Strategic Framework Fund (2019-2020) Independent Evaluation
Management Response

C2019.TARSF003.SIDA, C2018.TARSF001.QAT, C2019.TARSF004.LKAgov, C2020.TARSF006.PAKGov, C2020.TARSF005.CHuni, C2019.TARSF002.NIG

September 2021   **Geneva, Switzerland**

Name of programme/office/unit:	Office of the Executive Director	
Executive Director	Nikhil Seth	
Name of project undertaking	Strategic Framework Fund 2019-2020	C2019.TARSF003.SIDA C2018.TARSF001.QAT C2019.TARSF004.LKAgov C2020.TARSF006.PAKGov C2020.TARSF005.CHuni C2019.TARSF002.NIG
Name of evaluation	Independent evaluation of the Strategic Framework Fund (2019-2020)	
Date:	08.09.2021	

SECTION I – Comments on Findings, Conclusions
The evaluation was a thorough, useful and timely exercise. Given the Institute's tightly earmarked project base, the SFF has provided much needed flexibility and, without doubt, has resulted in resource efficiencies. During the initial two years of the Fund, emphasis was placed on achieving quick successes through multiple, small scale allocations. As with any new instrument, there are important opportunities for learning and improvement, and UNITAR will seize this evaluation report and the recommendations contained therein to inform the future administration of the SFF and design and delivery of projects. A summary of the evaluation and the recommendations will be submitted to the Sixty-Second Session of the UNITAR Board of Trustees in November 2021.

SECTION II - RECOMMENDATIONS					
	Management Response and Planned Action				
Recommendation	**Accepted Partially Accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
1. Recommendation 1: While carefully balancing needs and/or requests from Member States and SFF allocation requirements, a clear "Leave No One Behind" component should be required for each SFF-funded project.	Accepted	Allocations containing convincing LNOB objectives will receive priority in SFF allocations.		Under implementation	
	Management Comments: LNOB has always been considered as key for projects funded by the strategic framework fund. However, we recognize that more efforts are needed to ensure the funded projects are reaching the furthest behind first.				
Recommendation	**Accepted Partially accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
2. Recommendation 2: Decisions on allocation awards should take a blended approach of small and short-term seed funding-oriented projects (based on clear criteria, demonstrated needs and clearly identified results which are sustainable) with a limited number of larger and longer-term projects with cross-divisional cooperation, where possible	Accepted	As communicated by the ED at the June 2021 Programme Managers Meeting, this approach will be followed.		Implemented	
	Management Comments: 1. Emphasis for the incoming year's SFF is around the question of health and data and gender equality and the empowerment of women (GEEW). 2. Current thinking: All 7 programming divisions work together on the theme of gender equality and design a project, and a separate project be led by UNOSAT on data and health with relevant divisions partnering in the latter.				

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3.	Recommendation 3: Emphasis should be placed on the development of country-level partnerships, including UN Country Team engagement, in SFF project design and allocation decisions.	Partially accepted	• Revise SFF governing principles and SFF allocation application for programmes to outline how country-level partnerships including with UN country teams enable the effectiveness of projects • Communicate to programmes the importance of country-level partnerships.		Under implementation Planned	
	Management Comments: This information is already sought through the SFF application process but should be highlighted more strategically by Programmes.					

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4.	Recommendation 4: UNITAR programme units should ensure that allocation requests include a clearly defined results framework with specified Level 3 performance needs in project design and in post-training, including, for example, cost neutral communities of practice among	Accepted	Office of the Executive Director to communicate to programme units that implementation of the recommendation will inform SFF decision making for allocation requests.		Under implementation	

	alumni, and develop a budget/time criterion to ensure that larger-scale and term future SFF projects include a compulsory post-training follow-up action to measure and assess performance components.	**Management Comments:** Programme Units to ensure that allocation requests that contain training outputs include a description of Level 3 training needs (and Level 4 intended impacts if allocation request exceed $400,000), and that project design contains post project follow-up to measure and assess performance level changes/ application of knowledge and skills.			
	Recommendation	**Accepted Partially accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
5.	Recommendation 5: UNITAR programme units should at least consider partial virtual training delivery or alternative delivery mechanisms such as radio broadcasting to leverage increased reach, reduce costs and reduce the environmental footprint. This could become additional SFF project allocation criteria.	Accepted	Application request to be revised to specify how projects will be delivered including alternative mechanisms to leverage increased reach, and that such components will be considered in making allocation decisions.		Under implementation	
		Management Comments:				
	Recommendation	**Accepted Partially accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**

6.	Recommendation 6: Programme units should document impact stories using available guidance to analyse personal and institutional changes and the reach of training in Member States through alumni.	Accepted	In conjunction with recommendation #4, programme units to undertake impact stories to document personal and institutional changes from SFF-supported projects relying on guidance and support as needed from PPME.		Under implementation	
	Management Comments:					

	Recommendation	**Accepted Partially accepted Rejected**	**Planned action**	**Budget allocated (if necessary)**	**Status (planned, under implementation, implemented)**	**Update on status after 6 months (planned, under implementation, implemented)**
7.	Recommendation 7: The Executive Director's Office, in cooperation with the Board of Trustees, should strengthen efforts to widen the SFF donor base and overall SFF resources, complementing the engagement of ambassadors in Geneva with a targeted outreach to donor capitals.	Accepted	Included as agenda item for November 2021 BoT meeting		Under implementation	
	Management Comments: At its Sixty-first Session (November 2020), the Board took note of the Finance Committee's observations and Management's update on the Strategic Framework Fund, and the request to work with UNITAR to raise the visibility of the Fund and to promote the instrument within its networks. Management showcased the SFF at the September 2021 Friends of UNITAR Meeting in Geneva, and Management will be reviewing what future efforts can be made and support provided by the Board at its Sixty-second Session (Nov 2021) to further strengthen the visibility of and financial support to the SFF.					