

GUIDELINES FOR THE PREPARATION OF CONCEPT NOTES FOR THE 13TH TRANCHE

These guidelines are issued to assist implementing entities (IEs) in developing concept notes for projects funded under the 13th tranche of the Development Account (DA). These concept notes will be used for discussions with partners and the DA Team. Parts of them will be submitted to the GA as part of the Proposed Programme Budget.

Please note that when submitting concept notes, the following issues should be considered:

- The terminology of the results framework has been updated to align with the frameworks used by many development partners. Expected accomplishments are now outcomes and main activities are now outputs.
- Projects should follow a human rights-based approach, also integrating 'leaving no one behind' and, gender considerations in their analysis and execution.
- Coordination and/or implementation mechanisms in the context of the Resident Coordinator system and the UN Country Teams should be elaborated on in the management.
- Evaluation costs do not need to be included in the budget. As per the new Development Account Evaluation Framework, only half of the projects from the 13th tranche will be selected for final evaluation. After the shortlisting of projects for the 13th tranche, a random sample of projects will be selected for evaluation at their closure. Funds for the evaluation will, thereafter, be added to the budgets of the selected projects.

1. 13th TRANCHE THEME

At its meeting on 6 June 2019, the Development Account Steering Committee endorsed '**Supporting Member States in utilizing innovative and catalytic approaches to accelerate progress in achieving the SDGs**' as the theme for the 13th tranche.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND SELECTION PROJECTS

The DA Focal Points are expected to guide the development of the 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 of projects 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. Thus, DA Focal Points need to consider implementation capacity of the project implementing unit 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 (LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS). Additional funding beyond the US\$500-650,000 envelope per project can be foreseen for joint projects.

3. TIMELINE FOR PROJECT DRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The following table provides the various deadlines for initiation, review, finalization and approval of the projects for the 13th tranche.

16 September 2019	Deadline for submitting concept notes
End September-October 2019	DA Team consultations with each entity to finalize the short list and ensure adherence to the guidelines for the selected projects
November 2019	DA Team presents the suggested short list to the Steering Committee for endorsement and recommendation to the Programme Manager for approval
November/December 2019	Quality Assurance Group (QAG) reviews the concept notes for the shortlisted projects to ensure that they meet the criteria in the DA guidelines
15 Dec 2020	First draft DA fascicle submitted to PPBD
February 2020	Final version of DA fascicle submitted to PPBD
April 2020	DA Fascicle published
June 2020	Presentation of the DA fascicle to ACABQ in the context of the Proposed Programme Budget
October 2020	Presentation of the DA fascicle to the Fifth Committee
August-September 2020	Implementing entities start submitting project documents to the DA Team
October 2020	Latest date to submit project documents. Documents not approved by December 2020 will need to be reprogrammed to another project
Late December 2020	Expected GA approval of the Programme Budget for 2021 including the DA section
January 2021	Most project documents have been reviewed and approved. All allotments issued during Q1
June 2024	Operational closing down of projects and starting evaluation (for projects selected for evaluation)
December 2024	Operational and financial closure of the 13th tranche

4. MAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CONCEPT NOTES

Implementing entities must formulate the 13th tranche concept notes using the template provided.

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

- i. Title
- ii. Implementing entity and partners
- iii. Background
- iv. Highlighted planned result
- v. Relationship to the 2021 Strategic Framework and the SDGs and targets
- vi. Objective
- vii. Outcomes
- viii. Indicators of Achievement
- ix. Outputs
- 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 attractive, 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 UN 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, as well as the UN Resident Coordinator System and Country Teams. 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

The background section needs to include the following information:

- a) The issue that the project intends to address. While this section can include a paragraph defining the broader context of the issue, this section should also describe the actual problems that the project intends to address. As projects should follow a human rights-based approach, integrating 'leaving no one behind' and gender considerations in the analysis and execution, it will also be important briefly refer to these aspects vis-à-vis the issues the project is intending to address;
- b) Please briefly elaborate on the extent and the ways in which innovation is a feature of the project and its design;
- c) 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. Requests for support expressed by the target countries in the Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) of the high-level political forum (see also the following link: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/>) can also be included; Please note that the list of countries will not be included in the fascicle to be submitted to the GA;
- d) 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;
- e) How the project links to the overall normative and analytical work of the implementing entity/ies and its comparative advantage(s) in this area;
- f) The lessons learned and achievements from past activities in the target countries, and/or complementary activities which are currently ongoing;
- g) Show how the projects are an important operational vehicle for testing new and innovative development approaches, allowing successful ideas to be scaled up and replicated with funding from outside of the Account.

iv. **Highlighted planned result (max 250 words)**

This section should provide a summary of a **highlighted planned result** of the project as well as how this result would be evidenced. The highlighted 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 highlighted planned result could be to describe a change that is high profile, novel or representative of the project’s efforts. While highlighted 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 highlighted planned result derives from the project’s results framework. This section should also include the description of the evidence that will be used to demonstrate the achievement of the result, i.e. the related indicator of achievement.

Below is an example of a highlighted planned result. For more examples of highlighted planned results please see the DA programme budget 2020 (A/74/6 (Sect. 35)). The underlined language is templated language that is required to be included in the programme budget/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.*

Result and evidence

[Describe the result] *The planned deliverables are expected to contribute to the result, which is 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 persons’ organizations, to ensure social integration and inclusive development of youth with disabilities.* [Describe the evidence] *Evidence of the result, if achieved, will include each participating country having revised or prepared at least one policy or administrative measure for the social integration and inclusive development of youth with disabilities. The result, if achieved, will demonstrate progress made towards the collective attainment of the objective.*

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

This section should provide reference to the implementing entity/entities Strategic Framework(s) for the period 2020 referring to the relevant sub programme(s). Similar information needs to be included for the all 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), differentiating between **primary targets** and those that the project contributes to (**secondary targets**).

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. Outcomes

The outcomes (OCs) describe the changes that are expected to occur as a result of the completion of outputs. The outcomes 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 outcomes, it is important to assess whether the completion of the outputs is likely to achieve what is defined in the outcome. Given that Development Account projects have an implementation period of three to four years, it is expected that most projects would contain at least two outcomes, but complex projects with a larger budget may exceptionally have three outcomes.

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 measures for monitoring progress towards achieving the outcomes 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 outcome**, although 2 or 3 indicators are encouraged (e.g. IA1.1 and IA 1.2 for OC1, IA2.1, IA2.2, IA2.3 for OC2 etc.). Care should be taken not to reflect the completion of project outputs as indicators (e.g. the number of people trained), but rather the level of skills and knowledge gained through the project's interventions, 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 Y 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. Outputs

The project's outputs (OPs) are the set of actions to be taken to achieve the outcomes. Well-formulated outputs should answer the question - what are the specific actions, products, reports, etc that need to be delivered by the project, in cooperation with the beneficiaries, to achieve the outcomes?

Each output should be **clearly linked** to the outcome it contributes to (e.g. OP.1.1, OP.1.2 and OP.1.3 contribute to OC1; OP.2.1 and OP.2.2 contribute to OC2 etc.). In some instances, outputs may contribute to multiple OCs; in this event, the dual nature of the output should be footnoted.

Ex: Six national workshops organized 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; Two interregional study tours organized for 10 officials from the seven member countries to share knowledge and learn best practices; A regional advisory mission organized for three countries to assess cross-border ecosystem and policy opportunities; A policy paper developed, 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; A tool kit developed 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, outcomes, indicators and outputs) are key for the development of a strong **results framework**.

In order to ascertain the validity and cohesiveness of the results 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 outcomes]
2. How can the outcomes be achieved? [...By delivering the outputs]

Bottom up questions:

1. If the project delivers the outputs outlined, are the outcomes likely to be achieved?
2. If the project achieves the outcomes, will this help meeting the objective?

x. Budget narrative

Below are the **budget categories** that should be used when preparing concept notes. **It is strongly advised to follow the budget narrative template and simply fill in the blanks**, including disaggregated figures by output; number of participants; number of days etc. Please delete budget 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 used to respond to short- term, interim needs of the implementing entity in carrying out the project's activities, through the use of temporary 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, or national project staff. 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 should not be listed in this budget class but rather under 'Grants and Contributions'.**
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 costs 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, interpretation costs for Expert Group Meetings, 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. This budget class should also be used for procurement contracts.
5. General operating expenses (125): This budget class should be used for communications and postage costs which can be 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, conference service costs and communication costs associated with workshops/trainings/seminars/expert group meetings should also be included in this budget class.**
6. Grants and Contributions - Workshops / Study Tours (145): This budget class is only for costs related to the travel/DSA of participants attending seminars, workshops and study tours as well as travel of experts and/or participants attending Expert Group Meetings.
 - Resource persons not contracted, i.e. meeting participants in advisory roles, such as panelists at meetings/workshops/seminars should also be charged to this budget class.
 - Grants and subcontracts issued 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.