



# Joint Programme 2022 Annual Progress Report

## SDG Financing Portfolio - Component 1

### Cover page

**UNCT/MCO:** Belarus

**Reporting Period:** 1 January - 31 December 2022

**JP title:** Promoting SDG Performance-based Budgeting that Prioritize Vulnerable Populations in Belarus

**Stakeholder partner:** National Government; Sub-national Governments; Parliamentarians; research institutions, youth ;

**Thematic SDG Areas:** Food systems transformation; Decent jobs & universal social protection; Digital transformation; SDG localization;

**PUNOs:** UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN-Women

**Top-up received as part of DEM:** Yes

**Total estimated expenditures:** US\$ \$ 726,085.0

**Total estimated commitments (including expenditures):** US\$ \$ 946,358.0

**Gender Marker:** Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm)

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### Executive Summary

The JP's activities in 2022 continued to be implemented across various thematic areas by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women with coordination support of RCO and in partnership with the stakeholders. UNDP playing the convening role worked with other UN agencies to ensure cross-cutting results in JP implementation with a special focus on gender equality, decent work, inclusion and leaving no one behind. PUNOs took steps to accelerate progress towards SDGs focusing on SDGs 3, 5 and 17 and working together on specific components to ensure continuity across SDGs.

UNFPA contributed to the development of normative budget planning methods focused on the cost of budgetary services per one consumer in the health sector in Belarus. UNFPA supported capacity building of health managers and development of new financial frameworks in healthcare with the focus on reproductive health and gender sensitivity.

UNICEF conducted a research study on child-focused public expenditure measurement, social assistance services

and capacity development for performance-based budgeting and developed new Guidelines on child-focused public expenditure measurement, including analysis at the country and local levels. UNICEF finalized the country-wide survey on social services for families with children, including children with disabilities, and enhanced the capacity of local authorities to provide the services.

UNDP finalized the Rapid Integrated Assessment of state programmes and their finance for SDGs and presented key findings and recommendations on further actions to key national stakeholders. In close cooperation with the national partners, UNDP developed the BioFin Roadmap outlining innovative finance mechanisms for ecosystem services payments and market development in Belarus. Also, a roadmap to ensure Belarus' green growth and the country's position in specialized Global Green Economy Index (GGEI) was developed, following an assessment of the areas for accelerated low-carbon growth. A draft Development Finance Assessment report was prepared with recommendations for national counterparts on further steps towards the development of Integrated National Financing Frameworks in Belarus.

UN Women, for the first time in Belarus, conducted an online capacity building training programme on GRB based on the capacity assessment and the preliminary analysis of the budgetary process in Belarus from gender perspective and started gender budget analyses of the State programme on "Labour market and Employment" for 2021-2025.

The most important achievements of the JP during the reporting period were communicated through joint and harmonized publications, coordinated by UNDP and implemented through the joint Communications Group in line with the jointly agreed communication strategy.

## Annual Progress

### Overall JP self-assessment of 2022 progress:

Satisfactory (majority of expected annual results achieved; 1 to 3 months delay in implementation)

### Overall progress and key developments to date (3 key JP milestones)

The JP's activities between 1 January and 31 December 2022 were implemented by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, and UN Women across various thematic areas in partnership with the stakeholders.

Under outcome 1, UNFPA organized a number of capacity building activities (seminars, trainings, conference) on normative budgeting in the healthcare system for managers and economists with a focus on reproductive health and gender-sensitive services (i.e. 24 February; 7, 8 and April; 25 May; 21 June, 20 December). Over 450 participants got knowledge in the result-based budgeting in healthcare. Capacity building activities were held in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health. A survey among the healthcare managers from 97 organizations to identify their needs on issues related to results-based budgeting was organized and conducted by the national counterpart (Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education – BelMAPO). A curricula for healthcare managers and economists on results-based budgeting, including methodological materials, was prepared and approved by BelMAPO. In September 2022, the educational program was launched and 2 courses were held (19-23 September, 26-30 September), with 39 graduates. The conceptual and methodological framework to integrate SDGs in budget planning based on the cost of services per consumer in healthcare was defined (May 2022). The analytical study "National Accounts of the healthcare system of the Republic of Belarus as a tool for managing public resources and achieving Sustainable Development Goals" was conducted (October 2022). Recommendations on the implementation of results-based budgeting in healthcare have been developed (November 2022). Feasibility study and testing of the conceptual and methodological framework in a pilot region were performed. The impact of DRG (diagnosis-related group) tool which was implemented as a normative budgeting approach on 6 hospital budgets in Grodno region was analyzed (September-December 2022).

Under Outcome 2, in 2022 UNICEF conducted a research study on child-focused public expenditure measurement, social assistance services and capacity development for performance-based budgeting in cooperation with the national partners and ownership of the Sub-national Governments (namely, Minsk City, Borisov, Molodechno, and Novopolotsk municipalities). The study resulted in the following intermediate deliverables: 1) child-focused

expenditures were measured and analysed at the national level and locally; 2) progress was advanced in Belarus towards the UNICEF Child-Focused Public Expenditure Measurement (C-PEM) approach and best practices; 3) the C-PEM Guidelines were developed; 4) the country-wide survey on social services for families with children was conducted which provided data on available services and needs of families with children, including children with disabilities, and capacity of local authorities to provide the services, as well as existing gaps and bottlenecks. A number of activities were also undertaken to advance policy dialogue and capacity development for performance-based child-focused budgeting, specifically: field visits to piloted cities, including meetings with the local authorities, Youth Parliament, CSOs representatives (February, March 2022); presentation of the UNICEF C-PEM methodology to the Local Governments in Borisov, Novopolotsk, Molodechno (November 2022); interagency national study team quarterly meetings; thematic meetings with key government stakeholders, including the ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MoLSP) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF), on performance-based child-focused budgeting and staff retraining.

Under outcome 3, in the reporting period UNDP undertook the analysis of state programmes and finalized the Rapid Integrated Assessment (RIA) of their finance for SDGs (February-November 2022). Gaps were identified, outcomes and recommendations on further actions were discussed with national partners.

[more text here]

### **Main Challenges, adjustments and lessons:**

Despite the buy-in from the Government, a series of internal and external constraints were encountered in JP implementation. PUNOs interventions have faced some delays from the very early stage with regards to the expected timeline due to the evolving post-election political and system crises in the country, socio-economic situation, economic sanctions, suspension of operation of some key international development partners. In 2022, after the start of the war in Ukraine, political and socio-economic disturbances have been boosted by new sanctions imposed by the EU and the US in addition to those that have already been in place. Moreover, in 2022 Belarus decided to terminate cooperation with some international organisations and donors and to denounce several international agreements. Owing to the referred hurdles, PUNOs have experienced a growing level of mistrust on the part of the government entities towards cooperation with the UN.

To preserve the national buy-in and increase coherence of UN system support, PUNOs held frequent meetings with the government counterparts to ensure JP remains a priority for the authorities and create enabling environment for agencies' interventions. After February 2022, relationships and communication with government institutions had to be re-established anew with consideration of the evolving situation and newly emerging circumstances.

In addition, the following structural constraints should also be listed:

- significant changes of personnel in the key partners' organisations associated with human capital migration, which led to additional time and efforts for engaging the new counterparts;
- the number of available local and international experts to engage in consultancy services has been reduced, which created delays and slowdown in the implementation of some JP's activities;
- limited access to certain official statistical data and financial information caused by the restrictions of the authorities.

Lessons learned in the reporting period are as follows:

- engaging national experts from the research and academic institutions under the jurisdiction of the line ministries proved to be an effective mechanism for facilitating the JP implementation. Such institutions usually have the human capacity, expertise and access to the official statistical data and updated regulatory framework;
- in the unstable and unfavorable contexts, a longer-period lasting programmes and projects are more efficient, given long decision-making processes in the government institutions and extended timeline for clearance by national partners. In such contexts, short-term programmes and projects need more time to successfully complete the planned interventions and therefore may require extension.

## SDG Acceleration

PUNOs joined forces to accelerate progress towards SDGs focusing on SDGs 3, 5 and 17 and working together on specific components to ensure continuity across SDGs.

UNFPA and UNICEF focused on mainstreaming SDGs 3 on health and gender equity (3 and 5) through promoting universal access to healthcare with the focus on sexual and reproductive health and identifying cost effective ways to provide equitable services for children with a child-focused public expenditure measurement framework. UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health and its healthcare institutions to improve the efficiency in the use of public finance in healthcare, in particular with regards to reproductive health services, by introducing results-oriented budgeting, in particular normative cost-based budget planning methods per one consumer. The analysis of the State programme "People's health and demographic security" for 2021-2025 for compliance with the objectives and indicators of SDG 3 "Ensuring a healthy lifestyle and promoting well-being for everyone at any age" was carried out. Recommendations on the integration of the SDGs into the planning and implementation of state programmes in healthcare have been developed. Analysis of existing forms of state and departmental statistical reporting for healthcare institutions in terms of providing data for the formation of reports on the SDGs was performed and recommendations for optimizing reporting have been developed.

The UN Women component of the JP is supporting the acceleration of the progress towards SDG 5.c.1 through capacitating representatives from profile Ministries on mainstreaming gender equality in state programmes and budgets. Through the data gap assessment and the first ever gender budget analyses of the State programme on "Labour market and Employment" for 2021-2025 UN Women is aiming to support the Government in accelerating progress on SDG 5 by amending the approach to policy making and budgeting, based on identifying gender gaps and the different needs of women and men and vulnerable groups.

UNDP has focused on SDG 17 on partnerships for SDGs. The report concluded that the level of SDG alignment between national and global SDGs was of 39% (66 versus global 169 targets). The following SDGs showed a low percentage of target alignment: SDG 5 Gender (11 per cent), SDG 13 Climate change (20%); SDG 16 Peaceful and inclusive societies (17%) and SDG 17 Partnerships (11%). The assessment indicated, in particular, gaps with regards to SDG 17, on targets related to multi-stakeholder partnerships for sustainable development, technology, trade and PPP cooperation on SDG implementation, and capacities to disaggregate data.

## Updates on SDG financing framework

	Assessment Diagnostics	Financing Strategy	Monitoring	Governance
Inception phase			Review	Coordination
Previously Completed	Advancing (50-99%)	Planned (0%)	Planned (0%)	Planned (0%)

## Descriptions on progress by INFF building blocks

**Inception Phase:** The INFF Roadmap is being developed and is expected to be approved by the Government after finalization of the results of DFA. Presentation to and discussion with the national stakeholders of the DFA Summary Report will take place at the final event under JP.

**Assessment & Diagnostics:** The RIA and DFA assessments, as main parts of the INFF study, were identified as priority areas for cooperation with the national stakeholders. To estimate the cost of implementing national sustainable development priorities, the RIA working group analyzed the list of state programmes for 2021-2025 (32 programmes) and identified 24 (accessible and not related to law enforcement and defense issues) for subsequent analysis for compliance with global and national SDGs. 24 state programmes were analyzed by the working group and sent for clarification to the government bodies responsible for their development. Further to this, the DFA was launched to assess current financing trends, provide an approximation of future spending needs and help Belarus determine their financing gaps. A draft of Development Finance Assessment report has been developed with recommendations on further steps for key national counterparts towards creating the Integrated National Financing Frameworks in Belarus. With regards to the GGEI Index, a draft of the roadmap was developed by UNDP

in partnership with the line ministry on improving the Belarus position in the ranking and enhancing the country situation in the field of green financing. The roadmap should allow Belarus to increasingly draw on alternative forms of financing particularly from the private sector, including by setting up SDG social impact funds, harnessing climate finance, low carbon development, green financial instruments based on the 2021 analysis of the GGEI position of Belarus.

**Financing Strategy:** n/a

**Monitoring & Review:** n/a

**Governance & Coordination:** n/a

## Annual Reporting on Results

### JP contributions to the Joint SDG Fund's global cost of living crisis

The JP top up programme aims at identifying the specific impact of the cost-of-living crisis on vulnerable groups and contributing to the development of policy recommendations to address targeted responses. Key contributions made so far by the JP include the following:

1) UNDP in close collaboration with national experts worked on data collection, DFA analysis, and policy recommendations for the agricultural sector and key national stakeholders to support agricultural production, processing and supply, and the development of innovative tools. Based on the findings of the analytical note on the current trends in the sector, UNDP identified 3 areas of partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, as follows: DFA in the area of agriculture; recommendations for the innovative mechanisms of agricultural start-ups financing; recommendations on developing educational programs for beginner farmers and producers of organic products.

2) UNFPA focused on the increased pressure on the shrinking healthcare budgets due to triple vulnerabilities crisis, impacting the funds available for health-related SDGs. UNFPA is running a desk review of potential impact of financial crisis on healthcare system with case study on infertility and reproductive health. The team of experts is currently analyzing two tools which may have the potential to increase sustainability of the national healthcare system: i.e. its digitalization and restructuring of medical care provided at hospitals. The use of cost-effectiveness analysis will make financial forecasting on the reproductive health sector more effective and needs-oriented, enabling health planners to better adhere to the LNOB principle.

3) UNICEF conducted the Commitment to Equity for Children research, including the multidimensional child poverty measurement and fiscal policy recommendations for a national definition of multidimensional child poverty. In 2023, UNICEF will work with national partners to apply this evidence to the development of Belarus' multi-dimensional poverty measurement on annual basis.

4) UN Women enhanced knowledge of PUNOs in skills on gender mainstreaming in programming and budgeting during the online training session (29 September 2022) to ensure development of gender-sensitive responses to the global crises thorough comprehensive analysis within child protection, health and agriculture in Belarus.

These key contributions made to date by the JP are the basic steps taken by PUNOs together with partners and stakeholders committed to building on the work of the JP, to ensure a sustainable follow-up to the global cost-of-living crisis. This will align the crisis response to longer-term sustainable development plans, policies and financing, which is of extreme importance to the country, since, according to international experts, the cost-of-living crisis will be the most serious global risk in the next two years.

### Next steps, scaling and sustainability [400 words]

To successfully complete the overall JP, PUNOs will put efforts in additional coordination with national partners, review, editing of final materials and clearances that must be completed. Advocacy efforts and more strategic engagement of key stakeholders will help sustain and scale up the results after JP completion.

For UNFPA, raising awareness of healthcare managers and economists on results-based budgeting and SDGs will be sustainable over time, since the curricula was officially approved and incorporated into the training programme of BelMAPO. The research results and the developed recommendations are expected to be presented at a final board meeting of the Ministry of Health in March 2023.

UNICEF will focus on the C-PEM Guidelines and budget briefs finalization and presentation. CEQ4C study findings and recommendations will be presented to the national stakeholders (Belstat, MoLSP, MoF, sub-national governments). A thematic plan for advanced training and retraining of social workers and civil servants of sub-national governments will be developed, and training will be conducted, including through the Child and Adolescent Friendly Cities (CAFC) platform.

UNDP will work towards incorporation of RIA methodology into the national process of preparation and monitoring of the state programmes, pairing the relevant national portal with a digital RIA Dashboard. In Q1 2023, UNDP will focus on finalization of DFA analysis and BioFin report and presentation of key results to the national partners, as well as approval of the INFF Roadmap for Belarus which would contribute to the sustainability of the SDG financing strategy and financial reforms in the country.

UN Women will conduct offline seminar on GRB for profile Ministries and key stakeholders to apply gender analysis tools in practice and discuss entry points for GRB across the budget cycle, finalise a data gap assessment of the gender relevant data in the sectors of labor and social protection in partnership with Belstat, as well as gender analyses of the State programme "Employment and Labour market" and present the results. Information materials on GRB will be developed and disseminated to target audiences.

In Q1 2023, the results of the JP components are expected to be presented and communicated by the PUNOs at their individual final events as well as at the final joint event preliminary scheduled for 10 March 2023. The manuals on the research studies conducted by PUNOs will be designed, printed and distributed among the relevant partners.

## **Priority Cross-cutting Issues**

### **Cross-cutting results/issues**

UNDP playing the convening role worked with other UN agencies to ensure cross-cutting results in JP implementation with a special focus on gender equality, decent work, inclusion and leaving no one behind. With regards to preparation of Rapid Integrated Assessment, cooperation with UN Women supported the analyses through gender lens and highlighted the need of establishing the system of tracking allocations for gender equality as per national SDG 5.c.1.1. Under this activity, gender-specific SDG indicators in 24 state programmes were analyzed, followed by initiating a dialogue with governmental agencies on gender-responsive budgeting. While developing a roadmap to support the Belarus' Global Green Economy Index, UNDP has focused on the creation of "green" jobs to achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation and ensure decent work and equal opportunity, with a focus on vulnerable groups.

Gender-sensitive approach was applied in the research studies conducted for the healthcare system. As an example, within the framework of modeling budgets with the new DRG tool, an analysis of the impact of gender factors on budgets of 6 health care institutions was performed. WHO, though not being a PUNO, was involved in the development of national health accounts, so that those could be linked with SDGs to help national partners to improve SDG Financing.

UNICEF contributed to the multidimensional child pottery methodology to be developed by Belstat in 2023 (SDG 1.2.2). The Child Budget methodology, developed in the course of the study, allows to measure public expenditures, related to children and adolescents, for national and sub-national governments, and for social protection, health care, and education sectors.

### **How did the JP apply the Gender Marker**

The JP is Gender-sensitive (for example, the JP acknowledged and aimed to address gender to enhance the policy/programme, such as undertaking gender analysis to ensure policies/programmes do no harm). Evidence,

data collection and analysis (e.g. gender assessments of programmes; policy briefs, costing for scale-up of social services); Policy dialogues, advocacy (e.g. direct inputs to national policies, strategies, laws, including women’s and girls’ rights groups in coordination mechanisms); Adaptation of existing programmes (e.g. revision of eligibility criteria, removal of conditionalities); Capacity development (e.g. training of social workers, local governments, local communities);

**Focus on LNOB cross cutting principles**

Human Rights	Persons with disabilities	Youth	Environmental and social standards
No	Yes	Yes	Yes

## Strategic Partnerships, Documents and Communications

### How did the JP facilitate collaboration with diverse stakeholders in the SDG financing space

JP hasn’t secured additional financing in terms of co-funding and co-financing. However, in 2022 PUNOs enhanced collaboration with the government at the national and sub-national level, as well as Youth Parliamentarians and other youth institutions.

In particular, UNDP is at the stage of developing a strategic partnership with MoE, a key government partner in the SDG financing space. Agreements were reached on holding a series of trainings with presentation of available UNDP tools in the field of SDG Financing. A new partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food has been launched through additional funding (DEM).

The strategic partners for UNFPA provided consulting, scientific and practical research services. In particular, Republican Scientific and Practical Center of Medical Technologies and BelMAPO contributed to the results by providing pro bono the facilities and staff consultancy services for training and educational activities for the healthcare system.

UNICEF continued to build strategic partnerships with local authorities involved in C-PEM. In 2022, 4 sub-national governments (namely, of Molodechno, Borisov, Novopolotsk, and Minsk City) organised and covered the costs of roundtables in their municipalities where the C-PEM Guidelines were discussed and tested. The events featured participation of the local authorities, Youth Parliaments, media, and general public.

### Donor and Strategic events attended by JP in 2022

JP steering committee/ programme board meeting	Strategic partners/ donors event	Closing meeting/ event
Yes	Yes	No

### JP contribution to SDG Financing

Drafted a bill, strategy, and/or approved a law increasing the fiscal space for the policy focus	Produced financing, costing, diagnostic and feasibility analyses as a basis to invest or increase spending on the SDGs	Improved efficiency (cost savings) in management programmes/schemes	Improved effectiveness of (value for social impact of \$1 spent) sector investment on the SDGs	Drafted policies/regulatory frameworks i.e. developed tools to incentivize private sector investment on the SDGs	Structured financial instruments (public, private or blended) to leverage additional funding	new instruments or private additional funding
No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

## **Main capacity building activities supported by the JP that allowed people to expand their knowledge on SDG Financing and INFFs**

UNFPA undertook 7 capacity building activities (seminars, trainings, conference) on normative budgeting in the healthcare system for healthcare managers and economists with a focus on reproductive health and gender-sensitive services. 463 participants got knowledge in the result-based budgeting and 39 healthcare managers and economists graduated from a 40-hour certified course.

19 representatives from profile Ministries, including MoLSP, MoE, MoF and research institutions in the sectors of labour, economy and healthcare were capacitated on Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB) through an introductory meeting and a series of 8 online training sessions. 85% of participants improved their knowledge on GRB, GRB international experience, its benefits and importance to align gender policies with sectoral policies, the role of gender data and sex disaggregated statistics for evidence-based policy planning, gender analyses and application of its results for state programmes development.

UNICEF in close coordination with local governments organized roundtables for local authorities, Youth Parliamentarians, media, general public, to discuss the methodology of child focused public expenditure measurement.

More than 20 representatives of the Ministry of Economy and its subordinate institution were capacitated in Rapid Integrated Assessment methodology. Moreover, all the stakeholders involved in implementation of 24 state programmes were involved in methodological training during bilateral meetings and programme discussions.