GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF CONCEPT NOTES FOR THE 12TH TRANCHE

1. SUMMARY OF CHANGES

These guidelines are issued to assist implementing entities (IEs) in developing concept notes for projects funded under the 12th tranche of the Development Account (DA).

Based on GA resolution 72/266 endorsing the SG's proposal to move from a biennial plan and budget to an annual one, the new format will entail substantial changes to the presentation of the Development Account in the fascicle.

- The concept notes will remain the main element for the DA programming, and will have two distinct purposes:

    o Input into the Programme budget fascicle including the new 'most significant planned result' of the projects.

    o Form the basis for the project document preparation, and the guide for the management of the project implementation and its evaluation.

- The project description in the fascicle will have fewer elements. These elements need to describe a succinct story. They include:

    o A short background focusing on the issue(s) the project will address.

    o The 'most significant planned result' will use elements of the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement to form a narrative on the results of the projects at a lower level than the objective, as well as including a 'portfolio of evidence' which describes how the result would be evidenced.

    o The objective, summary of deliverables, link to sub programmes and SDG targets.

- The supplementary information to the fascicle will also feature an itemized list of deliverables. At this point, the concept notes are not required to include this list but to present a list of activities, alike earlier tranches, in order to capture the logical flow of the project. During the quality review processes, the DA Team will work together with entities to draft the itemized list of deliverables based on the project activities.

- Due to the annual budget cycle each annual tranche will have half the budget of the previous tranche (i.e. $14m). Calls for project will now be issued on an annual basis.

- Projects retain their 4-year cycle and the project envelope will remain around US$500-650,000 with possible additional funds for joint projects.

- With regards to the timelines, the fascicle will need to be completed 3 months earlier than before, necessitating an earlier start and completion of the review process.

2. 12th TRANCHE THEME

In its meeting of 6 June 2018, the Development Account Steering Committee endorsed **"Supporting Member States to strengthen coherent policies and approaches to implement the 2030 agenda at local, national and regional levels"** as the theme for the 12th tranche.

The Steering Committee also stressed that it is essential that DA projects build on the comparative advantage of the implementing UN Secretariat entities and are implemented in partnerships to achieve tangible results.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SELECTION PROJECTSS

The DA Focal Points are expected to guide the development of the project concept notes ensuring their linkage to the theme, strong potential for capacity development results, and commitment to partnerships with relevant entities of the Secretariat and/or UN family. All concept notes should undergo an internal quality review process to facilitate the subsequent review and finalization of the shortlist for consideration by the Development Account Steering Committee. Implementing entities should submit twice the number of projects they expect to have financed per year. The submission should include a prioritization from the entity.

The GA has been very critical of low implementation rates. Given the annual budget, this will even be more important. Thus, DA Focal Points need to consider implementation capacity of the project implementation section when preparing their submission list, especially as the DA can only provide limited GTA and other staff support.

Projects drafters are encouraged to focus on countries with special needs. Additional funding beyond the US$500-650,000 envelope can be foreseen for joint projects.

4. TIMELINE FOR PROJECT DRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following table provides the various deadlines for initiation, review, finalization and approval of the projects for the 12th tranche.

14 September 2018	Deadline for submitting concept notes
End September-early October 2018	DA Team consultations with each entity to finalize the short list and ensure adherence to the guidelines for the selected projects
Early November 2018	DA Team presents the suggested short list to the Steering Committee for endorsement and recommendation to the Programme Manager for approval
November/December 2018	Quality Assurance Group (QAG) reviews the concept notes for the shortlisted projects to ensure that they meet the criteria in the DA guidelines
15 Jan 2019	DA fascicle and supplementary info for ACABQ submitted to PPBD
April 2019	DA Fascicle and GA Progress Report published
June 2019	Presentation of the DA fascicle and Progress Report to ACABQ in the context of the Proposed Programme Budget
November 2019	Presentation of the DA fascicle and Progress Report to the Fifth Committee
August-September 2019	Implementing entities start submitting project documents to the DA Team

October 2019	Latest date to submit project documents. Documents not approved by December 2019 will need to be reprogrammed to another project
Late December 2019	Expected GA approval of the Programme Budget for 2020 including the DA section
January 2020	Most project documents have been reviewed and approved. All allotments issued during Q1
June 2023	Operational closing down of projects and starting evaluation
December 2023	Closure of the 12th tranche

5. MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CONCEPT NOTES

Implementing entities must formulate the 12th tranche concept notes using the template provided.

Concept notes need to include the following ten elements (incomplete documents will not be considered):

i. Title
ii. Implementing entity and partners
iii. Background
iv. Most significant planned result
v. Relationship to the Strategic Framework for the period 2020and the SDGs and targets
vi. Objective
vii. Expected Accomplishments
viii. Indicators of Achievement
ix. Activities
x. Budget narrative

Each of the above components is elaborated below:

i. Title

The title should capture the overall programmatic thrust of the project. It should be short and concise and include the thematic area of the project and its geographical scope.

Ex: Disaster risk management for a resilient future in Asia and the Pacific; Climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean: Adaptive capacities of Small Island Developing States; Evidence-based policies for improved community safety in Latin American and African cities; Innovative climate finance mechanisms for financial institutions in the Asia-Pacific region; Implementation of the Arab Customs Union; Air quality data for health and environment policies in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region

ii. Implementing entity and partners

All Secretariat implementing entities that will be involved in implementing the project, starting with the lead entity (i.e. the entity submitting the proposal), should be listed in this section. While implementing partners often include the 10 DA implementing entities, DA projects are also expected to coordinate with UN funds, programmes and/or specialized agencies, when relevant and beneficial for the project. Concept notes which refer to cooperation with other UN Secretariat partners as active partners in the project's implementation should be shared with those entities for comments and confirmation of their participation.

iii. Background (max one page)

The background section needs to include the following information:

   a) The issue that the project intends to address. While there can be one paragraph defining the broader context of the issue, this section should describe the actual problems that the project intends to address. If already known, the tentative list of potential target countries should be included. This section should emphasize specific demand(s) and requests for support from these countries;

   b) The most recent intergovernmental legislation and entity-specific mandate which calls for action on this issue. This section should explain how the project activities will contribute to the SDGs and 2030 Agenda;

   c) How the project links to the overall normative and analytical work of the implementing entity/ies and its comparative advantage(s) in this area;

   d) The lessons learned and achievements from past activities in the target countries, and/or complementary activities which are currently ongoing; and

   e) The implementation arrangements with other entities of the UN Secretariat and the broader UN System, where appropriate.

iv. Most significant planned result (max 250 words) [NEW]

This section has been included to facilitate the presentation of projects in the new budget fascicle format. It should provide a summary of the **most significant planned result** of the project as well as how the result would be evidenced. The most significant planned result section should begin by briefly describing the 'trigger' for the project (e.g. a new resolution/outcome document/etc calling for this action/project; increasing requests from Member States; or other recent developments), after which it should convey the most important positive change expected in the project beneficiary countries following the completion of the project. Possible considerations in identifying the most significant planned result could be to describe a change that is high profile, novel or representative of the project's efforts. While the most significant planned result should be ambitious, it should also be achievable within the scope of the project, taking into consideration the project budget and timeframe available for its implementation. It is, therefore, essential that the most significant planned result derives from the logical framework. This section should also include the description of the evidence that will be used to demonstrate the achievement of the most significant planned result, i.e. the related indicator of achievement.

The below is an example of a most significant planned result. The underlined language is the templated language required by the new fascicle format.

Ex. [Describe the 'trigger'] *There are positive developments that link youth development and the advancement of persons with disabilities in Latin America. For example, the Iberoamerican Youth Pact, signed by the heads of State of the governments of the region during the Americas Summit, held in Colombia in 2016, explicitly calls governments in the region to "to promote the social, economic and political integration of young people with disability, recognizing their right to employment, through the implementation of plans for access to training and adaptation of jobs". The project will build on this momentum, by supporting the design and implementation of national policies for social inclusion of youth with disabilities, as well as design of national programmes and strategies for creating employment opportunities and including youth with disabilities in national labour markets.*

[Describe the result] *<u>The expected result of the project would</u> be an improved capacity among local and national government officials in three Latin American countries to develop or amend policies, legal frameworks and administrative measures, in close collaboration with youth organizations and disabled*

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persons' organizations, to ensure social integration and inclusive development of youth with disabilities. [Describe the evidence] *The expected result would be evidenced by each of the participating countries having revised or prepared at least one policy or administrative measure for the social integration and inclusive development of youth with disabilities. The expected result would demonstrate progress towards the collective attainment of the objective of project.*

v. Relationship to the Strategic Framework for the period 2020 and the SDG targets

This section should provide reference to the implementing entity's/ies' Strategic Framework(s) for the period 2020 referring to the relevant sub programme(s). Similar information needs to be included for the other UN Secretariat partners. *(ex: Habitat subprogramme 7 (Research and capacity development)). Reference should also be made to the most relevant SDG targets (ex: 12.3, 16.3 and 16.5)*

vi. Objective

The objective states the intended goal of the project, describes the overall achievement targeted by the project, involving a process of change aimed at meeting the needs of identified beneficiaries. Each project should have only one objective, which should not be longer than one sentence. The objective should include reference to the project's beneficiaries, its geographical scope and its substantive focus. The objective should not attempt to explain the ways in which the project intends to achieve the objective (i.e. it should not include the word 'through'), or describe the internal work of the UN using verbs such as 'support', 'facilitate' or 'contribute'. The project's delivery will contribute to the attainment of the objective, yet the objective may not be achieved in full during the project's implementation period.

Ex: *To strengthen national capacities of selected developing countries for the sustained, regular production of a priority set of environmental statistics…; To improve the capacity of selected countries to design, adapt and implement institutional and regulatory frameworks that foster sustainable practices in the field of sovereign debt governance; To strengthen the capacity of selected target countries with economies in transition and developing countries to improve the planning, management and regulation of cross border agricultural food supply chains in order to support enhanced competitiveness and improved food security; To enhance the capacity of selected developing countries in Asia and the Pacific to develop policies and strategies for multi-sectoral disaster-resilient development planning for safer communities.*

vii. Expected Accomplishments

The expected accomplishments (EAs) describe the changes that are expected to occur as a result of the project's activities. EAs should be achievable within the project's timeframe and budget and should be specific enough to be measured by the associated indicators of achievement. In developing the EAs, it is important to assess whether the implementation of the activities is likely to achieve what is defined in the EA. Given that Development Account projects have an implementation time of three to four years, it is expected that most projects would contain at least two EAs, but projects with complex activities or a large budget may exceptionally have three EAs.

Ex: *Enhanced technical capacities of selected countries to regularly produce a comprehensive set of environment statistics; Improved capacity of policymakers in beneficiary countries to identify regulatory and institutional gaps in the field of sovereign debt governance; Improved capacity of public and private stakeholders to identify and select sectors for national production and export of green/sustainable products; Strengthened national capacity of beneficiary countries to develop policies for sustainable housing; Strengthened capacity of policymakers to formulate cross-sectoral policies that enhance*

effective participation of youth in economic, social and political life; Enhanced engagement between policymakers and youth groups in jointly designing, amending and implementing youth-based policies for inclusive and sustainable development.

viii. Indicators of Achievement

The indicators of achievement (IAs) provide the measures for monitoring progress towards achieving the stated expected accomplishments and reporting on them after completion of the project. Every indicator needs to provide clearly defined units of **measurement and targets**, detailing the quantity, quality and timing of expected results.

At least one indicator should be developed **for each EA,** although 2 or 3 indicators are encouraged (e.g. IA1.1 & IA 1.2 for EA1, IA2.1, 2.2, 2.3 for EA2 etc.). Entities should be careful not to reflect project activities as indicators (e.g. the number of people trained), but rather the level of skills and knowledge gained through the project's activities (e.g. training indicator), or preferably the subsequent actions taken by the beneficiaries based on the project (e.g. action plans created, legislations drafted, or methodologies developed).

Ex: *X (number) out of X target countries design policy options and instruments to fill the regulatory and institutional gaps identified in the field of sovereign debt governance; Sustainable product sectors identified and selected for national production and export by national stakeholders in X out of the Y target countries; National Action Plans for the implementation of sustainability measures in the residential sector are developed and adopted in all beneficiary countries.*

ix. Activities

The project's activities are the set of actions to be taken to achieve the expected accomplishments. Well-formulated activities should answer the question, "What are the specific actions that need to be taken by the project team, in cooperation with the beneficiaries, to achieve in full the expected accomplishments?"

Each activity should be **clearly linked** to the expected accomplishment it contributes to (e.g. A.1.1, A.1.2 and A.1.3 contribute to EA1; A.2.1 and A.2.2 contribute to EA2 etc.). In some instances, activities may contribute to multiple EAs; in this event, the dual nature of the activity should be footnoted.

Ex: *Organize six national workshops to discuss policy notes and other technical documents with government officials aiming at drawing lessons on how policy recommendations that are derived from modelling-based policy analyses can be transmitted; Organizing two interregional study tours for 10 officials from the seven member countries to share knowledge and learn best practices; Organize a regional advisory mission for three countries to assess cross-border ecosystem and policy opportunities; Develop a policy paper, which will contain an analysis of best practices and lessons learned and guidelines on the preparation and implementation of National Action Plans for Sustainable Housing based on experiences and lessons learnt from the beneficiary countries; Develop a tool kit for compiling and disseminating national data of Short-Term Economic Statistics (STES) that includes application software, a catalogue of metadata and dissemination tools.*

Strong linkages among the four elements outlined above (i.e. objective (v), expected accomplishments (vi), indicators (vii) and activities (viii)) are key for the development of a strong **logical framework**.

In order to ascertain the validity and cohesiveness of the logical framework, entities are encouraged to conduct a **top-down and bottom-up review**, by raising the following questions, reflecting on the answers and revising any of the four elements, if required:

Top down questions:
1. How can the objective be met? [...By achieving the expected accomplishments]
2. How can the expected accomplishments be achieved? [...By delivering the main activities]

Bottom up questions:
1. If the project delivers the main activities outlined, are the expected accomplishments likely to be achieved?
2. If the project achieves the expected accomplishments, will this help meeting the objective?

x. Budget narrative

Below are the **budget categories** that should be used when preparing concept notes. **Fill in the blanks in the budget narrative template** including disaggregated figures by activity; number of participants; number of days etc. Delete lines/categories not used. Below are some general comments on the main budget classes. Entities are encouraged to consult with their finance section to ensure budgets correspond to the latest UMOJA guidance.

1. Other Staff costs – *GTA* **(015)**: This budget class is for General Temporary Assistance (GTA) used to respond to short- term, interim needs of the implementing entity in carrying out the project's activities, using staff resources. Staff charged to GTA are usually located with the Implementing Entity's HQ office, but may occasionally be assigned to a regional center of the entity. GTA should not be used for the recruitment of consultants, national project staff or UNVs. As the Development Account does not fund posts, the GTA share of the project budget should be reasonable i.e. max 5%.

2. Consultants and Experts **(105):** Consultants should be split into two groups: International consultants, and national/regional consultants. The share of the project budget allocated to international consultancies should be limited. Resource persons in advisory roles, such as panelists at meetings, workshops, seminars, should not be budgeted here but under 'Grants and Contributions'.

   Expert group meeting participants must be listed in this budget class.

3. Travel of staff **(115):** This budget class is used exclusively for travel of UN system-wide staff, for all types of travel (participation in expert groups, workshops, providing advisory services). Staff travel should not be included under workshops.

4. Contractual Services **(120):** Contractual services include institutional contracts with national, regional or international institutions, companies, IGOs or NGOs for preparing publications, conducting studies, carrying out technical work, assisting with the organization of workshops, translating or printing documents, etc. The use of local and regional institutions and/or NGOs is encouraged as it contributes to the strengthening of national capacities.

5. General operating expenses **(125):** This budget class should be used for communications and postage costs which are directly attributed to the project, as well as in-house or low-value printing of reports. For major undertakings related to printing services, use the contractual services budget class.

   Venue rentals associated with workshops/trainings/seminars/expert group meetings should also generally be included in this budget class.

6. _Workshops / Study Tours_ **(145):** This budget class is for costs related to the travel/ DSA of participants attending seminars, workshops and study tours **only.**

- Resource persons not contracted, i.e. meeting participants in advisory roles, such as panelists at meetings/workshops/seminars should also be charged from this budget class.
- Grants and subcontracts issues to implementing partners to carry out training activities should NOT be charged here but to contractual services.
- Any conference related expenditures including venue rental should generally be charged to general operating expenses.