveness. The project reportedly supported 270 cooperatives comprising more than 21,300 women; facilitated the creation of peer-learning and networking spaces, including WhatsApp groups connecting approximately 5,000 entrepreneurs; and provided training on cooperative management and formalization.⁴⁵ These activities were effective in mobilizing women, fostering horizontal exchange and contributed to strengthening cooperative structures. However, the project did not provide verifiable evidence of financial outcomes. Although it claimed that "dozens" of contracts were secured by women-led cooperatives, there was no independent confirmation of the number, value or distribution of these contracts. The project did not achieve its intended link with financial institutions, and no data were available on loans secured by women. As a result, while the initiative achieved its outreach and capacity-building objectives, transformational results in income generation or enterprise expansion remain unsubstantiated.

Efforts to expand women's access to markets through affirmative procurement reflected an innovative attempt to influence economic governance structures. The initiative reportedly strengthened the skills of 200 women entrepreneurs in digital technology and contract procedures, and contributed to raising awareness of women's participation in public procurement.⁴⁶ One reported case concerned a woman entrepreneur who secured three contracts with the African Cup of Nations Organising Committee following the training.

While such examples suggest catalytic effects at the individual level, broader structural influence remains difficult to assess. The absence of baseline data on women's participation in national procurement and the aggregation of key regional figures across four countries (Mali, Nigeria, Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire) precluded an assessment of shifts within the Ivorian procurement landscape. As such, the initiative produced

clear capacity-building and visibility gains, but available evidence did not allow an assessment of its broader influence on procurement practices or women's market access.

Skills development and second-chance education interventions under the *KOAFEC II* initiative introduced a vocational and digital pathway for 400 out-of-school girls and women. The project reportedly developed and validated 14 training modules with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children, and identified 382 prospective project participants. Although the project officially started in June 2022, project funds were not effectively received by UN Women Côte d'Ivoire until August 2023. Consequently, training activities had not commenced by 2024, because of delays in fund availability and personnel recruitment. This prevented any assessment of effectiveness during the review period. Despite its strong conceptual alignment with national priorities for digital inclusion and female employability, the initiative remains in its preparatory stage, with results anticipated in future cycles.

Private-sector partnerships also expanded under the *Endeavour Mining pilot* project launched in October 2023. The initiative aims to support women in the Ity mining zone of Tonkpi by integrating them into extractive-industry value chains. Implementation began in 2024, and results were not observable during the period under review. Nonetheless, the partnership reflects an important strategic shift towards engaging sectors where women remain structurally underrepresented, and holds potential for future influence pending the establishment of a clear monitoring framework.

⁴⁵ Evaluation of the Women Empowerment through ICT project, 2023, p.17

⁴⁶ These achievements were reported at the regional level and cannot be solely attributed to the Côte d'Ivoire component, as no country-specific data were generated by the Country Office.

Across projects in this thematic area, operational and systemic constraints significantly limited overall effectiveness. Resource mobilization gaps halted early-stage improvements in the shea and cocoa sectors, preventing women from accessing opportunities such as organic certification, which could have tripled their income. The final evaluation of the *BuyFromWomen* project also⁴⁷ indicated that technical failure prevented women from accessing the planned climate-resilience information, undermining one of the core intended outcomes. The lack of robust monitoring and outcome measurement further constrained assessment of economic impact. Reporting remained predominantly output-focused, with limited tracking of income changes, enterprise growth, access to credit or longer-term empowerment outcomes. As a result, while the portfolio demonstrated strong relevance and introduced important innovations, its ability to consistently deliver planned outputs and track associated outcomes was limited.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

EFFECTIVENESS IN EVAW

EVAW interventions under the Strategic Note 2021–2025 were more effective in strengthening the enabling environment for GBV prevention and response than in securing longer-term change. Across the portfolio, the clearest contributions were in institutional strengthening; expansion of selected survivor-support structures; and improved coordination with government, UN partners and civil society. Evidence was weaker on national budgetary integration for sustained service delivery and change in community norms and behaviours. Overall, the EVAW portfolio showed clearer results in advocacy and partnerships than in measurable outcome-level changes, while implementation quality varied across interventions.

The EVAW portfolio implemented under the Strategic Note 2021–2025 comprised six interventions designed to work across the full continuum of GBV prevention and response. Collectively, these initiatives aimed to strengthen community awareness, expand survivor-centred services, improve institutional mechanisms for policy implementation and accountability, and reinforce national coordination structures. The strategic breadth of the portfolio reflects a comprehensive vision, although the depth of outcome achievement varied considerably. Evidence was stronger in areas where shorter-term institutional, coordination and service-delivery results could reasonably be expected; whereas longer-term changes, particularly in behaviour and broader system integration, were less observable within the evaluation period.

In this analysis, effectiveness is examined across three consolidated domains: (1) institutional strengthening and policy alignment; (2) service availability and response capacity; and (3) community-level prevention and behavioural change.

⁴⁷ Evaluation of the Women Empowerment through ICT project, 2023, pp.15, 91

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING AND POLICY

ALIGNMENT

This was the area where the EVAW portfolio demonstrated the clearest and most consistent results.

UN Women played a central role in supporting revision of the National Strategy to Combat GBV for 2026–2030, working with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children, parliament, sector ministries, UN agencies, CSOs and development partners.⁴⁸ UN Women's support contributed to provisions in the strategy for a multi-level steering structure and more formal arrangements for partnership, resource mobilization and results-based monitoring arrangements under the National Programme to Combat Gender-Based Violence.⁴⁹ If implemented consistently, these mechanisms may strengthen long-term coordination and accountability.

Increased government commitment was also reflected in advancements in GBV governance structures, supported in part by technical assistance under the Muskoka initiatives.⁵⁰ Interviews with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children indicated that support in gender-sensitive planning, data management and survivor referral pathway revision contributed to a more structured national response system, although the extent of the Ministry's operational integration of these tools is still evolving.

On the normative side, UN Women's collaboration with national authorities and health partners reinforced gender-responsive dimensions of the national health and protection agenda. Muskoka-supported coordination efforts contributed to the integration of GBV prevention within discussions on the Continuum of Care across reproductive, maternal and adolescent health programmes. Targeted advocacy and technical inputs also contributed to enforcement of Law 2019-870 on women's representation in elected assemblies, complementing national efforts to promote gender equality in governance.

The EVAW portfolio achieved meaningful influence on national policy frameworks and governance structures. However, evidence on whether these institutional gains have translated into sustained domestic budget allocations for GBV services remains weak.

SERVICE AVAILABILITY AND RESPONSE CAPACITY

Evidence of effectiveness was more consistent in this domain than in prevention, although gaps remain in outcome-level verification.

In the northern districts of Bounkani and Tchologo, two women-friendly spaces ("Maisons des Femmes") were reportedly installed in asylum-seeker camps, increasing access to GBV-related services for 5,245 female asylum seekers (2,698 in Nioronigué and 2,547 in Timalah).⁵¹ Six social centres in the same area were reported to be offering a standard package of prevention and response interventions by early 2025, while 272 social workers and agents of local non-governmental organizations had reportedly been trained on gender, GBV prevention and holistic care for survivors.⁵²

Across other regions, GBV platforms in Bouaké, Béoumi and Bottro were equipped to become more operational. Five social centres in the Gbêkê region received equipment, and the Béoumi social centre was fully rehabilitated, suggesting improved operational readiness of local response structures.⁵³

Taken together, these figures suggest that the EVAW portfolio contributed to expanding access points for survivors, strengthening localized referral pathways and improving the operational readiness of selected response structures and frontline actors.

The portfolio demonstrated promising gains in service reach, safe-space provision and localized response capacity. However, the evaluation did not have verified evidence on referral completion rates, service uptake over time, survivor satisfaction, service quality or

⁴⁸ National Strategy Against GBV, pp. 74-77

⁴⁹ Ibid. pp. 91,92

⁵⁰ Also known as the *Reproductive Rights and Nutrition Project*

⁵¹ *Meeting the urgent needs of women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis in northern Côte d'Ivoire 2023-2024* Japan Supplementary Budget project report

⁵² *Service & Resilience for GBV Survivors in the N-E of CIV*, 2025 Report

⁵³ Annual report 2024 (Impact 1)

longer-term case outcomes. Effectiveness at this level therefore appears promising but is not yet confirmed by systematic outcome evidence.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL PREVENTION AND BEHAVIOURAL

CHANGE

This was the area where the portfolio showed the greatest limitations in terms of verifiable results. Prevention efforts demonstrated wide outreach but limited evidence of behavioural influence. The annual 16 Days of Activism campaign reportedly engaged approximately 10,000 participants across Abidjan, Bélier and Gbêkê through debates, school-based sessions and media broadcasts. These figures were self-reported and could not be independently verified, but partners indicated that media visibility contributed to heightened public recognition of GBV as a national concern.

Complementary outreach through UBRAF-supported activities reached 163 sex workers in Abidjan and Yopougon, exceeding initial targets by 63 per cent, and provided combined HIV and GBV counselling along with 20 micro-grants of US\$ 500 for small-scale entrepreneurship.⁵⁴ While these interventions demonstrated an effort to pair risk reduction with economic resilience for stigmatized groups, there was no follow-up data to confirm whether the support contributed to sustained empowerment or reduced exposure to GBV.

The qualitative study on HIV, STIs and GBV among women with disabilities in Abidjan, Yamoussoukro, Daloa and Bouaké⁵⁵ provided insight into overlapping vulnerabilities and reportedly informed adaptations in prevention messaging. As would be expected at this stage, the evidence does not yet indicate whether these adjustments have produced measurable shifts in behaviour or service uptake.

Media and youth engagement activities under Muskoka 3.0⁵⁶ reportedly reached approximately 7,000 listeners via 13 community radio stations. Testimonies gathered by the Muskoka team suggested increased confidence among community leaders and adolescents to speak

publicly about gender equality, but these perceptions were self-reported and were not validated through structured outcome monitoring.

Prevention work sustained public visibility around GBV and reached constituencies facing intersecting vulnerabilities. However, most achievements were captured through activity reporting and testimonial evidence. There is insufficient verifiable data to determine whether these efforts produced lasting attitudinal or behavioural transformation at community level.

EFFECTIVENESS IN WPS/HA

The WPS/HA portfolio was strategically effective in advancing normative and institutional change but continued to face challenges in achieving operational scale and demonstrating outcome-level results for women. While the portfolio contributed credible institutional gains, including the barrier assessment with security institutions and gender-responsive elements of the humanitarian response, available evidence does not yet show corresponding shifts in women's leadership, participation or influence in the peace and security space.

The assessment of effectiveness in the WPS/HA portfolio is constrained by recurring limitations in the evidence base. Many reported achievements rely on partner or project self-reporting, while monitoring systems often remained focused on activities and outputs rather than on verified outcome-level change. In several cases, the absence of baselines, follow-up data or structured verification mechanisms limited the evaluation's ability to determine the extent to which reported outputs translated into sustained changes in women's participation, access to services, protection or institutional practice.

⁵⁴ As part of the HIV/AIDS programme *Country and community capacities are strengthened to define, prioritize, implement and bring gender-responsive HIV combination prevention programmes*, 2022

⁵⁵ UBRAF documentation, 2021

⁵⁶ Or *Project to contribute to reducing maternal, neonatal, child, adolescent mortality and morbidity*.

Despite these limitations in the evidence base, the WPS/HA portfolio was designed to advance women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding; strengthen gender-responsive security governance; and address protection risks affecting women and girls in the northern humanitarian context. Its interventions aligned well with the Strategic Note's commitments to inclusive peace, security-sector transformation and the integration of gender into crisis response. The strategic framing was therefore robust, although the available evidence remains stronger on implemented activities and institutional contributions than on verified outcome-level results.

The peace and local development initiative in Gbêké⁵⁷ illustrates this pattern. It aimed to strengthen community cohesion and expand women's engagement in dialogue mechanisms through sensitization, consultations and collaboration with women's groups. However, reporting primarily described the activities conducted, without demonstrating whether women gained influence in mediation structures or whether local dialogue platforms became more gender inclusive. Interviewed participants noted that generating tangible evidence of improved cohesion or increased women's inclusion was particularly difficult because resources had not been allocated for tools or systems capable of tracking changes in dialogue dynamics, community trust or decision-making influence. As a result, although the intervention remained relevant to WPS/HA priorities, the available evidence does not permit an assessment of progress beyond the output level.

More substantive institutional influence is evident in the security sector reform initiative⁵⁸ which conducted a barrier assessment within the national police using the MOWIP methodology⁵⁹ and plausibly reached 380 officers and 27 decision makers. This assessment was meant to provide a structured identification of institutional, operational and cultural barriers affecting women's participation in UN peace operations. Ultimately, the aim was that the resulting analysis would inform national discussions related to implementation of National Action Plan 1325; increase awareness among senior police officials; and strengthen the institutional basis for future reforms. While no immediate increase in women's deployment to peacekeeping missions was documented, secondary sources indicate that the intervention met its planned deliverables and contributed to creating a more conducive environment for gender-responsive security governance. Its contributions therefore lie primarily in normative and institutional strengthening rather than in measurable gains in women's participation.

The humanitarian-WPS intervention in northern Côte d'Ivoire⁶⁰ delivered the largest volume of outputs and demonstrated the most visible operational presence, although outcome-level results remain unverified. Activities responded to the acute vulnerabilities created by insecurity and displacement in the border regions, and reporting to the donor described extensive reach. According to these self-reported figures,⁶¹ 2,812 households received food and non-food kits, reaching 10,123 women and girls. Two Women's Houses⁶² were reportedly established to provide GBV case management and psychosocial support.

⁵⁷ Integrated support for the management of local development, the promotion of peaceful societies and human security in the Gbêké region, in particular the four localities of Béoumi, Bottro, Bouaké and Sakassou

⁵⁸ Barrier Assessment on the participation of uniformed women in UN Peacekeeping

⁵⁹ The MOWIP methodology is an assessment approach designed by [DCAF](#) and the Cornell University GSS Lab to identify the institutional, operational and cultural barriers affecting the participation of women in United Nations peace operations.

⁶⁰ Two initiatives: The *Provide emergency support to vulnerable women and young people in asylum seekers hosting communities for mitigating the deterioration in social cohesion in most affected regions of Côte d'Ivoire* by the Sahel security crisis project and the *Meeting the urgent needs of women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis in northern CIV and ensuring their full participation in the humanitarian response* project.

⁶¹ Under the initiative *Meeting the urgent needs of women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis in northern CIV and ensuring their full participation in the humanitarian response*, reports to the donor indicated that 2,812 households received food and non-food kits, reaching 10,123 women and girls; and that two Women Houses were established for GBV case management and psychosocial support. Solar-powered water pumps reportedly improved regularity of drinking water access for about 9,537 people, reducing the risky journeys undertaken by women and girls. Livelihood kits were said to have been distributed to 1,000 women across four associations, helping to restore basic income-generating opportunities.

⁶² In the humanitarian context of northern Côte d'Ivoire (in Nioronigué and Timalah camps in particular), "Women's Houses" are spaces where female asylum seekers expect to find safety and care, leverage and strengthen existing regional government planning structures.

Solar-powered water pumps were installed, providing safer access to drinking water for 9,537 people and reducing the risky journeys previously undertaken by women and girls. Approximately 1,000 women across four associations were said to have received livelihood kits to help restore basic income-generating activities. These accounts suggest a substantial volume of humanitarian assistance delivered in highly fragile settings, with plausible relevance for women's safety and resilience. However, the absence of information on referral pathways, changes in perceived safety, community-level protection outcomes or women's participation in humanitarian coordination mechanisms prevented confirmation of whether these outputs progressively translated into sustainable improvements. The subsequent Japan Supplementary Budget intervention⁶³ remained at proposal stage and had not yet contributed reportable results.

Across the WPS/HA portfolio, a recurring challenge was the inability to trace how delivered activities shaped women's influence or agency within peace and security processes. Institutional contributions were clearer in the security sector than in community-level conflict prevention or humanitarian programming, where evidence was activity-heavy and outcome-thin. Humanitarian interventions appear⁶⁴ to have alleviated immediate vulnerabilities, but it was not possible to verify whether they enhanced resilience, participation or protection outcomes in a sustained manner. Similarly, while the barrier assessment strengthened the knowledge base for gender-responsive policing, no data exist to show that institutional awareness translated into actionable reforms or increased opportunities for women in peace operations.

Overall, the WPS/HA portfolio demonstrated strategic relevance and delivered credible institutional and humanitarian contributions; however, these achievements remain insufficiently substantiated by outcome evidence. The prevailing reliance on partner-reported figures, the absence of systematic monitoring tools and incomplete results chains collectively constrained effectiveness. Although the portfolio succeeded in expanding gender-responsive discourse and informing institutional processes, there is no verified indication that women's leadership or participation in peace and security processes expanded meaningfully during the period under review.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

⁶³ Project titled *Provide emergency support to vulnerable women and young people in asylum seekers hosting communities for mitigating the deterioration in social cohesion in most affected regions of Côte d'Ivoire by the Sahel security crisis*

⁶⁴ Humanitarian interventions seem to have expanded access to essential goods and services for women and girls affected by displacement: 6,293 women reportedly gained access to productive assets and livelihood support, 5,245 women asylum seekers to GBV-related services through newly established Women's Houses, and 9,537 asylum seekers benefitted from improved drinking water infrastructure in the two camps targeted by the intervention (Annual Report 2020–2024).

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

What are the key results of UN Women's work in Côte d'Ivoire? What factors promote or hinder the achievement of observed results? Have capacities been developed and strengthened to ensure the sustainability of efforts and results?

FINDING 5

Prospects for project sustainability varied across impact areas. WPP demonstrates the strongest foundations for continuity, while WEE and WPS/HA show emerging sustainability, particularly where interventions are embedded in ministerial systems or supported through private-sector partnerships. In contrast, Humanitarian Action and ERAW present weaker durability, reflecting their reliance on short-term grants, limited national budget absorption and only partial embedding at the institutional level.

Do achieved results show signs of continuity beyond the end of the Strategic Note?

The sustainability of results beyond the end of the Strategic Note varied markedly across thematic areas. Governance and WPP show the strongest prospects for continuity, as gains are anchored in permanent legal provisions and functioning institutional mechanisms. Sustainability in WEE is more mixed and contingent on effective transfer to national systems or private actors. In contrast, ERAW and humanitarian and WPS/HA interventions display weaker continuity prospects, reflecting limited institutionalization.

Across thematic areas, the likelihood that results will endure varies considerably. Governance and WPP results show the strongest prospects for continuity because they are anchored in legal reforms and institutional commitments that extend beyond the Strategic Note period. The 30 per cent quota law, a permanent legal provision, continues to shape political processes. Its effective application during the 2023 elections, which produced historically high levels of women's representation, reflects the Independent Electoral Commission's determination to apply the harmonized electoral code, which was strengthened through UN Women's support.⁶⁵ Mechanisms such as the Monitoring Committee on Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Processes have continued to operate and advocate for compliance,⁶⁶

suggesting that the structures supporting WPP will remain active. Efforts to reinforce the National Assembly's gender-responsiveness, including development of a capacity-building plan with the Women's Parliamentary Caucus, indicate that institutional change is also continuing at the legislative level. However, WPP leadership efforts tended to receive intermittent support concentrated around election periods. This election-driven investment model limits continuity, as lasting gains in women's leadership usually emerge from sustained, year-round engagement and integration into recurring institutional cycles rather than short bursts of activity tied to electoral calendars.

Prospects for sustainability within WEE are more uneven. They appear strongest where initiatives have been integrated into ministerial systems or have a clear transfer plan to national or private-sector partners. For example:

- The BuyFromWomen digital platform, developed with private-sector partners under a defined sustainability and exit strategy, has a credible road map for transfer to national actors.⁶⁷ However, these prospects remain conditional, given reportedly low utilization, connectivity constraints, the high cost of smartphones and the need for continued investment in complementary tools and community-level support.

⁶⁵ UN Women's capacity support to the Independent Electoral Commission took place in May 2023. The Commission's rigorous implementation of the 30 per cent gender quota took place in September 2023.

⁶⁶ UN Women Côte d'Ivoire, Progress Note, Q.4 2024, p.7

⁶⁷ UN Women Côte d'Ivoire 2024 Work Plan Report, p.5. It was confirmed by programme personnel from both the donor and UN Women.

- Functional and digital literacy tools from the ICT-Agriculture⁶⁸ project have been embedded within Ministry of Education structures, creating a basis for continued use; and the Ministry's active involvement reinforces institutional anchoring and signals a pathway for national systems to absorb results beyond the project cycle.
- Two WEE programmes had explicit sustainability mechanisms: the *BuyFromWomen* platform and the Gbêkê human security project, which integrated its architecture into regional government planning structures.⁶⁹

However, these prospects remain fragile. The evaluation of the ICT-Agriculture project highlights the need to sustain digital literacy programmes and notes concerns among stakeholders about ministerial ownership.⁷⁰

More broadly, the durability of WEE results remained dependent on enabling conditions beyond project delivery, including access to markets, equipment maintenance, spare parts and the presence of functional support mechanisms. This suggests that, even where training and productive support were delivered successfully, continuity could not be assumed in the absence of stronger institutional and market anchoring.

EVAW presents a comparatively weaker sustainability outlook. Several EVAW outreach and campaign activities lacked measures for institutionalization or state uptake. Partnerships with traditional and religious leaders were mentioned during interviews with personnel

and stakeholders, but these collaborations were not documented as formally institutionalized or financed, making their continuity uncertain. The absence of regular national budget lines for survivor services and GBV staffing further limits prospects for long-term absorption. Awareness-raising campaigns also remain heavily dependent on external funding, and although periodic repetition or scale-up has been discussed with the government, no durable mechanisms have yet been established within state systems.

Sustainability prospects for WPS/HA depend on the nature of the intervention. WPS/HA initiatives, particularly those under the Gbêkê project, have clearer continuation pathways. The project embedded its architecture into regional government planning structures:⁷¹ regional and departmental committees, early warning systems and social centres are already situated within the mandates of local government entities.⁷² In contrast, humanitarian programming shows predictably low prospects for continuity. For instance, humanitarian projects, aligned to one-year Japanese Supplementary Budget cycles, did not include sustainability plans beyond creating temporary water committees or safe spaces. Short-term interventions such as solar-powered water points and provide essential immediate support but are designed for one-year operational periods and rely entirely on future maintenance financing or state absorption. Without long-term budget commitments, their continued functioning remains uncertain.

⁶⁸ As part of the Empowering Women in Agriculture Through Access to ICTs in Côte d'Ivoire initiative.

⁶⁹ From its design, the Gbêkê Human Security Project (officially titled "Integrated Support for the Management of Local Development, the Promotion of Peaceful Societies, and Human Security in the Gbêkê Region") worked to leverage and strengthen existing regional government planning structures. Through its alignment with the Gbêkê Regional Development Plan 2021-2025, the project appears anchored within broader national and regional planning frameworks.

⁷⁰ Evaluation of Project "Empowering Women in Agriculture through ICT.", p.81

⁷¹ From its design, the Gbêkê Human Security Project (officially titled "Integrated Support for the Management of Local Development, the Promotion of Peaceful Societies, and Human Security in the Gbêkê Region") worked to develop the promotion of peaceful societies and human security in the Gbêkê region, in particular the four localities of Béoumi, Bottro, Bouaké and Sakassou. Through its alignment with the Gbêkê Regional Development Plan (RDP) 2021-2025, the project appears anchored within broader national and regional planning frameworks.

⁷² Its full title is "Integrated support for the management of local development, the promotion of peaceful societies and human security in the Gbêkê region, in particular the four localities of Béoumi, Bottro, Bouaké and Sakassou."

Have capacities been developed and strengthened sufficiently to sustain efforts and results?

Capacity development was widely used across the portfolio, but the durability of acquired skills varied considerably by thematic area. Capacities linked to formal institutional mandates, particularly in governance and WPP and within the Gbêkê human security framework, show stronger prospects for retention, while one-off, project-based training in WEE, ERAW and humanitarian programming face a higher risk of loss of capacity due to limited follow-up, financing and institutional anchoring.

Capacity development has been a central strategy across the portfolio, although the durability of these efforts varies considerably. In governance and political participation, capacities built among electoral stakeholders and government actors are positioned for continued use. For instance, members of the Monitoring Committee for Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Processes strengthened their skills in oversight and advocacy aligned with their institutional mandates, increasing the likelihood that capacities will be retained. A broader group of actors, including local authorities, community leaders and youth in the Gbêkê region, reportedly⁷³ gained competencies in human security and gender, increasing prospects for the continued application of the capacities gained.

In WEE, the picture is more mixed. Gains in functional literacy, digital literacy and entrepreneurship are promising when housed within ministries which intend to continue supporting such work. However, many training courses were one-off events delivered through volunteers or short-term projects, leaving project participants without follow-up support. The absence of ongoing financing or structured mentoring increases the risk that competencies will be lost over time.

Capacity development has been relatively limited in ERAW and humanitarian programming. Training for community volunteers and service providers was mostly project-based and short term. In ERAW, some of this support was delivered through existing health and social service structures, but evidence of formal institutionalization and regular financing remained limited. In humanitarian programming, continuation depended more clearly on future maintenance financing or state absorption. While these activities often produced immediate improvements in knowledge and responsiveness, they appear to lack the structural supports necessary for long-term retention. In contrast, capacity-building under the Gbêkê human security framework was more deeply integrated into government systems, giving it a stronger chance of being maintained.

To what extent is national ownership, including local accountability and control systems, supporting sustainability?

National ownership emerges as a critical determinant of sustainability across the portfolio. While interventions often demonstrate an explicit intent to design for long-term continuation, sustainability prospects varied considerably across thematic areas, shaped by the depth of institutional integration, the strength of national ownership and accountability mechanisms, and the availability of predictable domestic financing.

The degree of national ownership varied widely across thematic areas and is among the strongest determinants of whether results will endure. The Governance and WPP areas display comparatively stronger foundations, while WEE and WPS/HA show more uneven but emerging pathways. In contrast, ERAW and WPS/HA programming face more limited prospects for sustained absorption into national budgets or institutional anchoring.

⁷³ The *Gbêkê Project* reports that over 7,000 local authorities were trained (Oct 2022, p.78).

In Governance and WPP, government leadership has been consistent and visible. The adoption of the second-generation National Action Plan on WPS/HA and the enforcement of the quota law illustrate sustained political will. Institutional actors such as the Regional Council of Gbêkê have gone further by establishing their own funding mechanisms for women's economic initiatives, demonstrating local-level championing that strengthens sustainability. Networks such as the Monitoring Committee on Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Processes and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus also serve as enduring accountability mechanisms that can continue to drive progress beyond external project cycles.

In the WEE thematic area, ministries are engaged but face constraints that limit their ability to sustain interventions without external support. The absence of dedicated budget lines for platforms, market-access initiatives or digital tools restricts the extent to which government institutions can absorb or scale activities. This partial ownership results in a mixed sustainability outlook.

Ownership appears comparatively weaker in ERAW. There is limited evidence of state-driven institutionalization of GBV services, permanent allocation of specialized staff or stable budget lines that would anchor these services in national systems. Reflecting this limited traction, the ERAW impact area was ultimately not carried forward as a stand-alone⁷⁴ area in the Strategic Note 2026–2030. This choice aligns with personnel's perceptions of comparatively lower added value in this domain. Although most respondents to the personnel survey⁷⁵ rated UN Women's overall contribution as medium or high, ERAW registered the highest concentration of low and very low assessments, suggesting that the conditions needed for sustained influence are less consistently in place than in other parts of the portfolio.

Due to its emergency focus, humanitarian action is not expected to be nationally absorbed. Therefore, the absence of any mechanisms to transition emergency structures towards national systems limits their endurance.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

⁷⁴ ERAW is not dropped as an area of work. It is featured across impact areas.

⁷⁵ 19 of 27 respondents cluster around medium and high ratings, but ERAW recorded the highest concentration of low and very low ratings compared to other impact areas. See Question 2 of Personnel Survey at Annex 10.

4.5 GENDER EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Has the portfolio been designed and implemented in accordance with human rights and leave no one behind principles, while considering disability perspectives, social and environmental safeguards and development effectiveness principles (ensuring national ownership and sustainability of programming efforts)?

FINDING 6

The Country Office's portfolio demonstrates a strong intent to uphold the leave no one behind principle and a human-rights-based approach across its thematic areas (most visibly within the ERAW and WEE portfolios) by combining institutional and community-level initiatives that promote participation, inclusion and equitable access. Disability inclusion, while initially overlooked, has begun to gain visibility through targeted actions. Systematic rights-based measurement could be improved.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND BY THEMATIC AREAS

WPP and peacebuilding

Under the WPS/HA and WPP areas, the Country Office emphasized inclusion and participation as vehicles for advancing women's rights. The *Integrated Support for the Management of Local Development and Peaceful Societies in Gbêkê* project sought to strengthen women's roles in conflict prevention and reconciliation processes. These initiatives promoted civic participation, social cohesion and women's leadership in peace structures, thereby contributing to the realization of political and civic rights. However, the rights dimension was expressed more through the promotion of participation rather than through formal accountability or monitoring mechanisms linking inclusion to measurable empowerment outcomes.

WEE

The WEE portfolio reflected human rights and leave no one behind commitments by focusing on rural women's equitable access to economic opportunities, productive resources, information and markets. Across this thematic area, interventions⁷⁶ sought to address structural barriers affecting women's economic participation, including limited access to technology, finance, market linkages and formal economic opportunities. In this way, the portfolio aimed to translate equality commitments into more practical pathways for the realization of women's economic rights. However, the extent to which these efforts reached the most marginalized groups or translated into measurable reductions in exclusion was not consistently captured in the results framework.

⁷⁶ For instance, the projects *Empowering Women in Agriculture through Access to ICT* and *Affirmative Procurement Reform in West Africa* sought to reduce gender-based exclusion in agriculture, market access, public contracting and procurement. By linking WEE to information, finance and technology, these interventions aimed to translate equality commitments into actionable mechanisms for economic rights realization.

EVAW and women's rights

The EVAW portfolio demonstrated the strongest alignment with human rights-based and leave no one behind principles. The Country Office played a key role in supporting adoption of the *National Strategy to Combat GBV (NSCGBV 2026-2030)*, which institutionalizes a survivor-centred, rights-based and community-driven approach to prevention and response. The process, co-led with the Ministry of Women, Family and Children, was inclusive of civil society, professional associations and survivor networks, reflecting the human rights principles of participation and empowerment.⁷⁷

Examples of rights-based programming are seen through joint initiatives under the *Reproductive Rights and Nutrition Project*⁷⁸ and UNAIDS–UBRAF⁷⁹ 2022–2026 frameworks. The Reproductive Rights and Nutrition Project integrated the right to health and equitable access for women, adolescents and youth in sexual and reproductive health services. Its guiding principles (ethics, equity, inclusion and gender equality) align directly with the Human rights-based approach framework.⁸⁰

The UNAIDS–UBRAF partnership adopted an “inequalities” lens, addressing the compounded discrimination faced by adolescent girls, women living with HIV and key populations. The UBRAF framework explicitly defines the Joint Programme’s approach as “rights-based and gender-transformative,” thereby contributing to reinforcing leave no one behind through policy reform and community engagement.⁸¹ These combined interventions mark potential contributions towards progress in mainstreaming a rights-based approach.

DISABILITY INCLUSION AS AN EMERGING PRACTICE

At the outset, the Strategic Note’s attention to disability was limited. Although the *National Development Plan 2021–2025* identifies⁸² persons with disabilities among priority vulnerable groups, none of the projects reviewed included disability-specific indicators or had dedicated a budget line to disability. Early programme designs (such as *Empowering Women through ICT in Agriculture*) made references to accessibility without explicit provisions for women with disabilities. The subsequent *National Strategy to Combat Gender-Based Violence 2026–2030* offers a more inclusive vision, recognizing persons with disabilities affected by GBV.⁸³

While most interventions did not systematically integrate disability considerations, an encouraging practice emerged through the UN Women–UN Volunteers partnership on *Support to the Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities through Volunteering*. The initiative promoted volunteerism and leave no one behind awareness to support socio-professional inclusion of persons with disabilities and boost their representation in the UN system. The programme targeted support to 30 people, mostly women with disabilities, to register as UN Volunteers, broadening the candidate pool and building a database for future placements.⁸⁴



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

⁷⁷ NSCGBV, p. 29-31

⁷⁸ Reproductive Rights and Nutrition Project, 2023

⁷⁹ Programme on HIV/AIDS 2022-2026

⁸⁰ Project document of Reproductive Rights and Nutrition Project, p. 12-16

⁸¹ UBRAF 2022-2026 project document Outputs_Indicators, p. 4-6

⁸² PND 2021-2025, p. 17-18

⁸³ NSCGBV, p. 27-31

⁸⁴ UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Annual Report 2023, p. 8-9

MEASURING HUMAN RIGHTS AND LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

OUTCOMES

Across thematic areas, the evaluation found that the Strategic Note's Development Results Framework focused on service coverage, outreach and capacity-building outputs but contained few, if any, indicators for accountability mechanisms or the realization of rights and leave no one behind.

In the ERAW and health-related portfolios, results were reported through the number of project participants reached, services delivered or structures supported, but without consistent tracking of qualitative changes in women's empowerment, perception of rights or access to justice. Interviewed programme personnel stated that project-level indicators or country-level annual monitoring frameworks were not designed at the Country Office level. There is opportunity to include human rights indicators in the Development Results Framework (such as the extent of survivor satisfaction with redress mechanisms or policy enforcement).

In WEE thematic area, monitoring frameworks focused on participation numbers (e.g. women trained or linked to markets) rather than on whether interventions reduced exclusion, expanded equitable access or strengthened institutional responsiveness to women facing structural barriers.

Similarly, in WPS/HA and WPP, participation was often used as a proxy for empowerment: however, the monitoring frameworks did not adequately assess whether women's engagement translated into greater influence over decision-making, access to resources or more inclusive institutional processes.

Overall, the results frameworks captured activity-level participation more consistently than rights-based change or reductions in exclusion. As a result, the Country Office's contributions to advancing human rights and leave no one behind are more visible in programme intent than in systematically measured outcomes.



Photo: UN Women / Stéphane Sansan Joel Dah

4.6 ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY

To what extent did the Country Office's management structure and organizational architecture enable efficient implementation of the country portfolio? Did the Country Office possess the necessary skills, knowledge and capacities to achieve the results outlined in the Strategic Note?

FINDING 7

The Country Office delivered expected outputs, but funding and staffing limitations kept the cost of delivery high and restricted the office's ability to optimize structured roll-out and operational efficiency across the portfolio.

The 2021–2025 portfolio operated in a resource environment characterized by modest funding and compressed timelines. The Country Office managed more than 20 distinct grants⁸⁵ during the Strategic Note period, most of which ranged between US\$ 15,000 and US\$ 550,000. Only a few exceeded the US\$ 500,000 threshold, e.g. the digital education initiative⁸⁶ (US\$ 599,173) and the Women-led cooperatives advisory project⁸⁷ (US\$ 1.5 million).

This financial structure shaped the way the Country Office worked and had significant implications for efficiency. Predictability was limited because the portfolio was dominated by short-term, donor-earmarked grants, often lasting only 12 to 24 months. Several grants were even shorter, such as the 16 Days campaign in 2021 (US\$ 15,000) and multiple Muskoka or UNAIDS envelopes with narrow scopes and brief validity periods. These conditions forced the Country Office to navigate constantly shifting project cycles, undermining the stability needed for long-term planning, deliberate sequencing of interventions or sustained investment in monitoring systems. The limitations of the monitoring system (including output-focused reporting, limited outcome tracking and reliance on partner self-reporting) can be traced directly to this fragmented

funding environment, which made sustained investment in robust monitoring infrastructure difficult to justify or sustain across short grant cycles.

Within this context, overall financial delivery rates remained reasonable⁸⁸ but displayed a declining trend over the Strategic Note period. Early years benefitted from relatively standardized activities and faster-disbursing grants that could be executed within existing operational arrangements. As the portfolio matured, implementation increasingly relied on more complex, multi-partner and service-oriented interventions, including humanitarian, resilience and EVAW-related activities, which required longer start-up phases, intensive coordination and sequential operational steps before expenditure could materialize. This shift generated a cumulative bottleneck effect, whereby planning, compliance and coordination demands were front-loaded while disbursement and delivery lagged behind, resulting in a growing volume of approved but undisbursed resources in later years.

⁸⁵ Annex 5: List of projects 2021-2025

⁸⁶ Education and digital technology for women's empowerment

⁸⁷ Staple Food Cooperatives

⁸⁸ See Figure 2, Country Office budget versus delivery (2021-2025)

The administrative burden per dollar managed was high. Each project required contracting, procurement, monitoring and financial reporting regardless of its size. The transition from Atlas to Quantum added further workload pressures in a context already marked by numerous small grants, forcing personnel to process a large volume of transactions for relatively modest financial envelopes. This increased demands on the procurement, operations and finance teams, and the limited availability of core funding constrained the Country Office's ability to hire operations personnel on stable contracts, leading to increasing reliance on short-term staffing arrangements.⁸⁹

Human-resource constraints meant that personnel were involved in implementing multiple grants concurrently while covering geographically dispersed interventions,⁹⁰ and substantial time was required for partner follow-up, data consolidation and donor reporting. The prolonged vacancy of the Operations Manager position intensified these pressures.⁹¹ Tasks ordinarily overseen by this role, including procurement and contract drafting, travel processing and financial clearance were absorbed by the available personnel,⁹² reducing the time available for monitoring, on-site support and early detection of implementation issues.

The Country Office maintained high completion rates for mandatory training,⁹³ which reflects its sustained investment in personnel development. However, personnel workloads remained high relative to available resources, thus highlighting persistent staffing constraints.

Fragmentation also weakened efficient sequencing across the portfolio. Multiple donor allocations supported overlapping thematic areas that had to be managed in parallel, often with distinct reporting and visibility requirements. This affected staff deployment, monitoring missions and partner engagement across several impact areas, even where financial volumes were limited. Delays in liquidating partner advances kept funds tied up, slowed their reallocation to planned activities and increased the administrative follow-up required from personnel and partners.

Civil society partners reported unpredictable contracting and disbursement processes, which in some cases reduced the time available for engagement with women. Several implementing partners also had limited reporting capacities, contributing to repeated delays in financial closure. This is reflected in the ageing profile of outstanding advances:⁹⁴ almost half exceeded 12 months, tying up resources and increasing follow-up demands for both staff and partners. Slow liquidation⁹⁵ affected the timely recycling of funds and added administrative workload.⁹⁶

Despite these challenges, donor reporting performance remained relatively strong over the period. Approximately 73 per cent of reports were submitted on time, while delayed submissions represented 24 per cent of the total and only 3 per cent were classified as significantly overdue.⁹⁷

⁸⁹ Internal Audit, 2022, p.5

⁹⁰ Internal audit, 2022, p. 6. ; evaluation interviews with civil society partners.

⁹¹ "Workflows were not clear between Programme and Operations", Internal audit, 2022, p. 4

⁹² "The Finance Associate (G7) has been acting as Operations Manager since 2015", Internal audit, 2022, p. 8

⁹³ The Country Office regularly updates its data on the status of mandatory course completion. In the 2022 Annual Report, completion reached 87 per cent (target: 90 per cent by 2025; baseline: 62.68 per cent in 2021), noted as "Target reached or surpassed." Of 18 personnel, 7 had completed all mandatory courses, with the overall indicator reported as 87 per cent. In 2023, the rate remained high at 88.07 per cent (14 of 22 personnel fully compliant); and, in 2024, it continued at 88.89 per cent, confirming sustained progress.

⁹⁴ These advances totalled US\$ 243,504.21, with 26 per cent under six months, 25 per cent between 7 and 12 months, and 49 per cent older than 12 months (Annex 17).

⁹⁵ See the gap between budget and expenditure (Figure 2). Contracting and disbursement delays shortened implementation periods for some partners (Internal Audit, 2022, p. 7). Partner reporting constraints also delayed financial closure.

⁹⁶ "Supporting documents and archives were not readily available (...) data collection proved difficult and time-consuming", Internal audit, 2022, p. 11

⁹⁷ [Dashboard](#) DAMS Reporting Commitments as of 8 Oct 2025

Overall, the Country Office operated under a relatively costly delivery model. Fragmented funding, short implementation cycles, staffing limitations and uneven partner capacities all contributed to high transaction costs and reduced opportunities for efficient sequencing, monitoring and learning across the portfolio. The funding architecture across portfolios was characterized by high transaction costs relative to grant sizes, parallel administrative processes across thematically overlapping funding streams and limited scope to sequence interventions efficiently. Together, these features constrained predictability, increased the administrative burden relative to available resources and reduced delivery efficiency. Partner capacity gaps and structural staffing limitations further amplified these pressures, helping to explain both the rising cost of delivery and the observed deceleration in annual delivery rates over the Strategic Note period. To avoid repetition, the following sub-sections therefore focus on portfolio-specific dynamics, while recognizing that the underlying efficiency challenges were systemic.

EFFICIENCY OF THE WPP PORTFOLIO

Efficiency in the WPP portfolio was shaped by the tight alignment between project timelines and the national political calendar; the predominance of small and short-term grants; and the sustained coordination required with electoral institutions and civil society partners. According to programme personnel, this created repeated administrative cycles for contracting, procurement and donor visibility, which absorbed a significant amount of time relative to the size of the grants.

Short implementation windows were a defining constraint, particularly in this thematic area. Electoral support projects often had to begin preparatory work, such as convening training sessions, within compressed time frames as election dates approached. Disbursement delays in some cases reduced the effective delivery period available to partners, limiting the extent to which outreach activities could be scaled or tailored to emerging needs.

Institutional work with the Independent Electoral Commission was comparatively more efficient. Because collaboration drew on an established partnership and clear technical roles, activities such as training, advisory support and operationalization of the Gender Thematic Commission could proceed with fewer transaction costs. The adoption of Ordinance No. 029/CEI/PDT of 8 December 2020 required only targeted technical assistance to the Electoral Commission, without the need for heavy operational input. This form of institutional engagement achieved meaningful influence at relatively low cost and provided continuity across political cycles.

In contrast, youth-focused leadership and university-based activities, while meaningful, were described as comparatively resource-intensive. The small size of individual grants meant that a lot of time was spent on partner support, reporting consolidation and quality checks. As monitoring relied primarily on partner self-reporting, additional staff effort was required to verify outputs and retrieve participants' data at the reporting stage. These administrative demands limited the scope for field presence and reduced the potential for structured follow-up with trained project participants.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

EFFICIENCY OF THE WEE PORTFOLIO

The WEE portfolio was ambitious in scope, combining digital solutions, literacy and skills training, market-access facilitation and climate-resilience components. However, in practice, the complexity of these interventions often exceeded the resources and operational capacity available, which contributed to substantial delays and uneven progress across components.

In retrospect, programme managers generally assessed preparation and design processes as strong. Projects such as *BuyFromWomen* and *AFAWA* undertook detailed baseline and needs assessments, including a digital literacy study reporting that approximately 55 per cent of rural women in target zones had low literacy levels. While this diagnostic work added relevance and helped tailor digital tools to beneficiary profiles, it also extended preparation timelines and raised upfront costs.

Efficiency constraints became more visible during implementation. The *BuyFromWomen* platform faced a delay of nearly three years before becoming fully operational,⁹⁸ which significantly postponed the availability of digital services for rural women farmers. A planned Climate Resilience Information System under the same project was never made fully functional due to technical and resource limitations and was classified as an “operational failure” by the evaluation.

While the overall financial execution rate reportedly reached 94.5 per cent, the internal distribution of expenditure reveals imbalances: the digital platform absorbed 50.8 per cent of executed resources, while market-access components accounted for only 1.6 per cent.⁹⁹

EFFICIENCY OF THE EVAW PORTFOLIO

Many EVAW interventions were financed through several small grants, including the Muskoka allocations, UBRAF funds and bilateral contributions, each with distinct reporting and visibility requirements. Implied parallel administrative processes increased the transaction cost per dollar spent. Beyond the fragmented funding, the EVAW portfolio was faced with short implementation windows and uneven partner capacities, which further constrained delivery.¹⁰⁰

Delivery costs were also elevated by the geographical dispersion of EVAW activities. Community outreach in rural zones, peer education with sex workers and public campaigns required significant travel and logistics, while monitoring relied largely on partner self-reporting. Considerable time was required to check and consolidate data because donor templates were not harmonized.

That being said, multi-partner prevention campaigns, including those conducted during the 16 Days of Activism, appear to have increased the reach and visibility of advocacy efforts by pooling the contributions of national actors and civil society partners. Joint events in Abidjan, Bélier and Gbêkê reportedly reached close to 10,000 people, suggesting that coordinated delivery enabled broader outreach than is likely to have been achieved through fragmented small-scale activities. Although this approach required substantial coordination relative to the size of the grants, it appears to have improved the visibility and scale of prevention messaging.

⁹⁸ Evaluation of project *Empowering women through ICT*, 2023, p.45

⁹⁹ Financial annexes of Evaluation of the *Empowering women through ICT*, 2023

¹⁰⁰ For instance, the UBRAF-supported programme required a no-cost extension beyond its tight timeline to complete its micro-enterprise component.

EFFICIENCY OF THE WPS/HA PORTFOLIO

Efficiency varied markedly across WPS/HA interventions due to the portfolio's combination of peacebuilding, mediation, humanitarian response and security-sector reform. Institutional components, such as the MOWIP police assessment, were among the most efficient. These activities relied on standardized methodologies, established coordination mechanisms and predictable workflows, enabling completion within expected timelines and with comparatively low transaction costs.

In contrast, humanitarian and resilience projects were far more resource intensive. Many were implemented through short or medium-term grants with asynchronous timelines,¹⁰¹ including Japan Supplementary Budget interventions, early warning initiatives and multi-agency resilience programming. These arrangements demanded extensive start-up coordination, which interviewees described as highly staff-time intensive, particularly under joint structures such as the Gbêkê Human Security Initiative with UNDP. This complexity contributed to delays in roll-out and compressed implementation windows.



Photo: UN Women/ Stéphane Sansan Joel Dah

Operational bottlenecks were substantial in humanitarian and resilience components due to geographic and security constraints. Impressions drawn from a field visit in the North¹⁰² highlighted long travel distances, high logistical costs and the need for sustained supervision in remote areas of Bounkani and Tchologo. These factors increased logistical costs and limited the frequency of field monitoring. Reduced field presence meant that operational issues were often detected later in the project cycle, increasing the effort and cost of corrective action.

Efficiency challenges were also evident in community-level peacebuilding, where partner capacities varied. As shared by evaluation participants, reporting delays required significant staff time to reconcile field data and clarify advances. This pattern persisted in smaller grants supporting local mediation and dialogue structures, where limited resources made it difficult for partners to meet the administrative and monitoring requirements.

Humanitarian delivery mechanisms, while generating tangible outputs, also faced cost-effectiveness constraints. While the Japan Supplementary Budget humanitarian project successfully established solar-powered water pumps and safe spaces for women and girls, procurement delays and the design of the voucher mechanism limited overall efficiency. As the team learned during the field visit, the e-voucher system absorbed around 20 per cent of the Japan Supplementary Budget, a significant share given the short implementation period and limited recharge cycles, ultimately reducing the resources available for direct support to project participants. The late arrival of the e-vouchers further compressed distribution timelines and diminished intended benefits.

¹⁰¹ "Meeting the urgent needs of women and girls affected by the humanitarian crisis in northern CIV and ensuring their full participation in the humanitarian response", 2024

¹⁰² The evaluation team visited the project "Strengthening resilience in the North-East of CIV" in August 2025

5. LESSONS LEARNED

The evaluation highlights the following lessons learned.

LESSON 1

A funding architecture dominated by small, short-term grants elevates transaction costs, constrains strategic sequencing and limits the potential for transformative, at-scale outcomes. The portfolio's reliance on numerous modest, earmarked grants, while enabling responsiveness, generated high administrative burdens relative to resources. This structure fragmented staff focus, compressed implementation timelines and prioritized procedural commitments (such as donor reporting) over sustained outcome measurement. It demonstrates that without a critical mass of predictable, multi-year funding, even well-designed interventions struggle to move beyond pilot scale and achieve systemic impact.

LESSON 2

Strategic coherence is more often cumulative and adaptive rather than deliberately engineered, and heavily influenced by donor opportunities and contextual shifts. Connections across thematic areas tended to arise retrospectively, rather than through deliberate upfront planning via shared normative frameworks, recurring partnerships and a pre-planned, integrated design. While this adaptability is a strength in a dynamic environment, there remains scope to strengthen planning-stage attention to linkages between thematic areas and funding streams so that coherence is not only achieved adaptively but also articulated more intentionally from the outset.



Photo: UN Women/Yulia Panevina

LESSON 3

Sustainability prospects are determined by the depth of institutional integration and the presence of domestic financing mechanisms. The portfolio shows a clear continuum: results anchored in law (e.g. the quota) or embedded in ministerial systems (digital literacy curricula) show strong continuity. Interventions reliant on project-based service delivery or awareness campaigns, without dedicated national budget lines or formal handover protocols, face a heightened risk of losing momentum once external funding concludes. Therefore, designing for sustainability requires a primary focus on appropriate institutional pathways whether through state systems, formal budgets or embedded community-level mechanisms, depending on the nature of the intervention.

LESSON 4

The portfolio's strongest demonstrated value lies in upstream normative support and institutional reform, while proving downstream, community-level impact remains a persistent challenge. UN Women Côte d'Ivoire effectively influenced laws, policies and the creation of gender mechanisms within key institutions. However, tracing a clear results chain from these institutional gains to tangible improvements in women's daily lives, namely safety (freedom from violence), economic autonomy and political influence, was hampered by the modest scale of community-facing interventions and, to a certain extent, weak outcome monitoring.

LESSON 5

When programmes integrate human rights and leave no one behind principles in their intent and design but monitoring frameworks mainly track outputs instead of changes in empowerment, access to justice or reductions in inequality, then the ability to assess whether interventions contributed to transformative rights-based change becomes limited.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Taken as a whole, the UN Women Côte d'Ivoire portfolio was strategically relevant, broadly coherent and most effective where the Country Office could mobilize its integrated mandate through normative influence, coordination leadership and targeted institutional support. The evaluation noted that the portfolio's clearest contributions were upstream – in laws, policies, institutional mechanisms and coordination platforms. In contrast, evidence remains more limited on the extent to which these gains translated into sustained and measurable changes in women's daily lives at scale, particularly in relation to income, protection and influence at community level. This contrast reflects both the nature of the portfolio and the operating constraints under which it was delivered.

CONCLUSION 1.

UN Women Côte d'Ivoire's strategic positioning was strong, but the reach and depth of programming were limited relative to the scale and diversity of national needs.

The portfolio demonstrated strong relevance through its close alignment with Côte d'Ivoire's national frameworks, international gender equality commitments and priority policy agendas in governance, WEE, ERAW and WPS/HA. The Country Office also showed adaptability, including in its response to evolving security dynamics and humanitarian needs in the northern regions.

However, while relevance was high at the level of strategic positioning and policy alignment, it was less consistently realized in terms of breadth, depth and differentiated reach. Programmatic responses did not always sufficiently translate national-level relevance into scaled and inclusive outcomes for the most marginalized groups of women. As a result, the portfolio's relevance was strongest at policy and institutional levels, but more uneven at the community level, particularly in operationalizing the principle of leaving no one behind.

CONCLUSION 2.

Portfolio coherence was achieved through cumulative adaptation rather than deliberate ex ante design, resulting in functional alignment with scope for deeper synergies.

Over the Strategic Note period, the portfolio functioned as a broadly coherent body of work, with interventions generally reinforcing, rather than undermining, one another within and across impact areas. This coherence was sustained through repeated engagement with shared normative frameworks, institutional partners and coordination platforms, allowing the Country Office to manage multiple funding streams without major fragmentation or duplication.

However, coherence was more often assembled over time rather than structurally embedded from the outset. The strongest intentional sequencing was observed in WEE, where the BuyFromWomen platform provided a programmatic backbone. In other impact areas, coherence became apparent mainly in hindsight rather than through explicit portfolio-level design. As a result, coherence depended heavily on active coordination and adaptive management rather than on a unifying portfolio logic articulating how interventions across thematic areas would reinforce one another.

The portfolio was therefore coherent enough to function effectively in a fragmented funding environment but not sufficiently engineered to systematically amplify synergies across impact areas. Coherence was largely reactive and opportunistic rather than proactive and strategic, leading to missed opportunities for greater collective impact.

CONCLUSION 3.

The portfolio was its most effective at institutional and normative levels, while evidence of sustained downstream outcome-level change was more limited.

Across the portfolio, the most clearly demonstrated effectiveness lay in institutional and normative change. Governance and WPP generated the most visible and verifiable results, including through support to operationalization of the quota law, increased women's representation in the 2023 local elections and institutionalization of gender mechanisms within the Independent Electoral Commission and parliament. More broadly, UN Women contributed to significant national-level frameworks and coordination structures, including by strengthening gender mainstreaming in planning instruments, the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 and the national GBV policy architecture.

Evidence of sustained outcome-level change in women's lives was more limited and uneven across thematic areas. While the portfolio generated substantial outputs and innovative interventions (particularly in WEE, EVAW and WPS/HA), the evaluation found less consistent evidence that these efforts translated into measurable changes in women's economic autonomy, protection outcomes, behavioural norms, service utilization or influence in peace and security processes. Contributions were clearest in terms of enabling environments and institutional capacity, and weaker where effectiveness depended on longer results chains, sustained community-level uptake or behavioural change over time.

The portfolio was therefore most effective where its theory of change operated through institutional influence and normative reform, and less effective where outcomes required scale, duration and systematic outcome-level measurement. This reflects not a lack of delivery, but a misalignment between strategic ambition, available resourcing and the portfolio's ability to evidence downstream change.

CONCLUSION 4.

Sustainability prospects varied across the portfolio, with stronger foundations where results were embedded in legal or institutional mandates and more limited where continuation depended on short-term, external support.

Sustainability prospects differed across the portfolio and followed a discernible continuum. The strongest foundations were observed where results were anchored in permanent legal provisions, established institutional mandates and where identifiable national actors were capable of carrying reforms forward, particularly in Governance and WPP. In these areas, results were less dependent on UN Women's continued presence and therefore were more likely to endure beyond the Strategic Note period.

In WEE and parts of WPS/HA, sustainability prospects were more mixed but remained visible where interventions incorporated elements of institutional embedding, transfer strategies or linkages to market actors or public systems. Sustainability was less assured for interventions reliant on project-based service delivery, humanitarian modalities or short funding cycles, particularly where domestic financing pathways, handover arrangements or accountability mechanisms were limited.

Across the portfolio, sustainability was shaped less by the quality of implementation than by whether results were intentionally anchored in enduring institutions, financing arrangements and governance structures. The principal sustainability challenge was not that some interventions were time-bound by design, but that the portfolio did not always explicitly distinguish between results intended to endure and those expected to be temporary. This reduced clarity around sustainability expectations and made it more difficult to assess longer-term contribution and legacy.

CONCLUSION 5.

Efficiency was shaped by a structurally demanding delivery model characterized by fragmented funding, compressed timelines and staffing constraints.

The portfolio was implemented through a large number of mostly small and short-term grants, with a strong reliance on non-core resources and a concentration of funding among a limited number of donors. This funding architecture increased transaction demands, shortened implementation windows, complicated sequencing and imposed substantial operational requirements regardless of grant size.

These pressures were compounded by staffing constraints, including the prolonged vacancy of the Operations Manager function; high workloads associated with managing multiple grants in parallel; and the need to oversee geographically dispersed interventions and partners with varying capacities. In this context, some forms of institutional technical assistance proved relatively efficient to deliver, while community-level, humanitarian and multi-partner interventions were more resource-intensive in relation to their scale.

The main efficiency constraints were structural and recurrent, driven primarily by the configuration of the funding and delivery model, which had a tangible effect on the Country Office's ability to optimize delivery processes, monitoring frequency and organizational learning. These constraints limited the extent to which available resources could be converted into results.

CONCLUSION 6.

Human rights and leave no one behind commitments were clearly articulated in strategic intent and advocacy but were less consistently translated into measurable outcome evidence.

The portfolio demonstrated a sustained commitment to human rights and leave-no-one-behind principles at the level of strategic framing and programme design. Participation, inclusion and equitable access were prominently reflected across multiple impact areas, particularly in ERAW and WEE. Disability inclusion also gained visibility during the Strategic Note period, albeit primarily as an emerging practice rather than a systematically embedded programming dimension.

However, these commitments were not consistently operationalized in results frameworks and monitoring systems. Across much of the portfolio, indicators remained predominantly output-oriented, and participation or service delivery was frequently used as a proxy for empowerment. As a result, the portfolio generated limited verifiable evidence on changes in women's enjoyment of rights, access to justice, decision-making influence and reductions in discrimination or inequality outcomes, particularly for the most marginalized groups of women.

The evaluation therefore concludes that the portfolio's rights-based and leave no one behind orientation was stronger in strategic intent than in demonstrable outcome evidence. The limitation in evidencing rights-based transformation also represents an evaluability constraint, insofar as the monitoring framework was not sufficiently configured to assess whether Human Rights and leave no one behind ambitions were realized in practice.

The portfolio's limited ability to demonstrate rights-based transformation was linked not only to the design of results frameworks and monitoring systems, but also to the broader mechanisms through which change was expected to occur. In this regard, UN Women's comparative advantage in Côte d'Ivoire lay in its ability to convene, influence and connect actors around the gender equality agenda. Fully converting this advantage into sustained, demonstrable change depended on the strength of collective delivery and evidence systems. The Country Office's leadership of the Gender Thematic Group, Outcome Groups 6 and 8, and broader multi-stakeholder platforms positioned it as a central and well-recognized actor in shaping gender equality priorities within the UN system and beyond. Stakeholders consistently acknowledged UN Women's convening capacity and technical credibility, and this role clearly underpinned many of the portfolio's strongest achievements, particularly in normative alignment, institutional reform and policy influence.

At the same time, coordination gains were more robust at the level of joint planning, harmonization and accountability frameworks than in deeply integrated multi-agency delivery arrangements or resilient governance structures. Periods of coordination fragility linked to staffing transitions, together with generally limited outcome-level monitoring across the portfolio, constrained the extent to which UN Women's convening and influencing role could be translated into consistently demonstrable, portfolio-wide changes in women's lives.



7

RECOMMENDATIONS

Preliminary findings were presented to the UN Women Côte d'Ivoire Country Office and informed the development of the recommendations and suggested steps presented below. Following completion of the independent peer review, the Country Office was provided with an additional opportunity to review the revised draft report, including the recommendations, and to provide feedback. The Country Office subsequently confirmed its acceptance of the report findings and its recommendations. Each recommendation is linked to the corresponding findings, and the level of priority and implementation timeline are indicated below each recommendation.

RECOMMENDATION 1:

The Country Office should clarify its strategic focus and strengthen portfolio management to enhance impact and efficiency.

(Based on findings related to Coherence, Efficiency and Effectiveness)

Priority: HIGH

Timeline: MEDIUM-TERM

Key actions for consideration:

- Use the next reflection milestone within the ongoing Strategic Note to verify and sharpen the Country Office's strategic focus by concentrating resources on a limited number of core interventions that organize the portfolio, reinforce institutional anchoring and articulate credible pathways to reach women and groups most at risk of exclusion.
- Conduct annual portfolio analysis to actively manage synergies and sequencing across impact areas, including how interventions contribute to empowerment and access for underserved populations.
- Develop a multi-year resource mobilization strategy to secure fewer, larger and more flexible grants; and advocate for pooled funding within the UN Country Team to better support integrated, rights-based programming.

To be led by:

Country Office Management Team with support from the Regional Office

Rationale and impact:

A more concentrated and strategically managed portfolio is necessary to overcome the inefficiencies of fragmented funding, enhance coherence and deliver results at a meaningful scale.

RECOMMENDATION 2:

The Country Office should strengthen programme design by explicitly linking normative work to measurable community-level outcomes.

(Based on findings related to Effectiveness, and Human Rights and Gender Equality)

Priority: HIGH

Timeline: MEDIUM-TERM

Suggested steps to be taken for all new interventions:

- Strengthen project design by linking normative work to community-level outcomes through explicit theories of change and monitorable pathways that reflect gender equality and human rights principles.
- Incorporate realistic sequencing, adequate preparatory phases and costed sustainability assumptions into the design of digital platforms and service-oriented interventions to avoid reinforcing access inequalities.
- Allocate dedicated M&E resources from the outset to track progress along outcome pathways.

To be led by:

Thematic Programme Leads in consultation with the M&E Officer

Rationale and impact:

Intentional design focused on the results chain is required to bridge the current gap between high-level institutional gains and tangible improvements in the daily lives of women and girls.

RECOMMENDATION 3:

The Country Office should formalize coordination and partnership structures to build resilience and amplify impact.

(Based on findings related to Coherence within the UN system and Sustainability)

Priority: HIGH

Timeline: SHORT-TERM

Suggested steps to be taken:

- Formalize and strengthen the Gender Thematic Group's role in joint analysis and programming; and institutionalize continuity plans for improved system-wide coherence.
- Invest in civil society capacity development and structured engagement frameworks to enhance accountability, participation and gender equality and human rights commitments.

To be led by:

Country Representative and the programme specialist responsible for coordination

Rationale and impact:

Strengthening the architecture of coordination and partnerships will protect a core source of UN Women's value-added, ensure greater resilience and deepen the sustainability of results through broader ownership.

RECOMMENDATION 4:

The Country Office should revitalize results-based management to focus on outcomes, learning and adaptive management.

(Based on findings related to Effectiveness, and Human Rights and Gender Equality)

Priority: MEDIUM

Timeline: MEDIUM-TERM

Key actions for consideration:

- During formulation of the next Strategic Note, work with headquarters and UNSDCF partners to ensure that the results framework includes a limited set of outcome-level indicators that capture empowerment, access and inclusion, with feasible disaggregation by location and disability, and that these are coherently reflected across the UNSDCF and the Country Office's results-based management system.
- Institutionalize semi-annual portfolio reflection exercises focused on the use of available M&E evidence for adaptive management and rights-sensitive learning, including qualitative analysis where outcome measurement is constrained.

To be led by:

M&E Officer with Thematic Programme Leads and the Country Office Management Team

Rationale and impact:

A more robust, outcome-oriented and learning-focused M&E system is essential to demonstrate transformative change, ensure accountability and enable evidence-based programme adjustments.

RECOMMENDATION 5:

The Country Office should optimize operational processes to prevent inefficiencies and safeguard delivery quality.

(Based on findings related to Efficiency)

Priority: MEDIUM

Timeline: SHORT TO MEDIUM-TERM

Key actions for consideration:

- Address prolonged staffing gaps in operations and finance functions to ensure adequate oversight, reduce risks and maintain the quality of programme delivery.

To be led by:

Operations Manager/Finance Associate, Human Resource Personnel and the Country Office Management Team

Rationale and impact:

Systemic operational bottlenecks increase transaction costs and divert resources from strategic programme oversight. Streamlining processes and securing adequate staffing are fundamental to improving overall portfolio efficiency.

RECOMMENDATION 6:

The Country Office should develop and execute distinct sustainability and transition strategies for each impact area.

(Based on findings related to Sustainability and Relevance)

Priority: HIGH

Timeline: SHORT TO MEDIUM-TERM

Key actions for consideration:

- Develop tailored sustainability plans for each impact area. These must include formal handover protocols, advocacy for dedicated domestic financing and concrete steps for integration into government planning and budgetary systems, while maintaining attention to inclusion and accessibility.

To be led by:

Country Office Management Team and respective Thematic Leads, in close partnership with key national counterparts

Rationale and impact:

A uniform approach to sustainability is ineffective. Impact-specific strategies (aligned with the level of existing national ownership) are critical to secure lasting results.

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.



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