

Terminal Evaluation Joint Program:
Strengthening of the National Social Protection
Strategy Punte al Desarrollo to break the cycle
of poverty at the local level with a gender and
environmental perspective.

FINAL REPORT.

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Acronyms and abbreviations.

BNCR: National Bank of Costa Rica (Banco Nacional de Costa Rica)

EARTH: School of Agriculture of the Humid Tropical Region (Escuela de Agricultura de la Región Tropical Húmeda).

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization for the United Nations.

FIDEIMAS: Imas Trust (Fideicomiso del IMAS).

JP EPD: Joint Program: Strengthening of the National Social Protection Strategy Puente al Desarrollo to break the cycle of poverty at the local level with a gender and environmental perspective.

ILO: International Labour Organization.

IMAS: Institute of Social Assistance (Instituto Mixto de Ayuda Social).

INA: National Institute of Learning (Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje).

INAMU: Women's Institute (Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres).

ITCR: Technological Institute of Costa Rica (Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica)

MAG: Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (Ministerio de Agricultura y Ganadería).

MDHIS: Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion (Ministerio de Desarrollo Humano e Inclusión Social).

MEP: Ministry of Public Education (Ministerio de Educación Pública).

MIDEPLAN: Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (Ministerio de Planificación y Política Económica).

MINAE: Ministry of Environment and Energy (Ministerio de Ambiente y Energía).

MTSS: Ministry of Labour and Social Security (Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social)

RCO: Resident Coordinator's Office

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

TCU: University Communal Work (Trabajo Comunal Universitario)

UN Women: UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme.

PNC: National Care Policy (Política Nacional de Cuidados).

REDCUDI: National Child Care and Development Network (Red Nacional de Cuido y Desarrollo Infantil).

SINIRUBE: National System of Information and Unique Registry of Beneficiaries of the State (Sistema Nacional de Información y Registro Único de Beneficiarios del Estado).

SNE: National Employment System (Sistema Nacional de Empleo).

UNS: United Nations System (Sistema de las Naciones Unidas).

UCR: University of Costa Rica (Universidad de Costa Rica).

UNA: National University (Universidad Nacional)

1. Executive summary.

Purpose and methodology.

The final evaluation of the “Joint Program: Strengthening of the National Social Protection Strategy Puente al Desarrollo to break the cycle of poverty at the local level with a gender and environmental perspective” (from now on JP EPD) is aimed at evaluating the achievement of the results of this JP. In addition to identifying good practices and lessons learned, identifying areas for improvement, and providing conclusions and recommendations that would be relevant for the medium or long term.

The evaluation is based on a participatory methodology, with an intersectional and intercultural gender and human rights approach, using recollection qualitative information techniques by consulting a wide range of institutional officials at the national, regional, and local levels and beneficiaries of the projects. Additionally, the documents prepared within the framework of the JP were analyzed (see bibliography).

Nine people from the UNS team and nine from public institutions were interviewed. There were four focus groups: one with the staff of the JP EPD (6 participants) and three with women from the cantons of Buenos Aires, Limón, and Puntarenas (a total of 20 participants).

Evaluation findings.

1. Criteria: Relevance.

-The actions developed considered the conditions of women in their diversity, establishing a management model that included active listening to their requirements and the joint creation of the implemented interventions, which are included both in the design and execution of these activities.

-Establishing actions corresponding to the conditions of women from their diversity leads to the conclusion that there are different profiles of entry and exit of the EPD, which must be contemplated in its methodological and operational strategy.

-Women's economic autonomy is promoted by encouraging the formalization of organizations, providing means of access to sources of financing and potential customers of their products (E-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres").

-Support for women's organizations strengthens their capacity to develop and manage socio-productive initiatives and reinforces their relationships with other women's groups.

-Differentiated strategies of work are developed with women from indigenous communities, which consider their worldview and particular conditions, integrating them into the implementation of activities.

-The JP EPD includes populations of women in poverty, Afro-descendants, indigenous territories, coastal or rural areas, and with disabilities.

2. Criteria: Efficiency.

-Compliance with the results established as of December 2021 is 90% or higher. The results foreseen in the framework are met or exceeded programmatic results, except for the implementation of 2 additional innovation laboratories in 2 different cantons, which is not possible due to the consequences on public finances of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the design of the Joint Programme, replication in the additional cantons did not have resources from the SDG Joint Fund, and it was an activity that required financing from the national budget.

-As unexpected results are identified: support to institutions in the context of the pandemic (protocol for the prevention and mitigation of Covid-19 in the IMAS and the institutions of Puente al Agro, the expansion of the SINIRUBE technological infrastructure, as a response to the increase in applications for social protection benefits due to the Covid-19 crisis; strengthening relations among women participants, development of territorial intervention models aimed at women with potential for replicability; strengthening of the ties of women's organizations participating in the JP EPD with local offices of public sector institutions, support in institutional infrastructure of SINIRUBE and the National Care Policy (PNC).

- Within the framework of the COVID 19 pandemic, the JP EPD showed the ability to support public sector institutions by generating health protocols to face the pandemic, strengthening the operating capacity of SINIRUBE, monitoring socio-productive initiatives led by women, and adapting the time available for the development of innovation laboratories.

- As an innovative and strategic action in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to adapt UN Women's "Buy from Women" initiative to develop an e-commerce platform called "Hecho por Mujeres" so that women entrepreneurs could sell their products directly to

consumers. The design and development of the platform incorporated an intersectional gender perspective and was a joint work with IMAS and FIDEIMAS.

-Despite the impact of the pandemic, especially in terms of the development of face-to-face activities with women in the three territories, it was possible to meet the defined goals. However, according to the participants, this resulted in greater pressure to execute the actions. Although they managed to meet the goals, they consider that their socio-productive initiatives have not been fully consolidated in several cases. So, they still require support in training and accompaniment.

-As factors that allowed the participation of women in their diversity are identified: strategy of the JP EPD for contact with interested women, availability of financial resources for expenses associated with meetings, allowing the participation of groups of women with informal, productive units, clarify doubts of functionaries on the development of actions in indigenous territories, the development of socio-productive initiatives stimulates the participation of women.

-Factors that hindered the participation of women in their diversity are identified: racist behavior of some public sector officials, unfamiliarity with the requirements and forms required to formalize the organization or to achieve the approval of the project before public institutions or the JP EPD, delay of public institutions for approving socio-productive proposals, lack of experience with socio-productive initiatives, the concentration of support for socio-productive initiatives in certain organizations ¹and gender-based violence against women.

3. Criteria: Sustainability.

-Commitment offices have been established with institutions and cooperation letters between the BNCR, FIDEIMAS, and FAO. A letter from Sepsa-MAG indicates that the gender course is already incorporated into the institutional training policy.

- A memorandum of understanding was signed between UN Women, IMAS, and FIDEIMAS to transfer ownership of the "Hecho por Mujeres" e-commerce platform to FIDEIMAS and responsibility for administration, maintenance, and hosting. FIDEIMAS has assumed these responsibilities, allocated budget and staff, and provided training and accompaniment to women entrepreneurs interested in selling on the platform. It has also defined the criteria to determine

¹ Specifically pointed out by women from indigenous territories of Buenos Aires.

whether women entrepreneurs are prepared to sell on the platform. Additionally, in March 2022, IMAS, INAMU, INA, and MEIC signed an inter-institutional agreement to create the National Program "Hecho por Mujeres" to support the capacity building of women entrepreneurs and give sustainability to this initiative.

-There are formal agreements in the cantons of Limón and Buenos Aires (INAMU, MAG, CNP, Clubes 4S) that support the commitment of the institutions in accompanying the processes initiated with women leaders during 2022-2023.

-In the case of the canton of Puntarenas, the productive initiatives of seed capital, such as the innovation laboratory, were developed jointly with other institutions present in the territory, is the case of the IMAS, Inder, INA, Inamu, and the UNA, which will continue to support, technically and economically, the initiatives.

-However, the lack of institutional resources to follow up on the different seed capital initiatives is a risk pointed out by the staff of the JP EPD and the women interviewed.

-Taking into account the change in the executive and legislative powers as of May 2022, the RCO and UNS agencies raise the importance of promoting the necessary communication with the incoming administration to expose the importance and benefits of the results of the JP; and ensure the political and operational commitments that will give continuity and sustainability to the achievements obtained.

4.Criteria: Coherence.

-The UNS position itself as a benchmark with public institutions at the level of national directorates and local offices, and the central government for the development of actions required to fulfill the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to support institutional activities.

-The JP EPD coordinated with various institutions at the national and local levels and with public and private organizations at the local level. However, the involvement of local governments is weak, reflecting financial and technical constraints.

-The synergies between public institutions and UNS agencies allowed to support the strengthening of governance mechanisms and the implementation of social protection policy from the perspective of the 2030 Agenda.

-The JP promoted the exchange of experiences between the participating women's groups.

-The articulation between UNDP, ILO, UN Women, FAO, and RCO allows greater integration of knowledge, experience, and specialized work, which contributes to formulating comprehensive proposals that meet the needs of women's populations from an interdisciplinary perspective. It also promoted the mobilization of additional funds from each of the agencies involved while supporting the articulation of the different projects and actions.

5.Criteria: Coordination.

-Inter-institutional coordination mechanisms have been favored by integrating high-level political authorities into the Steering Committee.

- According to the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, the methodology of the SGD Fund facilitates the meeting and joint work of UNS agencies and government institutions, being dynamic, proactive, and, above all, of joint creation, constructivist, contributions, and horizontal dialogue between entities.

-The involvement in the design of the JP EPD of the Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion brings political weight to the Joint Program. It facilitates inter-institutional coordination at the central and local levels.

-The participation of the "Mesa Caribe" (Caribbean Roundtable), coordinated by the Second Vice Presidency of the Republic, is an important factor in the case of the canton of Limón as a space for intersectoral and inter-institutional coordination in which the actions of the PC EPD are articulated.

-The Joint Program's design process, which focused on the definition of tasks without initially defining the distribution of budget among the UNS agencies involved, allows from the beginning a process characterized by interagency cooperation and coordination. The technical quality of the participants for each agency also contributes greatly to this.

- The coordination between the RCO and UNS agencies is key to the success of the JP EPD.

-The RCO has played a very important role in building and strengthening relations with the national political leadership and donors to the SDG Fund and has also visited the three cantons where the JP EPD works.

- The JP EPD has effectively built cooperative relationships with local governments, state institutions, the private sector, and universities. These collaborative relationships have strengthened the impact and ownership of actions at the local and national levels.

6. Criteria: Results and impact on public institutions and women participants.

-Multiple effects have been achieved in the participating institutions. Among these are: a review of policies and procedures from an intersectional perspective of gender, environmental impact, interculturality, and attention to populations with conditions of vulnerability; strengthening of SINIRUBE, support for FIDEIMAS, development of the "Hecho por Mujeres" platform, "Plan Familiar" (Family Plan) 2.0 with a gender focus, support in the elaboration of the Gender Equality Policy with an Intersectional Approach of the IMAS. Strengthening of the Agro Information Sheet from a gender and intercultural perspective, design of manuals and protocols for the National Employment System (SNE) with a gender perspective, design of institutional training plans on how to incorporate the gender perspective in the planning, programs, and projects of the agrarian, fisheries and rural sectors.

-Institutional tools have been created to identify situations of gender violence and improve the procedures for referring to the authorities responsible for dealing with these situations.

-Progress has been made in the articulation of the BNCR and FIDEIMAS to promote women's access to resources under conditions that correspond to their possibilities.

-The JP EPD supported the identification and support of companies led by women's groups, which received non-reimbursable seed capital funds and training. This has allowed the insertion of twenty companies (with a focus on gender and environmental sustainability) in the formal sector of the economy and thus access financing and support services from government institutions and private companies.

- The Joint Program developed in partnership with IMAS and FIDEIMAS the e-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres" and supported the creation of capacities in a group of women entrepreneurs to sell successfully on the platform, improve their skills to manage their business, and close their digital divide.

Conclusions.

A. Design and Formulation of the Program.

The design process of the JP EPD includes two elements that strengthen it in terms of subsequent execution:

a) Joint elaboration between the UNS Agencies' technical staff focused on the definition of goals and coordinated actions.

b) The active involvement of the Minister and Vice Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion provides both the commitment of the IMAS and the necessary political support to promote the integration of different public institutions and, in the implementation of the JP EPD, coordinates the Board of Directors.

In the execution of the Joint Programme, these two elements allowed to establish effective and constant coordination spaces throughout the implementation of the JP.

By proposing the incorporation of gender and environmental perspectives and the institutional articulation in the development of comprehensive support for women in vulnerable conditions, the theory of change clearly establishes the relationship between objectives, actions, and results. Additionally, it shows the necessary flexibility to adapt to unforeseen situations, such as those arising from the health emergency due to COVID 19 and does not experience changes in the JP EPD's execution period.

The spaces for inter-institutional and inter-agency coordination are adequate and functioning properly. The support of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, the Resident Coordinator of the UNS, and the commitment of the people of public institutions and the Joint Program contribute.

However, it is an opinion widely shared by the interviewees of the UNS and public institutions that the period originally defined for the fulfillment of goals, due to the guidelines of the Joint Fund of the SDGs, is inadequate in terms of guaranteeing the consolidation of socio-productive initiatives of women. It is especially important to consider the varying degrees of experience in this initiative and the consolidation of productive experiences of informal organizations and groups of women involved in the Joint Programme.

B. Execution of the project.

The involvement of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, and the Resident Coordinator, provides political leadership that promotes the articulation of public institutions and UNS agencies, in addition to facilitating high-level agreements that enable the coordination of actions in the territories, inclusion in institutional policies and technical instruments from an

intersectional gender approach. Additionally, the close coordination of efforts between the agencies involved, facilitated through biweekly meetings of the interagency committee and collaboration in implementing specific activities, was key to obtaining the expected results.

The results obtained within the framework of the JP EPD in the three cantons, especially the inclusion of organized groups of women in areas with little prior presence, encourage the support of the local staff of public institutions, facilitating the elaboration of support agreements for these organizations. The Joint Programme demonstrates the ability to adapt to changes in conditions caused by the COVID 19 health emergency, making it possible to meet the budget execution goals and activities development goals.

However, the reduction of effective implementation times of socio-productive initiatives results in pressure on the women participants and staff of the Joint Programme to complete the process and execute resources. In its execution, the JP EPD develops a management model that includes a presence in communities, active listening to organizations, consideration of different options, and providing technical support, financial support, development of professional, collective, and life skills that consider their conditions as women, but also from their social contexts, cultural and others. This model articulates an intersectional gender perspective, environmental sustainability, and culturally sensitive approach, allowing a comprehensive procedure for its target population.

C. Project Results.

The JP EPC demonstrated the ability to meet or exceed the established results. The pandemic affects the development of actions not originally included, such as the development of institutional protocols, expansion of the technological infrastructure, and technical capacities of SINIRUBE to respond to government actions to support sectors affected by the response measures to the pandemic, support to the PNC.

The development of the e-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres", which had been proposed as a possible innovative initiative that could be developed during the design process of the project, was prioritized as a strategic action in response to the pandemic to provide access to markets to women entrepreneurs who lost their sales channels.

As unexpected effects on the women participants, the strengthening of relations between the participating women, the development of effective practices with the potential for replicability, and the strengthening of the ties of the women's organizations participating in the JP EPD with the local offices of public institutions are identified.

The pandemic situation forced the adaptation of the time available to develop innovation laboratories and socio-productive initiatives. However, it was possible to meet the established goals, but the different profiles of the women and socio-productive initiatives participating resulted in differentiated levels of consolidation of these initiatives at the end of the JP EPD. So, it is of great importance to have an adequate follow-up in training, inputs, and accompaniment to support them in their successful development and sustainability.

The Joint Programme facilitated the participation of women in their diversity through a methodological proposal that made it possible to overcome the situation of exclusion present in both institutions and communities while strengthening the capacity of the local and national staff of institutions to develop actions aimed at these populations, especially in indigenous territories.

The actions carried out in the framework of the JP EPD allow the UNS to be positioned as a benchmark for public institutions, local offices, as well as the central government for the development of the actions required for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as well as to support institutional activities.

The articulation between UNDP, ILO, UN Women, FAO, and RCO, allows greater integration of knowledge, experience, and specialized work, which contributes to formulating comprehensive proposals that meet the needs of women's populations from an interdisciplinary perspective. It also promoted the mobilization of additional funds from each of the agencies involved while supporting the articulation of the different projects and actions.

Continued coordination between the RCO and UNS agencies is key to the success of the JP EPD. It is recognized that the RCO has played a very important role in building and strengthening relationships with national political leadership and with donors to the SDG Fund. Multiple effects have been achieved in the participating institutions and coordination at the local level. These include: a review of policies and procedures from an intersectional perspective of gender, environmental impact, interculturality, and attention to populations with conditions of vulnerability; strengthening of

SINIRUBE, support for FIDEIMAS, development of the Platform “Hecho por Mujeres”, design, and implementation of manuals and protocols for the National Employment System (SNE) with an orientation to the population of the EPD, development of actions related to the National Care Policy (PNC), strengthening of the Information Sheet of the MAG from gender and intercultural perspective, design of institutional training plans on how to incorporate the gender perspective in the planning, programs, and projects of the agricultural, fisheries and rural sectors.

Trades of commitment and cooperation letters have been established with public institutions and banking entities that confirm the continuity of actions carried out within the framework of the JP EPD in terms of the application of tools with a gender focus and support for socio-productive initiatives.

However, considering the May 2022 change of government in the executive and legislative branches, the RCO and UNS agencies raise the importance of promoting the necessary political communication with the incoming administration to explain the importance and benefits of the results of the JP and ensure the political and operational commitments that will give continuity and sustainability to the accomplishments obtained.

Recommendations.

Based on the findings and conclusions described in the previous sections, the following recommendations are established:

Recommendation 1: Relevance.

In the planning of actions towards women in their diversity and from an intersectional gender perspective, it is necessary to consider the entry profiles of the women participants in terms of the economic situation, educational level, culture, connectivity, available time, and situations of exclusion and gender violence against women, establishing the actions to be developed that affect their conditions and the expected exit or conclusion profile in the time framework of the project.

Recommendation 2: Effectiveness.

Methodologically systematize the process of the JP, describing the steps and instruments required for the contact with women's organizations, the definition of activities in conjunction with the participants, development of actions, monitoring and feedback with the participants, construction of relationships with public institutions and other actors, preparation of the sustainability strategy.

Include in these systematization recommendations based on the lessons learned, such as adapting the actions to the different profiles of entry and exit, involvement of private companies, and others. Include the methodological contributions of the participating agencies and methodological proposals of the various consultancies produced within the framework of the JP, especially the articulation of the intersectional gender approach, women's economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

In future processes, the articulation of environmental protection actions in socio-productive initiatives must be strengthened by integrating institutions in the sector such as MINAE and academic institutions of higher education: public universities (UCR, UNA) and EARTH.

Recommendation 3: Sustainability at the local level.

Include in the cooperation framework of the UNS Costa Rica actions in the territories that recover and apply the learning of the JP EPD, such as the promotion of spaces of intersectoral territorial articulation. These spaces must integrate public, business, and community institutions and lessons learned in managing socio-productive initiatives in territories. Also, use the contact methodology called "umbrella strategy" to reach groups of women who have not been included in institutional programs or cooperation organizations.

Promote spaces for inter-agency coordination and promote from the RCO the coordination of follow-up activities that define UNDP, FAO, ILO, and UN Women for the actions initiated in the Joint Programme.

Recommendation 4: Sustainability, new administration and change of ministerial hierarchies.

Establish from the RCO, with the support of the agencies, an advocacy strategy with the authorities of the new government aimed at reporting on the results obtained and the importance of continuing to support the methodologies, instruments, and programs developed from the JP EPD.

Recommendation 5: Coherence and Coordination.

Present by the RCO and representatives of the UNS agencies involved to the new authorities of the IMAS, MAG, INAMU, INA, and MTSS, the progress obtained in the framework of the JP EPD, proposing the continuity and reinforcement of the advancement obtained.

It should be proposed to the IMAS Board of Directors to support the implementation of the National Plan for overcoming Poverty and Social Inclusion, in addition to continuing support for SINIRUBE, based on the lessons learned and tools developed within the framework of the JP EPD.

Recommendation 6: Coordination.

The role of the RCO as the coordinating body and representative of the UNS to central government authorities and hierarchies of public institutions should be maintained and strengthened in the implementation of the next cooperation framework. The participation of the RCO in the SDG Consultative Committee should be promoted by presenting a final report of the JP EPD to the new authorities.

Establish spaces for interagency coordination that promote joint actions in territories and on social protection issues by UNS agencies, based on the tools developed and the learnings obtained in the JP EPD.

Recommendation 7: Results and impact on public institutions and women participants.

The different UNS agencies involved in the Joint Program should follow up on the actions of public institutions to support the socio-productive initiatives of the women's organizations participating in the JP EPD to establish whether adequate support is being received for the consolidation of their initiatives, as well as the "Hecho por mujeres" platform.

Lessons learned.

As lessons learned, the following are identified:

The time available to carry out the processes is viewed as too short, especially considering the different entry profiles of the women to the JP. In these circumstances, the selection and scheduling of JP EPD activities are limited by the time constraints of the SDG Joint Fund and bureaucratic or operational realities. Complex processes involving multiple stakeholders had to be avoided or limited to ensure the necessary short-term results. A period of at least four years is considered

necessary. This situation was aggravated by the COVID-19 emergency that slowed down the implementation of actions at the local level.

-The different entry profiles of the participating women (a result of their personal and gender conditions, previous experiences in income generation, and even geographical location, among others) lead to the need to establish exit profiles of the institutional support processes, more flexible than those used in the JP EPD.

-Regarding interagency coordination, the decision to focus the design of the JP EPD on the strengths of the different agencies and defining a clear division of tasks and maintaining spaces for dialogue and constant coordination (interagency committee), in addition to the leadership of the RCO, allowed to establish a dynamic of agile and efficient joint work.

-It is necessary to actively involve the private sector and academia in actions to support productive projects of women, on which progress was made in the canton of Limón with the "Mesa Caribe," and it should be established in the intervention methodology in UNS territories.

-When developing actions in territories, it is necessary to establish a period for working together with community actors to define a solution to local needs. The experience of the JP EPD indicates that the time spent in the communities before proposing interventions gave a higher level of identification and ownership of initiatives at the local level.

- Although in the process of designing and executing the Joint Program, research and induction actions were carried out on institutional processes and dynamics with the people responsible for developing the activities in each canton, in the development of these activities, they found, on occasions, resistance or different priorities from local officials. Therefore, it is necessary to include in the planning of actions in territories the construction of institutional connections required to "convince" the local institutional staff of the importance and usefulness of the work proposal, which requires time and close monitoring by the UNS personnel.

-Political support from authorities such as ministers, governing bodies, and the Presidential House is essential to promote inter-institutional support and cooperation.

-The successful implementation of a JP requires active and close collaboration between the participating UNS agencies. Interdisciplinary collaborations lead to the creation of synergies that positively impact the processes and results of the Joint Program.

-The administrative processes required for the submission, approval, and management of projects represent a barrier to women's participation and project management. There is a need for greater adaptation of instruments that respond to women's educational and cultural conditions and flexibility in procedures and delivery times.

-The participation of the Resident Coordinator and the RCO team is very important for the success of the Joint Program, focusing on the integration of the JP EPD team and strategic direction. This also opens the door to high-level political coordination and influence with national government authorities.

-The commitment and active participation of the representatives of the UNS agencies allow for the fulfillment of the established goals and the adequate coordination between the different agencies.

-The incorporation of the gender departments of the participating institutions would strengthen the institutionalization of the practices and tools developed within the framework of the JP EPD.

- The process of institutionalization and sustainability of the results obtained by the JP EPD cannot be limited to the signing of institutional agreements. It must include a period of support and follow-up by the UNS, which incorporates management with the authorities, especially in situations of change of administration or replacement of hierarchies, and agreements to support institutions in the integration processes of methodologies and attention to women.

- Inter-agency joint construction and work with institutions are necessary to promote the sustainability of innovative initiatives, such as the E-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres".

2. Introduction.

The final evaluation of the "Joint Program: Strengthening of the National Social Protection Strategy Puente al Desarrollo to break the cycle of poverty at the local level with a gender and environmental perspective" (from now on JP EPD) is aimed at evaluating the achievement of the results of this JP. In addition to identifying good practices and lessons learned, identifying areas for improvement, and providing conclusions and recommendations that would be relevant for the medium or long term.

Consequently, the degree of achievement of the following expected results for 2022 is analyzed:

- Three cantons will implement new models of intervention and increase income generating opportunities for women as a consequence of participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive and environmental-friendly initiatives aimed at strengthening key areas for women's economic empowerment, including greater access to financing sources and markets, improved skills, and higher levels of associativity.
- Supported by SINIRUBE and the procedures of the National System of Employment, institutions responsible for the welfare, labor and agricultural components of the EPD work more cohesively and integrate, both at the central and local level, the intersectional gender and environmental sustainability perspectives in their respective protocols, tools and procedures, directly benefiting 3000 female-led households and their families through extended and more comprehensive programs and services representing a government investment of over 4.7 million USD.
- Established innovative public and private inter-institutional partnership schemes, including the academia, at the local and central level to support women's entrepreneurship and/or participation in the labor force.

Progress in achieving the following outcomes is also assessed:

Outcome 1: National institutions responsible for the EPD adopt people-centered, gender- and environmentally sensitive institutional arrangements to close gaps in the social protection floor and promote women's economic empowerment.

- Output 1.1. Improved inter-institutional and multi-level coordination mechanisms to implement the EPD components with gender and environmental sustainability perspectives.
- Output 1.2. Generated tools and capacities in the institutions responsible for the EPD's components, to incorporate intersectional gender and environmental-sustainability perspectives.

- Output 1.3. Established an institutional model to improve EPD institutional capacities to promote employability and entrepreneurship to facilitate the just transition to the formal economy, including intersectional gender and environmental-sustainability perspectives.

Outcome 2: Women and their households in the selected cantons increase their income-generating opportunities as a direct consequence of the participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive and environmentally friendly local initiatives promoted by the EPD.

- Output 2.1 Women in poverty in the selected cantons have increased access to tailor-made services from local, innovative, gender-sensitive and environmentally-friendly laboratories.
- Output 2.2. Productive initiatives led by women in the selected cantons have increased access to gender-sensitive and environmentally-friendly financial instruments to sustain their livelihoods.

This document includes the following sections: country context, evaluation methodology, evaluation findings, conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned, bibliography, and Annexes. The annexes have the list of people interviewed, the evaluation matrix used in the process, information collection instruments, recommendations, and observations from interested parties indicating the degree of integration in the final report.

3. Methodology.

The evaluation is based on a participatory methodology, with an intersectional and intercultural gender and human rights approach, using recollection qualitative information techniques by consulting a wide range of institutional officials at the national, regional, and local levels and beneficiaries of the projects. Additionally, the documents prepared within the framework of the JP were analyzed (see bibliography).

Due to the limitations imposed by the COVID 19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted virtually, except for the focus groups of women participating in the JP EPD of Buenos Aires and Limón².

Also, 9 UNS people who participated in the Joint Programme and 9 from public sector institutions were interviewed. A focus group was held with the JP EPD team (6 participants) and focus groups with women from Buenos Aires (9 participants), Limón (7 participants), and Puntarenas (4 participants).

The consultant maintained communication and coordination with the Joint Evaluation Management Group, JEMG, and the coordinator of the JP EPD regarding the progress in the results and development of the fieldwork.

The evaluation design sought to incorporate an appropriate sample of the key actors that participated in the other activities of implementing the Joint Program in the cantons of Buenos Aires, Limón, and Puntarenas. Special importance was given to developing focus groups with women participants, and the consultations sought to implement the "Recommendations for using evaluation methods with a gender approach." (ONU Mujeres, 2015).

The triangulation of information obtained is carried out with the qualitative analysis software Atlas Ti 9. With this software, codes were developed from the questions and indicators included in the evaluation matrix, which are used to classify the contents of documents, interviews, and focus groups. After that, the citations corresponding to each code are organized. Subsequently, aggregates of citations are constructed by criteria and evaluation questions, which form the basis from which the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of this document are elaborated. Thus, it is possible to compare the information obtained from each source of information concerning the evaluation criteria, identifying coincidences and potential contradictions.

4. Context.

Considered an upper-middle-income country, Costa Rica experienced sustained economic growth over the past 25 years. Such progress results from an outward-looking development strategy based

² The women's focus group from the canton of Puntarenas was carried out virtually at the request of the participants.

on openness to foreign investment and gradual trade liberalization. Thanks to its environmental policies and achievements, it is also a world leader, which has helped the country build its green brand. This development model allowed the country to insert itself dynamically into the global economy and even generate a sector linked to the world's high-tech industry. Industrial-based and agro-industrial exports were displacing the traditional agricultural export sectors. The productive base also incorporated a thriving tourism sector that placed Costa Rica on the global map as a highly desired destination. In line with the country's economic dynamism, the per capita income growth was notorious in the last thirty years. However, poverty tended to stagnate at levels around 20% of households, according to the measurement by Income Line calculated by the National Institute of Statistics and Censuses of Costa Rica. (SNU, 2017) , in addition to a progressive growth in inequality measured by the Gini Coefficient, which as of July 2021 reaches a value of 0.517, the highest in the period 2011-2021 (INEC, 2022) .

On the other hand, the Costa Rican State faces a growing public debt of the Central Government that, at the end of 2020, represents 67% of GDP (Ministerio de Hacienda, 2021), which presents important limitations to public investment capacities. According to the World Bank, two development challenges stand out: the fiscal situation and persistent inequality, which affect the basic pillars of the Costa Rican development model: inclusion, growth, and sustainability (Banco Mundial , 2022).

The abovementioned economic and social challenges intensified with the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) pandemic. Despite Costa Rica's strong health system and timely response to the crisis, the pandemic impacted its economy. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 4.1% in 2020, the biggest drop in four decades, driven by sharp investment and private consumption declines. Despite government efforts to mitigate the impact of COVID 19, the incomes of the bottom 40% of the population declined by 15% in that year, and an estimated 124,000 people fell into poverty, raising the poverty rate. One in five working people was unemployed in the fourth quarter of 2020. The crisis disrupted Costa Rica's incipient fiscal consolidation built on major reforms adopted in 2018 and 2019.

In this regard, the 2021 State of the Nation Program's report indicates that the pandemic plunged the economy into one of the most severe productive disruptions of recent decades. Besides, the Central Bank's estimates as of July 2021 project a recovery in production that will take GDP to a level close to the pre-pandemic era. This recovery will be uneven between economic activities, and the labor market will not be expected to recover in the short term.

Consequently, the health emergency highlighted vulnerabilities in the country's economic, social, and political systems and deepened pre-existing inequalities. Although there are no studies on the impact of the situation on women's economic conditions when preparing this report, the "Joint Programme Document" points out the existence of gender gaps in the labor market, which have undoubtedly worsened from this situation. In this regard, the effects of the pandemic must be assessed from the factors of intersectionality: such as ethnicity, age, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, disability, culture, geographical location, and migratory status, from which the accumulated effects of pre-existing inequalities and the impact of the current situation in the short and long term can be established.

5. Evaluation findings.

This section will present findings by category and assessment questions. In the case of the latter, the categories that compose them and the information collected are established, allowing the degree of compliance and aspects that affected the actions developed. For each criterion, the findings obtained are described.

1.Criteria: Relevance.

Findings:

-The actions developed considered the conditions of women in their diversity, establishing a management model that included active listening to their requirements and the joint creation of the implemented interventions, which are included both in the design and execution of these activities.

-Establishing actions corresponding to the conditions of women from their diversity leads to the conclusion that there are different profiles of entry and exit of the EPD, which must be contemplated in its methodological and operational strategy.

-Women's economic autonomy is promoted by encouraging the formalization of organizations, providing means of access to sources of financing and potential customers of their products (E-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres").

-Support for women's organizations strengthens their capacity to develop and manage socio-productive initiatives and reinforces their relationships with other women's groups.

-Differentiated strategies of work are developed with women from indigenous communities, which take into account their worldview and particular conditions, integrating them into the implementation of activities.

-The JP EPD includes populations of women in poverty, Afro-descendants, indigenous territories, coastal or rural areas, and with disabilities.

Elements identified by evaluation question.

1.¿Hasta qué punto las acciones del JP EPD se dirigen a proporcionar respuesta a las mujeres en pobreza en su diversidad, tomando en cuenta su contexto y condiciones particulares?

The analysis of documents and the interview with informants allows to determine that the intersectionality approach³ was present in the design of the JP EPD but was developed and strengthened from work in the three participating cantons.

The women's selection process in the JP EPD included interviews to ensure that EPD actions responded, as one of the persons interviewed points out: "... as women, not just as families, which gave the framework to understand priorities from an intersectional gender perspective." In this regard, several people interviewed confirmed the existence of different entry and exit profiles of the Bridge to Development Strategy. This aspect will be taken up again in the later sections.

Once selected, the JP established a management model that includes a community presence, active listening to organizations, consideration of these options, and technical and financial support. Also, the development of professional skills and collective soft skills considers their conditions as women and their social, cultural, and other contexts. In this regard, it is indicated by informants from the canton of Buenos Aires that, in the actions conducted with women from indigenous territories:"... predominated a factor of respect for the worldview, understanding that we are not only in a matter of multiculturalism but also in components of various knowledge and visions. It sought to strengthen its tools around managing socio-productive initiatives in their distinct phases, even if they were incipient. Even with this, tools were integrated that could strengthen their work, developing several topics related to their productive activity and more general (of interest to all groups). In addition, they were accompanied throughout the process of placing seed capital."

The indigenous women consulted for this evaluation recognize that the actions of the Joint Program took them into account. They are incorporated into the activities to be developed. However, they insist on the need for the technicians responsible for developing projects for their communities to know the situation and worldview of Indigenous peoples.

³ Which can be summarized as the interrelation of gender, social and economic factors, which generate exclusions and inequalities and establish a gap in women's access to the different production resources and their rights.

Additionally, the design and development of the e-commerce platform incorporated an intersectional gender perspective, and fifty-two diverse women were interviewed during the consultation process to understand their needs.

2. To what extent are the design and implementation of JP EPD actions aimed at boosting women's economic autonomy in their diversity, including greater access to sources of finance and markets, better skills, and higher levels of associativity?

Within the framework of the JP EPD, it is possible, as indicated by documents and informants, to identify and incorporate populations that normally do not participate in the governmental social protection programs. This could be due to a lack of information on accessing financing and technical support sources or because their productive proposals are developing and do not meet the requirements to receive funding from institutional programs.

The Joint Program worked with women's organizations from different populations like indigenous, coastal areas, fisherwomen, artisans, and community tourism, which presented different levels of development of their productive projects and conditions of associativity. In these cases, the actions aimed to strengthen their organizational capacities (promoting the formalization of organizations when necessary), facilitating access to financing mechanisms, and developing tools for access to markets.

The e-commerce platform “Hecho por Mujeres”⁴, aims to promote women's economic autonomy and provides women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs with access to information, training, monitoring, and markets. This platform was developed in conjunction with the IMAS Trust (FIDEIMAS)⁵, which is committed to administering, maintaining, and sustaining the platform, which currently has 60 women, three women's and indigenous peoples' organizations, and more than 300 products (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, 2022). Training and accompaniment were developed hand in hand with FIDEIMAS to create the necessary capacities for the businesswomen to sell on the platform.

The women consulted in the three cantons indicated that they could access the supplies and equipment required to develop their socio-productive initiatives. They can also establish better

⁴ <https://hechopormujeres.cr/>

⁵ The IMAS Trust is oriented to financing additional and subsidiary guarantees through loans with a favorable interest rate. It also provides training, technical assistance, and follow-up for individuals or groups that execute productive projects. <https://www.imas.go.cr/es/beneficios/fideimas>

relations with public institutions, acquire greater skills in managing their socio-productive enterprises, and interact with other women's organizations.

Therefore, it is determined that the design and execution of the Joint Program are aimed at the economic autonomy of women in their diversity, greater access to sources of financing and markets, and higher levels of associativity.

3. To what extent are the design and implementation of the actions of the JP EPD aimed at achieving the socioeconomic inclusion of women from more vulnerable groups, such as indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, rural women, and women living on the coasts with disabilities, among others?

Within the intersectional gender approach framework, the conditions of disabilities are one of the elements considered. About Organizations specifically focused on people with disabilities, only the work of the Joint Program with the Association of the Deaf of Limon, ASORLI⁶, was identified. This organization develops a socio-productive initiative of green entrepreneurship with the use of bamboo for the manufacture of products. The JP provided them with funding and technical assistance. In other cases, if there are people with any disability condition, it is not a selection by disability factor. Still, it is an integral part of the process of community organization. In addition, the JP EPD created and implemented a training program for EPD officials to promote the inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities in social protection programs, named the training plan on inclusion, employability, and social protection of people with disabilities.

In the canton of Limón, the JP worked with Afro-descendant populations, indigenous people of the Taynín territory (Cabécar people), and people with disabilities (the association of deaf people of Limón). The JP supports the creation of connections in these communities to produce and market cocoa, coconut, bamboo, and traditional plants (medicinal and ornamental).

The JP EPD develops actions with women from 8 Costa Rican indigenous territories (Boruca, Cabagra, China Kichá, Rey Curré, Salitre, Taynín, Térraba, Ujarrás - including more than 87 women entrepreneurs from the Bribri, Brorán, Brunca and Cabécar peoples). Actions were implemented for business development, food safety, agrotourism, training, innovation in agricultural processes,

⁶ This association includes groups of deaf people, who live in the cantons of Matina, Limón, Talamanca, Guácimo, and Pococí, which are active members of the province of Limón. It includes 63 deaf people: Afro-descendants, migrants, indigenous, and mestizos. <https://www.facebook.com/Asociaci%C3%B3n-Sordos-Lim%C3%B3n-449119031870779/?ref=bookmarks>

access to credit and financing, development of personal skills for indigenous women, legal formalization and strengthening of local groups, financial education, networking for business activities, and community relations and other activities for local development. It is important to note that this required differentiated and culturally sensitive strategies in each of these territories, identifying indigenous women leaders and promoting the integration of women with different ethnic identities.

2. Criteria: Effectiveness.

Findings.

-Compliance with the results established as of December 2021 is 90% or higher. The results foreseen in the framework are met or exceeded programmatic results, except for the implementation of 2 additional innovation laboratories in 2 different cantons, which is not possible due to the consequences on public finances of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the design of the joint programme, replication in the additional cantons did not have resources from the SDG Joint Fund, and it was an activity that required financing from the national budget.

-As unexpected results are identified: support to institutions in the context of the pandemic (protocol for the prevention and mitigation of Covid-19 in the IMAS and the institutions of Puente al Agro, the expansion of the SINIRUBE technological infrastructure, as a response to the increase in applications for social protection benefits due to the Covid-19 crisis; strengthening relations among women participants, development of territorial intervention models aimed at women with potential for replicability; strengthening of the ties of women's organizations participating in the JP EPD with local offices of public sector institutions, support in institutional infrastructure of SINIRUBE and the National Care Policy (PNC).

- Within the framework of the COVID 19 pandemic, the JP EPD showed the ability to support public sector institutions by generating health protocols to face the pandemic, strengthening the operating capacity of SINIRUBE, monitoring socio-productive initiatives led by women, and adapting the time available for the development of innovation laboratories.

- As an innovative and strategic action in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the decision was made to adapt UN Women's "Buy from Women" initiative to develop an e-commerce platform called "Hecho por Mujeres" so that women entrepreneurs could sell their products directly to consumers. The design and development of the platform incorporated an intersectional gender perspective and was a joint work with IMAS and FIDEIMAS.

-Despite the impact of the pandemic, especially in terms of the development of face-to-face activities with women in the three territories, it was possible to meet the defined goals. However, according to the participants, this resulted in greater pressure to execute the actions. Although they managed to meet the goals, they consider that their socio-productive initiatives have not been fully consolidated in several cases. So, they still require support in training and accompaniment.

-As factors that allowed the participation of women in their diversity are identified: strategy of the JP EPD for contact with interested women, availability of financial resources for expenses associated with meetings, allowing the participation of groups of women with informal, productive units, clarify doubts of functionaries on the development of actions in indigenous territories, the development of socio-productive initiatives stimulates the participation of women.

-Factors that hindered the participation of women in their diversity are identified: racist behavior of some public sector officials, unfamiliarity with the requirements and forms required to formalize the organization or to achieve the approval of the project before public institutions or the JP EPD, delay of public institutions for approving socio-productive proposals, lack of experience with socio-productive initiatives, the concentration of support for socio-productive initiatives in certain organizations⁷and gender-based violence against women.

Elements identified by evaluation question.

1. To what extent did the JP EPD advance in fulfilling the established results, and unexpected results were generated?

The different people contacted, both representatives of public institutions and UNS staff, agreed on fulfilling the expected results. Although the experience of local intervention was not replicated in two additional cantons as originally planned due to the consequences on public finances of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the design of the joint programme, the replication in the additional cantons did not have resources from the Joint Fund of the SDGs, and it was an activity that required financing from the national budget.

⁷ Specifically pointed out by women from indigenous territories of Buenos Aires

As of December 31, 2021, the level of compliance is indicated below.⁸:

Result 1: By 2022, 3 cantons will implement new models of intervention and increase income generating opportunities for women as a consequence of participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive and environmental-friendly initiatives aimed at strengthening key areas for women's economic empowerment, including greater access to resources and markets, improved skills and higher levels of associativity.

Estimated rate of completion as of 31 Dec 2021: **95%**

Result 2: Supported by an efficient use of SINIRUBE and the procedures of the *Sistema Nacional de Empleo* (SNE)⁹, institutions responsible for the welfare, labor and agricultural components of the EPD work more cohesively and integrate, both at the central and local level, the intersectional gender and environmental sustainability perspectives in their respective protocols, tools and procedures, directly benefiting 3000 female-led households and their families through extended and more comprehensive programs and services representing a government investment of over 4.7 million USD.

Estimated rate of completion as of 31 Dec 2021: **95%**

Result 3: Established innovative public and private inter-institutional partnership schemes, including the academia, at the local and central level, to support women's entrepreneurships and/or participation in the labor force.

Estimated rate of completion as of 31 Dec 2021: **90%**

Regarding established outcomes, the results obtained are indicated in the report of the Joint Programme. (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, 2022):

⁸The results as of this date are included as they correspond to the most recent report available at the time of preparing this evaluation (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report, 2022).

⁹ National Employment System.

- **Outcome 1: National institutions responsible for the EPD adopt people-centered, gender and environmentally sensitive institutional arrangements to close gaps in the social protection floor and promote women's economic empowerment.**
 - The JP has promoted the creation and implementation of policies, procedures and tools in government institutions that have allowed the strengthening and expansion of social protection services, and the reduction of gaps for women and vulnerable populations.
 - Initiatives such as the National Care Policy, the Policy for Gender Equality Policy of IMAS, the new guidelines of the *Puente al Trabajo* component of the EPD, the Family Plan 2.0, the Guide to incorporate the gender perspective in the Family Plan, the revised Agro File incorporating the intersectional gender perspective, the database on access to financing for women living in poverty and extreme poverty, the articulation system for credit aimed at women in vulnerable conditions, the training program on Inclusion, protection and employability of people with disabilities, the Training Program for EPD officials, and others, promoted the reduction of inequalities, women's human rights, decent employment opportunities, poverty reduction, inclusion of vulnerable people and food security.

- **Outcome 2: Women and their households in the selected cantons increase their income-generating opportunities as a direct consequence of the participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive and environmentally friendly local initiatives promoted by the EPD.**
 - In the cantons of Buenos Aires, Limón and Puntarenas, the JP managed to directly support more than 245 women, grouped in 20 organizations, and their families, through non-reimbursable seed capital financing initiatives and innovation laboratories to strengthen the associativity, capabilities, and empowerment of local women leaders.
 - In the canton of Buenos Aires, the JP worked in seven indigenous territories (Boruca, Cabagra, China Kichá, Rey Curré, Salitre, Térraba, Ujarrás), with people from the Bribri, Brorán, Brunca and Cabécar peoples. The

organizations led by women received financing, training, and technical support to develop their businesses and generate income and well-being for their families. Productive initiatives included agriculture projects, farm animals, production of traditional textiles, art with cultural identity, and cultural rural ecotourism. Their organizations were formalized or renewed, their productive activities were strengthened, and they contributed to the individual and collective empowerment of local women.

- In the canton of Limón, work was carried out with afro-descendant populations, indigenous people from the Taynít territory (Cabecar people) and people with disabilities (the association of deaf people of Limón). In these communities, chains were generated for the production and marketing of cocoa, coconut, bamboo, and traditional plants (medicinal and ornamental). In addition, arts and crafts initiatives with cultural identity, natural cosmetic products, rural ecotourism, and conservation of traditional seeds were promoted. All these women participated in training processes for their businesses and received support from various state institutions, academia, and the private sector, strengthening the business ecosystem and creating opportunities for their economic autonomy and empowerment.
- In the canton of Puntarenas, the JP worked with women from rural coasts and inhabitants of small islands, including older women, young women, immigrant women, and others. The initiatives supported in these communities included organic farming projects, rural coastal ecotourism, mangrove conservation, environmental education, poultry production, production and marketing of oysters, and production of ecological sport fishing baits. The women of Puntarenas received training and support on multiple topics, including business development, carbon footprint measurement, women's empowerment, identification of forms of violence against women, SDGs, marketing of products and services, and others. Despite the difficulties due to violence and poverty in this canton, the

women supported by the JP were able to strengthen their businesses, the economy of their communities and improve their living conditions.

Por otra parte, se indican los siguientes resultados con respecto al fortalecimiento institucional:

Direct contribution to the “Puente al Trabajo” component of the EPD:

- Preparation of the Manual for the National Employment System and Toolbox.
- Approval of the “Puente al Trabajo” guideline within the framework of the SNE (the Employment Council also approved three other guidelines: migration, youth, and people in refugee conditions).
- Update of the INA Job Search Guides (virtual and face-to-face). For the population of “Puente al Trabajo”, executed by the Employment Units of the SNE.

Contributions to social protection (care):

- Development of a costing tool for services and care programs.
- Design of communication campaign on the rights of caregivers (within the framework of the PNC).
- A proposal of requirements was elaborated to define a differentiated mechanism of attention to the care workforce within the services of the National Employment System, including the platform ane.cr.
- An agreement was established between MAG and SINIRUBE to exchange information that contributes to the adequate placement of resources from social assistance programs.

Inclusion of the intersectional gender perspective:

- The JP EPD contributed to incorporating the intersectional gender perspective in the Family Plan 2.0 of the IMAS.
- Fourteen thousand families using EPD services have benefited from the Family Plan 2.0.
- The Guidance and Monitoring Matrix and the Guide and Follow-up Mechanisms (Checklist) were developed to guide the incorporation of the intersectional gender perspective in the programs.

- A series of recommendations and guidelines were developed to implement achievements on women's economic empowerment and violence against women.
- A training of trainers (T4T) was carried out on the Family Plan 2.0, with 20 civil servants who are already replicating the learning in the institution.
- The Training Program for EPD officials was implemented in 10 prioritized institutions. A total of 48 civil servants were trained. This training program has specific modules on the intersectional gender approach and strategies for its application in work processes.
- The Training Plan on inclusion, employability and social protection of people with disabilities was designed with an intersectional gender approach and implemented with 20 civil servants from 7 prioritized institutions.
- "Ficha Agro" was strengthened from the perspective of gender and interculturality.
- A course was developed to incorporate the gender and intercultural perspective in the agricultural, fisheries, and rural sector planning, plans, and projects.

Inclusivity and barrier breaking:

- Support of the JP EPD in elaborating the Gender Equality Policy with an intersectional approach and its IIMA Action Plan.
- Research on barriers was developed, and an informative proposal of financing options for women entrepreneurs was created. This plan was implemented with 20 civil servants from 7 prioritized institutions.
- The Training Plan on inclusion, employability and social protection of persons with disabilities was developed and published. This plan was implemented with 20 officials from 7 prioritized institutions (Programa Conjunto Fortalecimiento de la EPD, 2022).
- The Training Program for EPD civil servants was implemented in 10 prioritized institutions. A total of 48 civil servants were trained. This training program has eight modules, some of these address specific issues on the intersectional gender approach and strategies for its application in labor processes and interculturality.

Concerning the fulfillment of results foreseen in the framework programmatic results of the Joint Program, the progress reports indicate the completion or exceedance of those established. The only

exception was the inclusion of 2 additional cantons, which did not occur due to the reorientation of public resources due to the COVID-19 health emergency.

As for unexpected results, the following are mentioned:

Within the framework of the pandemic, the Joint Program supported the government's actions in response to the situation related to its objectives. For example, the development of health protocols for the development of activities in the agricultural sector and the COVID mitigation protocol of the IMAS, the expansion of technical capacities and equipment of SINIRUBE in order to make it possible to manage the requests for support from the people from the "Programa Proteger¹⁰".

Representatives of UNS agencies point out that, within the framework of the JP, coordination between public sector institutions and their ability to serve the target population of the programme were emphasized.

On the other hand, the Family Plan 2.0 allows 33.148 families to have a comprehensive family plan within the EPD (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report, 2022).

The women of the cantons established links between their activities and processes of improvement of productive processes. For example, through the innovation laboratory, women in Rey Curré and China Kichá produced alternative organic food, which is recovered by the MAG and is proposed to replicate in other communities (food for pigs, chickens, and chickens).

In this regard, the relations of the women's organizations participating in the Joint Program with the local offices of public institutions were strengthened, an aspect that the women recognized interviewed in the canton of Limón.

2. How are JP's actions adapting to the consequences of the COVID 19 Pandemic?

Regarding actions toward women's participation, the pandemic affected the presence on the ground, which is aggravated by the difficulties of wi-fi connection of some participants. Still, the staff of the JP EPD could maintain the activities and follow up on these. However, it is noted that the time foreseen for Innovation Laboratories was reduced.

¹⁰ The "Proteger" program (Decree No. 42305-MTSS-MDHIS and its reforms) provided temporary economic relief to workers who had their income affected by COVID-19. https://www.mtss.go.cr/elministerio/despacho/covid-19-mtss/plan_proteger/bono_proteger.html

As indicated by the Coordinator of the Joint Programme, the JP's staff proceeded to determine the scope that could meet the program's goals in the time that had been established, and it was possible to meet the defined goals.

Despite this, the women from the cantons of Buenos Aires, Limón, and Puntarenas indicated that the reduction in the execution times resulted in greater pressure to execute the actions and acquisition of inputs. Although they managed to meet the goals, in several cases, they consider that their socio-productive initiatives have not been fully consolidated, so they still require support in training, supplies, and accompaniment. Specific cases of delays in disbursements and conflict with the monitoring officer of the JP are mentioned, which are identified as having been solved by the JP EPD Team before de present evaluation.

3. What factors allowed/hindered the participation of women in their diversity?

Among the factors that allowed the participation of women in their diversity are identified:

-The JP EPD strategy of contact with women's groups, particularly in indigenous territories of Buenos Aires, called the "umbrella strategy,"¹¹ was not based on existing organizations but on personal references by the women. In this way, the JP's staff could attract women interested in socio-productive initiatives without previous experience in this type of initiative or relationship with the formal instances of the territory.

-The women of Buenos Aires recognize the openness to involve groups with non-formalized socio-productive initiatives as "a great help" since the formalization processes are identified as complicated, based on forms or procedures difficult to understand, and expensive.

-The provision of resources to support the organization of women in terms of transportation, food, and other rates, allowed to boost organizational activities because the costs associated with meetings discourage the attendance of women in poverty.

¹¹ This strategy was designed and executed for the process developed in the canton of Buenos Aires. One of the selection criteria for the JP EPD was the ability of women's groups to "shelter" or reach other women. In this sense, the larger the umbrella, the more points were received in the pre-selection criteria of the initiatives submitted to the seed capital funds competition.

-A greater receptivity of the institutions to develop socio-productive initiatives with this population, in turn, the result of the support of high authorities and the recognition by local officials of the achievements of the Joint Program.

-To demonstrate to public officials at the local level that it is possible to develop activities in indigenous territories without the need to consult the entire population¹², which allows a greater development of actions in the agricultural sector in those territories.

-The development of socio-productive initiatives supported by the JP EPD encourages other women to obtain information about the possibility of developing similar actions.

-Accompaniment by JP EPD officials throughout the different stages of the socio-productive initiative.

The following are identified as factors that hindered the participation of women in their diversity:

-Attitudes that can be described as racist by personnel of public institutions in the treatment of indigenous women cause them to resist going to offices or projects promoted by these institutions.

- Fears regarding being able to take on the various legal and procedural tasks necessary to formalize an organization or obtain approval for a project. Some women indicated that they had to seek technical support from the Joint Program team to complete the necessary forms to present their socio-productive initiative to the JP EPD.

- Some women consulted indicated that their socio-productive initiatives lost participants due to previous experiences with public institutions, which did not specify the necessary support to advance their proposals' consolidation.

-In certain indigenous territories, an informant specifically mentions that in Cabagra, there were no previous experiences of women in productive projects.

-The women of Buenos Aires indicated that contacts with institutions or cooperation organizations that finance socio-productive initiatives are concentrated in certain organizations in the territories, so it is difficult for them to have access to these sources of support for their productive initiatives. In this regard, it should be noted that the Indigenous Development Associations (Asociaciones de

¹² A misinterpretation of ILO Convention No. 169 "The Right to Consultation."

Desarrollo Indígena¹³) of this territory are strongly masculinized, which is pointed out by people interviewed as a factor that limits women's access to resources.

-In some organizations, situations of gender violence were identified that were referred to INAMU.

¹³ These are the formal instances of governance of indigenous territories established by national legislation. As defined by the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court of Justice (Vote No. 2006-014545): "... indigenous community development associations are local governments and official representatives of indigenous communities and, consequently, any action or project of official or private agencies or persons has to be processed through them."

3.Criteria: Sustainability.

Findings.

-Commitment offices have been established with institutions and cooperation letters between the BNCR, FIDEIMAS, and FAO. A letter from Sepsa-MAG indicates that the gender course is already incorporated into the institutional training policy.

- A memorandum of understanding was signed between UN Women, IMAS, and FIDEIMAS to transfer ownership of the "Hecho por Mujeres" e-commerce platform to FIDEIMAS and responsibility for administration, maintenance, and hosting. FIDEIMAS has assumed these responsibilities, allocated budget and staff, and provided training and accompaniment to women entrepreneurs interested in selling on the platform. It has also defined the criteria to determine whether women entrepreneurs are prepared to sell on the platform. Additionally, in March 2022, IMAS, INAMU, INA, and MEIC signed an inter-institutional agreement to create the National Program "Hecho por Mujeres" to support the capacity building of women entrepreneurs and give sustainability to this initiative.

-There are formal agreements in the cantons of Limón and Buenos Aires (INAMU, MAG, CNP, Clubes 4S) that support the commitment of the institutions in accompanying the processes initiated with women leaders during 2022-2023.

-In the case of the canton of Puntarenas, the productive initiatives of seed capital, such as the innovation laboratory, were developed jointly with other institutions present in the territory, is the case of the IMAS, Inder, INA, Inamu, and the UNA, which will continue to support, technically and economically, the initiatives.

-However, the lack of institutional resources to follow up on the different seed capital initiatives is a risk pointed out by the staff of the JP EPD and the women interviewed.

-Taking into account the change in the executive and legislative powers as of May 2022, the RCO and UNS agencies raise the importance of promoting the necessary communication with the incoming administration to expose the importance and benefits of the results of the JP; and ensure the political and operational commitments that will give continuity and sustainability to the achievements obtained.

Elements identified by evaluation question.

1. What mechanisms have been defined and established to ensure the sustainability of JP EPD's actions?

According to the 2021 annual report of the Joint Programme (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report, 2022) the actions aimed at the sustainability of results are:

- The policies, procedures and tools created or improved as part of the JP initiatives have been appropriated by the institutions of the EPD, and the more complex or costly initiatives (as the "Hecho por Mujeres" e-commerce platform) have been transferred to the ownership of government institutions for its sustainability and further development.
- A memorandum of understanding was signed between UN Women, IMAS, and FIDEIMAS to transfer ownership of the "*Hecho por Mujeres*" e-commerce platform to FIDEIMAS and responsibility for administration, maintenance, and hosting. FIDEIMAS has assumed these responsibilities, allocated budget and staff, and provided training and accompaniment to women entrepreneurs interested in selling on the platform. It has also defined the criteria to determine whether women entrepreneurs are prepared to sell on the platform. Additionally, in March 2022, an inter-institutional agreement was signed between IMAS, INAMU, INA, and MEIC to create the National Program "Hecho por Mujeres" to support the capacity building of women entrepreneurs and give sustainability to this initiative.
- The Política de Igualdad de Género del IMAS was validated in February. The public presentation will take place on April 20 of this year.
- The IMAS approved the document "Recommendations for the operationalization of achievement 11 of the Family Plan" and associated tools to improve the attention of cases of violence against women and articulation with INAMU. Implementation of guidelines and recommendations to strengthen the Family Plan 2.0 is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2022. The execution of the Plan is likely to continue with the inclusion of 19,000 new

families in 2022. This will allow the institutional sustainability of the Family Plan 2.0 and its tools.

- The JP EPD supported FIDEIMAS to develop the marketing strategy and definition of commercial goals for the e-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres." UN Women is committed to supporting FIDEIMAS during 2022 to strengthen its capacities for the administration and promotion of the platform.
- The database on the financial opportunities (grants and credits) available for women entrepreneurs and businessowners will be uploaded to IMAS website to make it easily available to women entrepreneurs and businessowners.
- The "Manual for the National Employment System and Toolbox" and the "Puente al Trabajo" guideline within the framework of the SNE, in addition to the guidelines: on migration, youth, and people in refugee conditions, have been approved by the respective technical councils where representatives of employers and workers participate, as well as public institutions (MTSS, INA, IMAS, INAMU) and are being implemented.
- There is a cooperation accord between BNCR, FIDEIMAS and FAO, and Sepsa-MAG where it is indicated that the gender course is already incorporated into the institutional training policy. In addition, at the local level, there are letters of commitment for follow-up by INAMU, CNP. MAG, IMAS, and 4S Clubs.

In the case of Limón, formal agreements have been established that support the commitment of the institutions in accompanying the processes initiated with women leaders during 2022-2023: regional IMAS, FIDEIMAS – "Hecho por Mujeres", CDE Limón, Red "Hecho en Limón", Network of JP entrepreneurs, Agribusiness cluster - Innovation platform, academy.

In the canton of Puntarenas, the National University continues with its work of technical and economic accompaniment with the three women's organizations that make up the innovation laboratory of the Oyster Project. Likewise, in the case of socio-productive initiatives related to organic agriculture, institutions such as MAG and Inder continue to provide the support that women require to increase and strengthen their business ideas. Likewise, the INA, IMAS, and INAMU are

institutions with a local presence that have established direct contact with the beneficiary organizations of seed capital, providing training services and opportunities to opt for economic support for their ventures.

For their part, representatives of the IMAS, MAG, and INAMU confirm that the tools and procedures developed within the framework of the Joint Programme have been integrated into institutional practices and are part of the annual institutional planning. However, it should be noted that, in the opinion of several of the people consulted, institutional resources in the cantons may not be sufficient to follow up on the various seed capital projects promoted by the JP EPD. An interviewed MEP official acknowledges, "... to this day, some of these projects are still attended, not all because there are many individual projects, but some are followed up".

In this regard, women interviewed from the three cantons report that they have been contacted by the institutions but indicate doubts about the possibilities of institutional support due to previous experiences and the known lack of resources of the local offices.

It is also necessary to consider the political moment of the country since the JP EPD will conclude two months before the change of the Executive and Legislative administrations. Therefore, there is a risk for the continuity of previous social protection programs and initiatives since the new administration can define priorities that affect the continuity of the processes initiated, both nationally and locally.

In this regard, a woman participant from Puntarenas canton assures that the IMAS does not have the budget to support or attend to them. In addition, she tells the experience they have had with the IMAS, where they carry out the required procedures, and after that, are informed that either there is no budget, or they do not qualify. Other women from that canton and Buenos Aires report backing from the MAG and the Club 4S project. In the canton of Limón, the women interviewed indicated the support from the INA and representatives of the JP. They declared that EARTH would be the instance that will follow up on productive initiatives.

Additionally, it is reported by representatives of the JP EPD that the INAMU will resume actions from May and the IMAS maintains activities at the time of preparation of this report. This includes negotiations and agreements with government institutions and other stakeholders. In this regard,

it is clear from the RCO and UNS agencies the importance of promoting the necessary political communication with the incoming administration to explain the importance and benefits of the JP's results and ensure the political and operational commitments that will give continuity and sustainability to the achievements obtained.

4.Criteria: Coherence.

Findings.

-The UNS position itself as a benchmark with public institutions at the level of national directorates and local offices, and the central government for the development of actions required to fulfill the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to support institutional activities.

-The JP EPD coordinated with various institutions at the national and local levels and with public and private organizations at the local level. However, the involvement of local governments is weak, reflecting financial and technical constraints.

-The synergies between public institutions and UNS agencies allowed to support the strengthening of governance mechanisms and the implementation of social protection policy from the perspective of the 2030 Agenda.

-The JP promoted the exchange of experiences between the participating women's groups.

-The articulation between UNDP, ILO, UN Women, FAO, and RCO allows greater integration of knowledge, experience, and specialized work, which contributes to formulating comprehensive proposals that meet the needs of women's populations from an interdisciplinary perspective. It also promoted the mobilization of additional funds from each of the agencies involved while supporting the articulation of the different projects and actions.

Elements identified by evaluation question.

1. Has the position, credibility, and reliability of the United Nations system as a partner of the Government and other actors been strengthened?

The representatives of public institutions and the UNS interviewed agree that the implementation of the actions of the JP EPD has resulted in recognition of the technical capacities of the personnel involved. While providing tools and allowing the generation of activities with women's groups, it was previously impossible to include them in the institutional support programs. As the coordinator of the JP EPD points out, "... the key liaison institutions (IMAS, INAMU, MAG, SINIRUBE, UNA, INA) worked very closely with the Joint Program and saw results fulfilled, and its needs met.

Consequently, there remains an important positive opinion about the contribution that the NUS can give to the development of the country and the attention to the specific needs of the institutions.” (Montero, 2022).

For its part, the 2021 annual report states that: “For the Costa Rican government, this JP has positioned itself as one of the benchmarks for the coordinated action that the state and the UN can develop together to promote the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in an effective and visible way. The effective participation of the government JP focal point, the Vice minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, as well as the support authorities in the Steering Committee were keys for the good coordination of the program.” (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, Joint Programme 2021 Annual Progress Report, 2022).

Representatives of public institutions interviewed affirm that the technical team of the JP EPD was characterized by its knowledge and respect for the institutionality, with a willingness to take into account the socio-productive initiatives under development by the different institutions involved in the implementation of the actions promoted by the Joint Program.

2. To what extent has complementarity, harmonization, and coordination among key actors been promoted to maximize the achievement of results?

The work strategy of the JP EPD promoted the coordination actions of key actors at the local and national levels: especially the Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion/IMAS, the Ministry of The Status of Women/INAMU, the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock (MAG), the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (MTSS), the Ministry of Planning and Economic Policy (MIDEPLAN), which have been of fundamental importance for the coordination of high-level actions. Coordination to strengthen and adapt programs included in the National Employment System (SNE) for women participating in the JP EPD, coordination with the INA, IMAS, MTSS, and Ministry of Public Education (MEP) is mentioned.

At the academic level, joint work was developed with UCR, UNA, ITCR, and EARTH University to support productive initiatives led by women entrepreneurs in rural areas and cantons with low human development through technical cooperation and business support.

An alliance was also developed with a UCR TCU¹⁴ to provide training and support in graphic design. Also, the "Conectadas" (Connected) program, funded by Tigo and implemented by the NGO "Ideas en Acción", contributes digital skills training to women entrepreneurs.

The JP worked with strategic partners such as Impact Hub, Agirre Center, and MAG for the innovation labs. The experience of these organizations allowed the use of methodologies (such as the ILO's LABOR and Design Thinking methodology) and innovation processes adapted to the needs of specific target audiences. It generated effective results in a short time.

As for the participation of local governments, there is only the participation of the Local Development Office of the Municipality of Buenos Aires. Concerning the cantons of Limón and Puntarenas, the interviewees pointed out that they lack the technical or financial resources or the political guidelines to get involved in the process.

3. To what extent have synergies and interrelationships been promoted between the different actions?

On this subject, the coordinator of the JP EPD indicates that in the work of institutional strengthening, there were many synergies, where for example, the staff of the ILO and UN Women worked very closely. In addition, FAO and UN Women worked together to promote gender inclusion in the "Ficha Agro."

There was a specific effort by the UN Women and FAO team to strengthen relationships between women's groups of the three cantons, which was carried out by digital means, largely because the issue of COVID made it impossible for women's organizations to mobilize from one canton to another.

For its part, the 2021 report of the JP EPD points out that one of the most outstanding achievements is the strengthening of effective synergies between UNS agencies, in this case, UNDP, ILO, UN Women, and FAO, together with the RCO, focusing on the integration of the SDGs. This made it possible to break down barriers to joint work and greater integration of knowledge, experience, and specialized work, which contributes to formulating comprehensive proposals that meet the needs of women's populations from an interdisciplinary perspective.

¹⁴ University Communal Work (Trabajo Comunal Universitario).

The joint work with the government of Costa Rica allowed supporting the strengthening of governance mechanisms and the implementation of social protection policy from the common perspective of the 2030 Agenda. Likewise, the JP EPD had a catalytic function for mobilizing additional funds from each of the agencies involved while supporting and articulating the different projects and actions linked to the social protection system.

As indicated by the participants in the focus group developed with the JP EPD team, it was possible to create an intersectoral and inter-institutional management model through which coordination processes were established that included joint work between institutions and linking previously unrelated processes.

5.Criteria: Coordination.

Findings.

-Inter-institutional coordination mechanisms have been favored by integrating high-level political authorities into the Steering Committee.

- According to the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, the methodology of the SGD Fund facilitates the meeting and joint work of UNS agencies and government institutions, being dynamic, proactive, and, above all, of joint creation, constructivist, contributions, and horizontal dialogue between entities.

-The involvement in the design of the JP EPD of the Ministry of Human Development and Social Inclusion brings political weight to the Joint Program. It facilitates inter-institutional coordination at the central and local levels.

-The participation of the "Mesa Caribe" (Caribbean Roundtable), coordinated by the Second Vice Presidency of the Republic, is an important factor in the case of the canton of Limón as a space for intersectoral and inter-institutional coordination in which the actions of the PC EPD are articulated.

-The Joint Program's design process, which focused on the definition of tasks without initially defining the distribution of budget among the UNS agencies involved, allows from the beginning a process characterized by interagency cooperation and coordination. The technical quality of the participants for each agency also contributes greatly to this.

- The coordination between the RCO and UNS agencies is key to the success of the JP EPD.

-The RCO has played a very important role in building and strengthening relations with the national political leadership and donors to the SDG Fund and has also visited the three cantons where the JP EPD works.

- The JP EPD has effectively built cooperative relationships with local governments, state institutions, the private sector, and universities. These collaborative relationships have strengthened the impact and ownership of actions at the local and national levels.

Elements identified by evaluation question.

1. From the development of the JP, was it possible to improve the inter-institutional and multilevel coordination mechanisms to apply JP-EPD components with an intersectional gender and environmental sustainability approach?

A key element of JP EPD's coordination and governance process is the participation in its Steering Committee of high-level political authorities, including MDHIS, MTSS, Minister for the Status of Women, MAG, and MIDEPLAN. The Joint Programme also coordinated various projects with the Ministries of Education, Environment and Energy, and the National Institute of Learning (INA).

These collaborations were extended to other institutions, offices, and regional government teams, which allowed the integration of goals and actions linked to the JP EPD. This was made possible by the integration, from the initial design of the JP, of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, Juan Luis Bermúdez, and the definition as the Government's Focal Point for the Joint Program of the Vice Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, Francisco Javier Delgado Jiménez. These people's political and technical leadership is recognized by the representatives of the UNS and the JP EPD as fundamental in the articulation of the different public institutions.

For his part, Minister Bermúdez affirms that "... the methodology of the SGD Fund came to facilitate dialogue with the other agencies. It was a very proactive dynamic, but above all, very co-creation and constructivist, of contributions and horizontal dialogue between the entities. After all, it facilitated intersectorality between the public sector and with the UN and its agencies..."

In the case of the canton of Limón, a platform of institutional articulation that previously existed and is coordinated by the Second Vice Presidency of the Republic¹⁵, it is the Mesa Caribe¹⁶, which is of great importance as a meeting point for the different institutions and articulation of the actions to be developed within the framework of the Joint Program.

¹⁵ Headed by the Vice President, Marvin Rodríguez Cordero.

¹⁶ This space includes four axes: Infrastructure, Productive Development, Employability, and Human Security, and is integrated by representatives of MIDEPLAN, IMAS, and MAG, with the participation of the ILO, as well as various economic and social sectors of the canton. <https://www.mideplan.go.cr/index.php/mesa-caribe-presento-informe-de-labores-del-periodo-2021>.

It is pointed out that the appropriation of the proposal of the Joint Program by the IMAS¹⁷ and the rectory of the social sector promotes the integration of different institutions. That and the clear commitment assumed by INAMU, MAG, and INA in the actions that correspond to them.

2. To what extent has the development of the JP EPD strengthened the joint work between the AFP of the UNS and public institutions, municipal governments, and community organizations?

It is pointed out by several of the people interviewed that the design process of the JP focused on the definition of tasks, that initially, there was no distribution of budget among the UNS agencies involved, which allows from the beginning a process characterized by interagency cooperation and coordination. In the words of one informant, "it is designed as one project, not as four projects."

The technical quality of the participants for each agency also contributes to achieving this. According to the interviewees, the constant coordination of the UNS and RCO agencies was key to the success of the JP EPD. The core team of the JP EPD met fortnightly during the implementation of the program to coordinate and monitor compliance with the work plan, which allowed for permanent interaction and collaboration between the organizations.

On the other hand, the RCO has played a very important role in building and strengthening relations with the national political leadership and with the donors of the SDG Fund, in addition to carrying out field visits to the three cantons where the JP EPD works. These actions have an important impact on the communication and public positioning of the key messages of the UN and the Joint SDG Fund.

It is affirmed by the informants, both from the UNS and public institutions, that the JP EPD has been effective in building cooperative relationships with local governments, state institutions, the private sector, and universities. These collaborative relationships have strengthened the impact and ownership of actions at the local level.

¹⁷ In this regard, it is important to note that the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion is, in turn, the Executive President of IMAS.

6. Criteria: Results and impact on public institutions and women participants

Findings.

-Multiple effects have been achieved in the participating institutions. Among these are: a review of policies and procedures from an intersectional perspective of gender, environmental impact, interculturality, and attention to populations with conditions of vulnerability; strengthening of SINIRUBE, support for FIDEIMAS, development of the "Hecho por Mujeres" platform, "Plan Familiar" (Family Plan) 2.0 with a gender focus, support in the elaboration of the Gender Equality Policy with an Intersectional Approach of the IMAS. Strengthening of the Agro Information Sheet from a gender and intercultural perspective, design of manuals and protocols for the National Employment System (SNE) with a gender perspective, design of institutional training plans on how to incorporate the gender perspective in the planning, programs, and projects of the agrarian, fisheries and rural sectors.

-Institutional tools have been created to identify situations of gender violence and improve the procedures for referring to the authorities responsible for dealing with these situations.

-Progress has been made in the articulation of the BNCR and FIDEIMAS to promote women's access to resources under conditions that correspond to their possibilities.

-The JP EPD supported the identification and support of companies led by women's groups, which received non-reimbursable seed capital funds and training. This has allowed the insertion of twenty companies (with a focus on gender and environmental sustainability) in the formal sector of the economy and thus access financing and support services from government institutions and private companies.

- The Joint Program developed in partnership with IMAS and FIDEIMAS the e-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres" and supported the creation of capacities in a group of women entrepreneurs to sell successfully on the platform, improve their skills to manage their business, and close their digital divide.

1. To what extent have the actions developed during the implementation of the JP-EPD affected the participating institutions?

The JP generated several resources for the institutions: the review of policies and procedures to include an intersectional gender perspective, as well as considerations of environmental impact, interculturality, and attention to populations with conditions of vulnerability (with disabilities, in poverty, migrants, indigenous people, Afro-descendants, the elderly, etc.). It is considered that, based on these processes, together with updated training programs or those created with the participation of the JP EPD, the expansion and improvement of social protection from public institutions for especially vulnerable populations at the local and national levels will be possible.

The Joint Program has contributed to the improvement of SINIRUBE by creating and adapting modules to serve populations that use social protection programs and creating a training program for public officials of the EPD. The contributions of the JP will allow better use of data to increase the effectiveness of government programs. They will also favor transparency and accuracy in using citizens' private data.

The process developed with FIDEIMAS, in conjunction with the BNCR, improved the capacity to allocate credits to women in poverty from an intersectoral perspective. For its part, the "Hecho por Mujeres" platform provides the institution with a tool to support the commercialization of products made by women, the closing of the digital divide of women entrepreneurs, and the articulation of efforts of programs to promote entrepreneurship.

Mention should also be made of the development of training courses for civil servants, both at the administrative level and technical and professional personnel. This program was taught in 2021 as a pilot project with 48 officials from 10 different institutions, and from 2022 it will be part of its basic tools of training of the institutions, which will allow a significant scope. The training covered the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, inter-institutional articulation, intersectional gender approach, environmental conservation, carbon-neutral production, social inclusion, and interculturality.

The JP developed new training programs for the care and integration of persons with disabilities into national social protection strategies; this action contributes to the awareness and inclusion of this population within state programs so that their particular needs are considered and met. In addition, a training program was developed for agricultural program officials. This program aims to incorporate the gender and intercultural perspective in the planning, plans, and projects of the farming, fisheries, and rural sectors, promoting sensitive proposals with a gender focus and attending to the needs of vulnerable populations. This training program will also be included in the institutional training plan for the agricultural sector from 2022.

The "Ficha de información Agro,"¹⁸ used by MAG staff, was revised from gender and interculturality perspectives to make visible women's contributions to farming, fishing, and rural production in the country and to identify their needs for technical and financial assistance from government agencies. The file was digitized, and a mobile app was developed to collect information in the field. Additionally, an agreement was signed between the MAG and SINIRUBE to transfer data.

A training program was designed and implemented to include intersectional gender analysis in the country's public and welfare policies. This program covers more than ten government institutions responsible for developing and implementing social protection policies. FIDEIMAS and INDER staff were trained on an intersectional gender perspective and how to support women entrepreneurs. In addition, the JP EPD worked with IMAS to incorporate the intersectional gender perspective into the Family Plan 2.0 and provided training of trainers to staff. Progress was made in developing tools for the IMAS to identify the risk of violence against women and coordinate with INAMU to obtain support for women in violent situations.

In this area, progress is being made in improving the articulation of the IMAS "Plan Familiar," the INAMU "Plan de Vida," and the reference of cases of women in situations of violence.

The JP EPD supported the preparation of the IMAS Gender Equality Policy with an intersectional approach and its First Action Plan, which has already been presented and validated by the institution.

A course was also developed for the farming, fisheries, and rural sector of Costa Rica on incorporating the gender perspective in the planning, plans, and projects of the agro, fishing, and rural sectors. The course was installed on the Moodle platform and was incorporated into the

¹⁸ Utilized in the "Puente Agro" framework to diagnose needs and define productive initiatives.

institutional training policy for 2022. In addition, the JP worked with the credit articulation system, which took advantage of institutional platforms to improve and incorporate this vision of gender and populations at risk and vulnerability.

2. To what extent have the actions developed during the implementation of the JP EPD allowed participating women and their families to increase their income-generating opportunities as a direct result of participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive, and environmentally friendly local initiatives?

In this regard, the Joint Programme worked on articulating the credit system between the BNCR and FIDEIMAS to promote women's access to credit under conditions that suit their soft possibilities. Bank credit approval has been achieved under this articulation system, culminating in a letter of cooperation between FIDEIMAS, BNCR, and FAO.

The JP EPD served as a catalyst for identifying and supporting women's group-led businesses, which received non-reimbursable seed capital funds and training and inter-institutional support from UNS agencies and government institutions in charge of various social protection programs.

Within the development and implementation framework of the platform "Hecho por Mujeres," FIDEIMAS presented the platform to more than 900 women entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs. Of these, 225 submitted applications to join the platform, and 130 women were classified at an advanced level, according to the formalization of the company, the quality of the product and packaging, production capacity, and online sales experience.

FIDEIMAS and UN Women trained women at an advanced level in online sales, pricing, business management in Made by Women, writing the description of products and profiles of the entrepreneur, customer service, and digital marketing strategies.

They were also trained by a TCU program of the UCR, the INA, the NGO "Ideas en Acción" (program funded by Tigo), the Ministry of Finance on technology, social networks, digital marketing, product presentation, logo design, fraud, and chargebacks, among others.

A total of 60 women entrepreneurs were selected as the first group to launch the platform. These received individual accompaniment from FIDEIMAS to make the description of their products and business profile and on the platform's management. It is reported that, in the first month of

operation of the platform, there were 30,000 visits to the platform, and 30 people bought products, for total revenue of \$ 2,130 (Programa Conjunto Fortalecimiento de la EPD, 2022).

It is also noted that the JP EPD has enabled the insertion of twenty companies (with a focus on gender and environmental sustainability) in the formal sector of the economy and thus access financing and support services from government institutions and private companies. (UNDP, FAO, ILO, & WOMEN, 2022).

6. Conclusions.

Conclusions are presented below from the information obtained in the evaluation process. This section will detail the findings in three main areas: design/formulation of the Joint Programme, implementation, and results, for the elaboration of which we started from the findings defined in the previous section.

A. Design and Formulation of the Program.

The design process of the JP EPD includes two elements that strengthen it in terms of subsequent execution:

- a) Joint elaboration between the UNS Agencies' technical staff focused on the definition of goals and coordinated actions.
- b) The active involvement of the Minister and Vice Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion provides both the commitment of the IMAS and the necessary political support to promote the integration of different public institutions and, in the implementation of the JP EPD, coordinates the Board of Directors.

In the execution of the Joint Programme, these two elements allowed to establish effective and constant coordination spaces throughout the implementation of the JP.

By proposing the incorporation of gender and environmental perspectives and the institutional articulation in the development of comprehensive support for women in vulnerable conditions, the theory of change clearly establishes the relationship between objectives, actions, and results. Additionally, it shows the necessary flexibility to adapt to unforeseen situations, such as those arising from the health emergency due to COVID 19 and does not experience changes in the JP EPD's execution period.

The spaces for inter-institutional and inter-agency coordination are adequate and functioning properly. The support of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, the Resident Coordinator of the UNS, and the commitment of the people of public institutions and the Joint Program contribute.

However, it is an opinion widely shared by the interviewees of the UNS and public institutions that the period originally defined for the fulfillment of goals, due to the guidelines of the Joint Fund of the SDGs, is inadequate in terms of guaranteeing the consolidation of socio-productive initiatives of women. It is especially important to consider the varying degrees of experience in this initiative and the consolidation of productive experiences of informal organizations and groups of women involved in the Joint Programme.

B. Execution of the project.

The involvement of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion, and the Resident Coordinator, provides political leadership that promotes the articulation of public institutions and UNS agencies, in addition to facilitating high-level agreements that enable the coordination of actions in the territories, inclusion in institutional policies and technical instruments from an intersectional gender approach. Additionally, the close coordination of efforts between the agencies involved, facilitated through biweekly meetings of the interagency committee and collaboration in implementing specific activities, was key to obtaining the expected results.

The results obtained within the framework of the JP EPD in the three cantons, especially the inclusion of organized groups of women in areas with little prior presence, encourage the support of the local staff of public institutions, facilitating the elaboration of support agreements for these organizations. The Joint Programme demonstrates the ability to adapt to changes in conditions caused by the COVID 19 health emergency, making it possible to meet the budget execution goals and activities development goals.

However, the reduction of effective implementation times of socio-productive initiatives results in pressure on the women participants and staff of the Joint Programme to complete the process and execute resources. In its execution, the JP EPD develops a management model that includes a presence in communities, active listening to organizations, consideration of different options, and providing technical support, financial support, development of professional, collective, and life skills that consider their particular conditions as women, but also from their social contexts, cultural and others. This model articulates an intersectional gender perspective, environmental sustainability, and culturally sensitive approach, allowing a comprehensive procedure for its target population.

C. Project Results.

The JP EPC demonstrated the ability to meet or exceed the established results. The pandemic affects the development of actions not originally included, such as the development of institutional protocols, expansion of the technological infrastructure, and technical capacities of SINIRUBE to respond to government actions to support sectors affected by the response measures to the pandemic, support to the PNC.

The development of the e-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres", which had been proposed as a possible innovative initiative that could be developed during the design process of the project, was prioritized as a strategic action in response to the pandemic to provide access to markets to women entrepreneurs who lost their sales channels.

As unexpected effects on the women participants, the strengthening of relations between the participating women, the development of effective practices with the potential for replicability, and the strengthening of the ties of the women's organizations participating in the JP EPD with the local offices of public institutions are identified.

The pandemic situation forced the adaptation of the time available to develop innovation laboratories and socio-productive initiatives. However, it was possible to meet the established goals, but the different profiles of the women and socio-productive initiatives participating resulted in differentiated levels of consolidation of these initiatives at the end of the JP EPD. So, it is of great importance to have an adequate follow-up in training, inputs, and accompaniment to support them in their successful development and sustainability.

The Joint Programme facilitated the participation of women in their diversity through a methodological proposal that made it possible to overcome the situation of exclusion present in both institutions and communities while strengthening the capacity of the local and national staff of institutions to develop actions aimed at these populations, especially in indigenous territories.

The actions carried out in the framework of the JP EPD allow the UNS to be positioned as a benchmark for public institutions, local offices, as well as the central government for the development of the actions required for the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, as well as to support institutional activities.

The articulation between UNDP, ILO, UN Women, FAO, and RCO, allows greater integration of knowledge, experience, and specialized work, which contributes to formulating comprehensive proposals that meet the needs of women's populations from an interdisciplinary perspective. It also promoted the mobilization of additional funds from each of the agencies involved while supporting the articulation of the different projects and actions.

Continued coordination between the RCO and UNS agencies is key to the success of the JP EPD. It is recognized that the RCO has played a very important role in building and strengthening relationships with national political leadership and with donors to the SDG Fund. Multiple effects have been achieved in the participating institutions and coordination at the local level. These include: a review of policies and procedures from an intersectional perspective of gender, environmental impact, interculturality, and attention to populations with conditions of vulnerability; strengthening of SINIRUBE, support for FIDEIMAS, development of the Platform "Hecho por Mujeres", design, and implementation of manuals and protocols for the National Employment System (SNE) with an orientation to the population of the EPD, development of actions related to the National Care Policy (PNC), strengthening of the Information Sheet of the MAG from gender and intercultural perspective, design of institutional training plans on how to incorporate the gender perspective in the planning, programs, and projects of the agricultural, fisheries and rural sectors.

Trades of commitment and cooperation letters have been established with public institutions and banking entities that confirm the continuity of actions carried out within the framework of the JP EPD in terms of the application of tools with a gender focus and support for socio-productive initiatives.

However, considering the May 2022 change of government in the executive and legislative branches, the RCO and UNS agencies raise the importance of promoting the necessary political communication with the incoming administration to explain the importance and benefits of the results of the JP and ensure the political and operational commitments that will give continuity and sustainability to the accomplishments obtained.

7. Recommendations.

Based on the findings and conclusions described in the previous sections, the following recommendations are established:

Recommendation 1: Relevance.

In the planning of actions towards women in their diversity and from an intersectional gender perspective, it is necessary to consider the entry profiles of the women participants in terms of the economic situation, educational level, culture, connectivity, available time, and situations of exclusion and gender violence against women, establishing the actions to be developed that affect their conditions and the expected exit or conclusion profile in the time framework of the project.

Recommendation 2: Effectiveness.

Methodologically systematize the process of the JP, describing the steps and instruments required for the contact with women's organizations, the definition of activities in conjunction with the participants, development of actions, monitoring and feedback with the participants, construction of relationships with public institutions and other actors, preparation of the sustainability strategy.

Include in these systematization recommendations based on the lessons learned, such as adapting the actions to the different profiles of entry and exit, involvement of private companies, and others. Include the methodological contributions of the participating agencies and methodological proposals of the various consultancies produced within the framework of the JP, especially the articulation of the intersectional gender approach, women's economic empowerment, and environmental sustainability.

In future processes, the articulation of environmental protection actions in socio-productive initiatives must be strengthened by integrating institutions in the sector such as MINAE and academic institutions of higher education: public universities (UCR, UNA) and EARTH.

Recommendation 3: Sustainability at the local level.

Include in the cooperation framework of the UNS Costa Rica actions in the territories that recover and apply the learning of the JP EPD, such as the promotion of spaces of intersectoral territorial articulation. These spaces must integrate public, business, and community institutions and lessons learned in managing socio-productive initiatives in territories. Also, use the contact methodology

called "umbrella strategy" to reach groups of women who have not been included in institutional programs or cooperation organizations.

Promote spaces for inter-agency coordination and promote from the RCO the coordination of follow-up activities that define UNDP, FAO, ILO, and UN Women for the actions initiated in the Joint Programme.

Recommendation 4: Sustainability, new administration and change of ministerial hierarchies.

Establish from the RCO, with the support of the agencies, an advocacy strategy with the authorities of the new government aimed at reporting on the results obtained and the importance of continuing to support the methodologies, instruments, and programs developed from the JP EPD.

Recommendation 5: Coherence and Coordination.

Present by the RCO and representatives of the UNS agencies involved to the new authorities of the IMAS, MAG, INAMU, INA, and MTSS, the progress obtained in the framework of the JP EPD, proposing the continuity and reinforcement of the advancement obtained.

It should be proposed to the IMAS Board of Directors to support the implementation of the National Plan for overcoming Poverty and Social Inclusion, in addition to continuing support for SINIRUBE, based on the lessons learned and tools developed within the framework of the JP EPD.

Recommendation 6: Coordination.

The role of the RCO as the coordinating body and representative of the UNS to central government authorities and hierarchies of public institutions should be maintained and strengthened in the implementation of the next cooperation framework. The participation of the RCO in the SDG Consultative Committee should be promoted by presenting a final report of the JP EPD to the new authorities.

Establish spaces for interagency coordination that promote joint actions in territories and on social protection issues by UNS agencies, based on the tools developed and the learnings obtained in the JP EPD.

Recommendation 7: Results and impact on public institutions and women participants.

The different UNS agencies involved in the Joint Program should follow up on the actions of public institutions to support the socio-productive initiatives of the women's organizations participating in

the JP EPD to establish whether adequate support is being received for the consolidation of their initiatives, as well as the “Hecho por mujeres” platform.

8. Lessons learned.

As lessons learned, the following are identified:

The time available to carry out the processes is viewed as too short, especially considering the different entry profiles of the women to the JP. In these circumstances, the selection and scheduling of JP EPD activities are limited by the time constraints of the SDG Joint Fund and bureaucratic or operational realities. Complex processes involving multiple stakeholders had to be avoided or limited to ensure the necessary short-term results. A period of at least four years is considered necessary. This situation was aggravated by the COVID-19 emergency that slowed down the implementation of actions at the local level.

-The different entry profiles of the participating women (a result of their personal and gender conditions, previous experiences in income generation, and even geographical location, among others) lead to the need to establish exit profiles of the institutional support processes, more flexible than those used in the JP EPD.

-Regarding interagency coordination, the decision to focus the design of the JP EPD on the strengths of the different agencies and defining a clear division of tasks and maintaining spaces for dialogue and constant coordination (interagency committee), in addition to the leadership of the RCO, allowed to establish a dynamic of agile and efficient joint work.

-It is necessary to actively involve the private sector and academia in actions to support productive projects of women, on which progress was made in the canton of Limón with the "Mesa Caribe," and it should be established in the intervention methodology in UNS territories.

-When developing actions in territories, it is necessary to establish a period for working together with community actors to define a solution to local needs. The experience of the JP EPD indicates that the time spent in the communities before proposing interventions gave a higher level of identification and ownership of initiatives at the local level.

- Although in the process of designing and executing the Joint Program, research and induction actions were carried out on institutional processes and dynamics with the people responsible for developing the activities in each canton, in the development of these activities, they found, on

occasions, resistance or different priorities from local officials. Therefore, it is necessary to include in the planning of actions in territories the construction of institutional connections required to "convince" the local institutional staff of the importance and usefulness of the work proposal, which requires time and close monitoring by the UNS personnel.

- Political support from authorities such as ministers, governing bodies, and the Presidential House is essential to promote inter-institutional support and cooperation.

- The successful implementation of a JP requires active and close collaboration between the participating UNS agencies. Interdisciplinary collaborations lead to the creation of synergies that positively impact the processes and results of the Joint Program.

- The administrative processes required for the submission, approval, and management of projects represent a barrier to women's participation and project management. There is a need for greater adaptation of instruments that respond to women's educational and cultural conditions and flexibility in procedures and delivery times.

- The participation of the Resident Coordinator and the RCO team is very important for the success of the Joint Program, focusing on the integration of the JP EPD team and strategic direction. This also opens the door to high-level political coordination and influence with national government authorities.

- The commitment and active participation of the representatives of the UNS agencies allow for the fulfillment of the established goals and the adequate coordination between the different agencies.

- The incorporation of the gender departments of the participating institutions would strengthen the institutionalization of the practices and tools developed within the framework of the JP EPD.

- The process of institutionalization and sustainability of the results obtained by the JP EPD cannot be limited to the signing of institutional agreements. It must include a period of support and follow-up by the UNS, which incorporates management with the authorities, especially in situations of change of administration or replacement of hierarchies, and agreements to support institutions in the integration processes of methodologies and attention to women.

- Inter-agency joint construction and work with institutions are necessary to promote the sustainability of innovative initiatives, such as the E-commerce platform "Hecho por Mujeres".

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Annexes.

Annex 1A: List of people interviewed and focus groups conducted.

Name	UNS Agency	Position	Interview date
1. Brenes, Randall	UNDP	Human Development and Democratic Governance Officer	March 2
2. Camacho, Aurora	UNDP	Gender Specialist	March 10
3. Chaves, Sylvia	FAO	Coordinator JP EPD, Buenos Aires.	01 de Marzo
4. Cruz, Victoria	RCO	Strategic Planning Officer and Team Leader	March 15
5. Mata, Gabriela	UN WOMEN (UNW)	National Private Sector Specialist UNW	March 14
6. Montero, Raul	UNDP	JP EPD, Coordinator.	March 1
7. Ortiz, José	ILO	Technical Social Protection Officer	March 3
8. Turcios, Gloriana	ILO	Territorial Specialist, Limón	March 04
9. Xirinachs, María	UN WOMEN (UNW)	Gender Specialist, JP EPD.	March 3

Name	Institution	Position	Interview date
1. Barrantes, Andres	MAG	Head of the Agricultural Extension Agency Buenos Aires	March 15
2. Bermúdez, Juan	MDHIS, IMAS	Minister DHIS, Executive Chairman IMAS.	March 22
3. Chacón, Laura	INA	National Employment System (SNE).	March 04
4. Cisneros, Stephanie	IMAS	Inter-institutional Comprehensive Care Area- Puente al Bienestar, liaison Puente al Trabajo .	March 4
5. Elizondo, Hugo	IMAS	Local Unit for Social Development (ULDS) Buenos Aires	March 10
6. Picado, María	INAMU	Director of Public Policy	March 8
7. Salas, Sonia	Segunda Vicepresidencia de la República	Advisor, liaison Mesa Caribe.	03 de Marzo

Name	Institution	Position	Interview date
8. Vargas, Ana	INAMU	Regional Development, Human Training Course	March 10
9. Wong, Juan	MAG	Agricultural and Rural Policy Analyst, Technical Liaison Puente Agro	March 3

Annex 1B: List of focus groups conducted.

Grupo focal	No Participantes	Fecha
Buenos Aires, Women participants JP EPD	9	17 de marzo
Limón, Women participants JP EPD	7	21 de marzo
JP EPD, Team	6	04 de marzo
Puntarenas, Women participants JP EPD	4	14 de marzo

Annex 2: Evaluation Matrix.

Based on the provisions of the TDRs and documents consulted, the following criteria and evaluation questions are proposed.

1.Criteria: Relevance		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
1. To what extent are the actions of the JP EPD aimed at providing a response to women in poverty in their diversity, considering their particular context and conditions?	2. Actions aimed at responding to women in their diversity are adapted to the conditions of the population by type of adaptation and population.	Documentary analysis. Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff. Focus groups with women participants and JP staff.
2. To what extent are the design and implementation of JP EPD actions aimed at boosting women's economic autonomy in their diversity, including greater access to sources of finance and markets, better skills, and higher levels of associativity?	1. The design of actions aims to boost women's economic autonomy by type of action. 2. The implementation of actions promotes women's economic autonomy by type of action. 3. Changes made in actions due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Types of actions aimed at promoting women's economic autonomy: -Mayor access to sources of financing. - Greater access to markets. - Skills mix. - Higher levels of associativity. -Other: greater training, accompaniment, and follow-up of women.	Documentary analysis. Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff. Focus groups with women participants and JP staff.

<p>3. To what extent are the design and implementation of the actions of the JP EPD aimed at achieving the socioeconomic inclusion of women from more vulnerable groups, such as indigenous women, Afro-descendant women, rural women, and women living on the coasts with disabilities, among others?</p>	<p>1. The design of actions aims to achieve the socioeconomic inclusion of women from vulnerable groups by type of inclusion.</p> <p>2. Implementing actions achieves the socioeconomic inclusion of women from vulnerable groups by type of inclusion.</p> <p>3. Changes were made in actions due to the COVID 19 pandemic.</p> <p>4. Type of socioeconomic inclusion: -Income generation. -Health care coverage and disability-related costs -Others.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff.</p> <p>Focus groups with women participants and JP staff.</p>
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2.Criteria : Efficiency		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
<p>1. To what extent did the JP EPD advance in fulfilling the established results, and unexpected results were generated?</p>	<p>1. Level of compliance with results.</p> <p>2. Factors that influenced the compliance or non-compliance with the results.</p> <p>3. Positive and non-positive unexpected results.</p> <p>4. Lessons learned.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff.</p>
<p>2. How are JP's actions adapting to the consequences of the COVID 19 pandemic?</p>	<p>1. Effects of the pandemic on JP EPD shares by type of action, target population, locality, and others.</p> <p>2. Changes made to JP shares because of the pandemic.</p> <p>3. Effects of the pandemic and the changes made on women participating in the JP</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff.</p> <p>Focus groups with women participants and JP staff.</p>
<p>3. What factors enabled/hindered the</p>	<p>1. Factors that allowed the participation of women in</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p>

participation of women in their diversity?	<p>their diversity by type of factor and locality.</p> <p>2. Factors that hindered the participation of women in their diversity by type of factor and locality.</p>	<p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff.</p> <p>Focus groups with women participants and JP staff.</p>
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3.Criteria: Sustainability

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
1. What mechanisms have been defined and established to ensure the sustainability of JP EPD's actions?	<p>1. Sustainability mechanisms are established by the type of mechanism and responsible.</p> <p>2. Sustainability mechanisms are established by the type of mechanism.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff</p>

4.Criteria: Coherence

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
1. Has the position, credibility, and reliability of the United Nations system as a partner of the Government and other actors been strengthened?	1. The contribution of the UNS is recognized by representatives of the Government, public institutions, and other actors of the JP EPD.	Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff
2. To what extent has complementarity, harmonization, and coordination among key actors been promoted to maximize the achievement of results?	1. Actions developed to promote complementarity, harmonization, and coordination between key actors by type of action.	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff</p>
3. To what extent have synergies and interrelationships been promoted between the different actions?	1. Actions were established to promote synergies and interrelationships between the different actions by type of action.	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions, and JP staff</p> <p>Grupos focales con participantes y personal del JP.</p>

5. Criteria: Coordination		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
1. Was it possible from the development of the JP to improve the inter-institutional and multilevel coordination mechanisms to implement the JP-EPD components with an intersectional gender and environmental sustainability approach?	<p>1. Inter-institutional, inter-agency (UNS AFP), and multilevel (local, national) coordination mechanisms established within the framework of the JP-EPD.</p> <p>2. Factors that positively and negatively influenced the success of the coordination mechanisms.</p> <p>3. Lessons learned.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with officials of public institutions and JP staff.</p>
2. To what extent has the development of the JP EPD strengthened the joint work between the AFP of the UNS and public institutions, municipal governments, and community organizations?	<p>1. Actions to strengthen the joint work of the UNS AFPs, by type of action.</p> <p>2. Actions to strengthen the joint work of AFP of the UNS are with public institutions, municipal governments, and community organizations by type of action.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions and JP staff.</p> <p>Focus groups with participants and JP staff.</p>

6. Criteria: Results and impact.		
Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources of information
1. To what extent have the actions developed during the implementation of the JP-EPD affected the participating institutions?	1. To have generated tools and capacities in the institutions responsible for the components of the EPD that allow them incorporate intersectional approaches to gender and environmental sustainability by type of tool and capacities.	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions and JP staff.</p>

	<p>2. There is an institutional model to enhance EPD institutional capacities to promote employability and entrepreneurship to facilitate the just transition to the formal economy, including intersectional approaches to gender and environmental sustainability.</p>	
<p>2. To what extent have the actions developed during the implementation of the JP EPD allowed the participating women and their families to increase their income-generating opportunities as a direct result of participatory, innovative, gender-sensitive, and environmentally friendly local initiatives?</p>	<p>1. Participating women and their families increase their income due to participation in local initiatives promoted by the JP EPD.</p> <p>2. Participating women and their families have increased access to gender-sensitive and environmentally friendly financial instruments to maintain their livelihoods due to their participation in local initiatives promoted by the JP EPD.</p>	<p>Documentary analysis.</p> <p>Interviews with participants in the JP, officials of public institutions and JP staff.</p> <p>Focus groups with participants and JP staff</p>

Annex 3: Information collection instruments.

The instruments presented in this section have been elaborated from the questions and evaluation assumptions presented in the section corresponding to the evaluation matrix. In this regard, it should be noted that these instruments have a general character that was appropriate based on the characteristics of each informant and their particular experience with the JP EPD.

A. SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STAFF OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS, UNS and JP EPD.

1- Did the actions developed by your institution within the framework of the JP EPD include women in their diversity?

2- From the JP EPD, were the groups of women in poverty who face the greatest vulnerability adequately defined from an intersectional perspective, and were the appropriate actions developed to respond to their conditions?

2.1- In case of a negative answer, why were these actions not developed?

2.2- In the case of a positive response, what kind of actions?

3- What actions were developed aimed at the economic autonomy of women? What were the results of these actions?

4- Were capacity-building tools and processes developed within the framework of the JP EPD to strengthen the capacities of your institution?

4.1- In the case of a positive response, what kind of actions?

4.2- In case of a negative response, do you know why these actions were not carried out?

5. Have participating women, and their families increased access to gender-sensitive and environmentally friendly financial instruments to maintain their livelihoods due to participating in local initiatives promoted by jp EPD?

6- What factors do you consider facilitating the participation of women in their diversity? (In general, by locality or action)

7- Were there factors that hindered the participation of women in their diversity in some localities? If yes, what kind of factors, where and why, and what actions were developed to overcome these factors?

8- Do you consider that from the JP EPD actions developed, the position, credibility, and reliability of the UNS have been strengthened?

9- Do you consider that the development of the JP EPD has strengthened the joint work between the AFP of the UNS and public institutions, municipal governments, and community organizations?

10- Do you think it was possible to meet the results of the JP EPD? Reason?

11- What factors do you consider to have positively or negatively influenced the achievement of the results?

12- Were unexpected results obtained, positive or negative? Which ones and for what reasons?

13- What coordination actions were established about coordination with other institutions, local government, community organizations, UNS, or others? Do you think the coordination actions were successful? Why? What factors do you consider positively and negatively influenced the success of the coordination mechanisms?

14- Have activities been developed that promote complementarity, harmonization, and coordination among key actors (UNS, public institutions, SDGs, community organizations, and local governments)? In case of a positive response, what kind of actions? What factors influence the success of these actions? In case of a negative answer, do you consider that it is necessary to develop this type of action?

15- In your knowledge, have synergies and interrelations been promoted between the different activities developed by the JP EPD? If so, what actions? In case of a negative answer, do you consider that it is necessary to create this type of action?

16- What were the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic on the development of JP EPD? What changes were required to develop in the actions due to the pandemic? Were the products differentiated by population or locality?

17- Have mechanisms aimed at the sustainability of activities been defined or planned? If so, which ones? (Scope and limitations of these mechanisms). If not, why have you not defined or designed these mechanisms?

18- What do you consider to be the main effects of the actions carried out in the participating institutions? Has it been possible to incorporate intersectional and intercultural gender and environmental sustainability into institutional programming and practices?

19- Is there an institutional model to improve EPD's institutional capacities to promote employability and entrepreneurship and facilitate the just transition to the formal economy, including intersectional and intercultural gender approaches and environmental sustainability?

20- Do you consider that there were limitations or obstacles to the development of the actions and the project's scope? If so, which ones?

21- Could you mention lessons learned from the JP EPD process?

22- What do you consider good practices developed in the JP EPD process?

B. Focus Group with women participating in the JP EPD.

Annotation: to allow honest opinions on the topics to be discussed, the activity should not be carried out in the presence of officials of public institutions.

Introduction. The facilitator is introduced and explains the purpose of the activity. We proceed with the presentation of the participants. The methodology of the exercise is described, and space is given for participants to share their approval or suggest modifications

Motivating questions:

1- What was your relationship with the JP? In which initiative were you linked? (Type of inclusion in the project, design, implementation, monitoring).

2- Do you consider that the activities you have participated in meet your needs and conditions? Are there topics you think should be included? What would they improve?

3- Did you have any difficulty participating in the activities of the JP EPD? (Explore gender factors such as dependent care, gender-based violence, and economic or other factors. In the case of the population with disabilities, explore factors associated with their condition.

3- From your participation, what things have improved for you? (Topics: economic situation, autonomy, access to institutions, acquisition of knowledge, access to information and training, participation in women's groups, development of new activities).

4- (Case of Buenos Aires innovation laboratory in Rey Curré and China Kichá) What gains did they get, what is allowing them to do, and how do they look in the future?

5- How has the pandemic affected you? (Economic income, PME or AM situation in your care, others) What changes occurred in the projects in which you were participating? What do you think of these changes? What could have been done better?

6- From the JP EPD projects, have you had more access to sources of financing, and markets, have you increased your skills, or have you strengthened your capacity to work in groups?

7-Recommendations and general opinions on your participation in the JP EPD.

Anexo 4: Recomendaciones y observaciones de partes interesadas.

The integration of the comments to the evaluation first version into the present document is detailed below.

RECOMMENDATION	INTEGRATION INTO THE EVALUATION REPORT
Recommendations on spelling errors.	Corrected
Recommendations on inclusive language.	Incorporated.
Recommendation on citations and bibliography: It is an institutional document of the SNU, or the four agencies involved. It does not have the personal authorship of the people responsible for the shipment.	Citations and bibliography were modified.
Degree of the fulfillment of goals.	It is clarified that the latest data available at the time of making the report are used, and these can be modified in the final report of the PC EPD.
Include sections on innovation as an axis of analysis and include actions in communication	The axes of analysis were defined in the TDR and work plan document. Innovation and communication actions are identified and analyzed in the different sections.
Methodology	Greater detail of the focus groups carried out was included.
Context.	The concept of poverty used was more precisely detailed.
The document uses the term productive project. It is recommended to modify by socio-productive initiative.	The requested correction is made.
Various indications about the inclusion of UNS agencies or public institutions in activities of the PC EPD are mentioned.	The requested inclusions are made.
The summary of lessons learned in the part of the executive summary was missing.	It was included in the executive summary.
"Hecho por Mujeres" is not an unexpected result. It is an innovative initiative to increase the income opportunities of women entrepreneurs within the framework of result 2 of the CP and was prioritized at the arrival of the pandemic.	The location of the designated paragraph is modified, and the description is expanded.
In recommendation 2. It asks whether the systematization carried out in the process can	The systematization carried out by the PC EPD aims to recover the process and activities

RECOMMENDATION	INTEGRATION INTO THE EVALUATION REPORT
contribute to or meet what is required for the recommended methodological systematization.	carried out in the period of the PC. It can be a starting point of what is proposed, a methodological document. However, the recommended document includes other additional elements.
In recommendation 3. Suggestion for inclusion of "as well as the actions in support of Hecho por Mujeres promoted by UN Women including a financing strategy."	It is not included because it is specific to action and is included in general recommendations to continue the support actions by UNS agencies and OCR of the activities developed within the framework of the PC EPD
Lack of clarity regarding the methodology of the SDG Fund in Criterion 5 Coordination	The description is expanded from the statements of the Minister of Human Development and Social Inclusion.
In conclusions: The agreements reached in the cantons, at least in BBAA, were not for political management but after an effort and follow-up of the technical team with the technical-official people of the various public institutions.	The section is expanded to recognize the role of the people on the technical team.
Describe in greater detail the "umbrella strategy."	The description of this strategy is expanded.
Factors that hindered women's participation in their diversity identify that ADI structures are highly masculinized.	Information on Indigenous Development Associations (ADI) is expanded
Women or groups are not formal or informal. They are productive units. Correct this throughout the document. Thus, the correct wording must be women with informal, productive units.	The correction is made to the entire document.
Sustainability of actions related to the SNE	It is noted that these instruments were adopted by the technical councils, where members of society (representatives of employers and workers) participate, and public sector institutions (MTSS, INA, IMAS, INAMU). It is indicated that they were approved and are already being implemented.
Other aspects of sustainability	Information on the BNCR, Fideimas, and FAO cooperation letter agreement for the credit articulation system is included. In the canton of Buenos Aires, INAMU will resume work in May, and IMAS has already started its actions.
Expected results	The IMAS Covid 19 Mitigation Protocol is included
Recommendation 6	It includes creating an inter-institutional committee for permanent social protection,

RECOMMENDATION	INTEGRATION INTO THE EVALUATION REPORT
	consisting of specialists and technicians from different UNS agencies.
Lessons learned	The lessons learned are modified corresponding to: "The construction of institutional links require..."; " Related to the above, it is important to convince and train middle managers..." and "The participation of the Resident Coordinator and the OCR team is very important..."

