



Final Narrative Report: Joint Programmes in the Seed Funding Tracks

INTRODUCTION

Reporting period: From the start date to the end date of the joint programme (JP).

- Please be succinct and to the point, focusing on the most important accomplishments and issues that you want to bring to the attention of the Joint SDG Fund at the global level.
- Please do not exceed the word limit for each narrative question.
- Kindly ensure that the information provided is duly reviewed and approved by the RC and all PUNOs involved in the JP.
- Please contact rena.hinoshita@un.org, maria.berenguer@un.org, vittoria.gemelli@un.org, and/or maya.marquez@un.org for questions and support.

Submission deadline from RCOs to the Joint SDG Fund: No later than 2 months from the JP end date via MS Form (<https://forms.office.com/e/zYeyMiXjAv>)

PROFILE

JOINT PROGRAMME (JP) PROFILE:	
UN Country Team	Costa Rica
JP Title	Accelerating SDG Localization through digital transformation. Fostering inclusive innovation to solve local challenges in Costa Rica
Funding Round (Select the applicable funding round for the JP)	<input type="checkbox"/> Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Transformation <input type="checkbox"/> Education and Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access and Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems Transformation <input type="checkbox"/> Integrated Policy and Capacity Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SDG Localization
Cross-fertilized SDG Transitions (Select up to 2 main SDG Transitions that are reflected in the JP progress to date)	<input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change, Biodiversity Loss, Pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Transformation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education and Skills <input type="checkbox"/> Energy Access and Affordability <input type="checkbox"/> Food Systems Transformation
Contribution to Cooperation Framework Outcomes	<p>The Joint Programme contributes to Costa Rica’s Cooperation Framework 2023-2027, "Closing gaps for a sustainable and inclusive Costa Rica," through the following strategic priorities and outcomes:</p> <p>Strategic Priority 1: An Inclusive Costa Rica</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 1.1: Empowered people who know their rights, focusing on women and vulnerable populations to reverse historical injustices.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 1.1.2: Strengthen civil society actors' capacities for governance, dialogue, and agreements. ● Outcome 1.2: Women, girls, and adolescents at the center of development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 1.2.1: Empower women and girls to demand their rights, strengthen leadership, and amplify their voices. <p>Strategic Priority 2: Governance Centered on People and Their Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outcome 2.1: Efficient, sustainable, and quality public services. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 2.1.2: Modernize the State with a focus on digitalization and closing the digital divide. ○ Output 2.1.4: Strengthen capacities for inclusive digital services. ○ Output 2.1.12: Improve data management for evidence-based policymaking. ● Outcome 2.2: Results-based management and financing for development. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 2.2.1: Strengthen institutional capacities for SDG-focused planning and budgeting. ● Outcome 2.3: Strengthened rule of law, transparency, and accountability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 2.3.2: Accelerate digital transformation for transparency and accountability. ○ Output 2.3.6: Improve capacities for SDG monitoring and reporting. <p>Strategic Priority 3: Shared Prosperity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outcome 3.1: Decent work and economic growth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 3.1.3: Promote new technologies for MIPYMES, especially in agriculture and livestock. ○ Output 3.1.8: Strengthen municipalities' capacities for resource use and local development. <p>Strategic Priority 4: Resilience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Outcome 4.3: Integrated response to systemic crises. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Output 4.3.2: Strengthen prevention and response to transnational organized crime. <p>The programme aligns with SDG targets 5.5, 5.b, 11.3, 16.7, 17.6, and 16.4, focusing on gender equality, digital transformation, and local governance</p>
Actual Start Date (i.e. fund transfer date)	05/08/2024
Duration	12 months
Actual End Date (i.e. operational closure date)	04/08/2025
Total Approved Funding from the Joint SDG Fund	USD 530.000
Planned Financial Closure Date	30/04/2026

Fund Management Modality: Administrative Agent (Pass-through Only)	Mult-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) - Mari Matsumoto, Portfolio Manager, mari.matsumoto@undp.org - Sara Ansari, Finance Manager, sara.ansari@undp.org
JP TEAM:	
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JP's RCO focal point	Adriana Sánchez Altamirano DMO adriana.sanchez@un.org Roberto Morales Sáenz Joint Programme Coordinator roberto.morales.saenz@undp.org
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JP's designated communications focal point	Danilo Mora Communications officer, OHR. danilo.mora@un.org

OVERVIEW

1. Overall self-assessment of the JP achievements.

The primary objective of the Joint SDG Fund's seed funding track is to provide countries with support and resources to incubate and pilot transformative solutions and approaches (including actions to develop and implement national roadmaps or priorities) that can subsequently lead to accelerating progress across [key SDG Transitions](#) at scale. Towards this objective, please evaluate the performance of the JP.

1.a. Rate the overall performance of the JP: Did the JP deliver its key results as planned in the ProDoc?

Unsatisfactory, Marginal Achievement: Less than 50% of expected results delivered.

Satisfactory Achievement: 50-75% of expected results delivered.

Very Good, Solid Achievement: 100% of expected results delivered; implementation completed on schedule.

Exceptional, Outstanding Achievement: 100% of expected results delivered ahead of schedule, with additional results or improvements delivered.

1.b. Incubation and validation of solutions/approaches/roadmaps: How much results did the JP reach in incubating innovative approaches/national roadmaps and/or piloting transformative solutions during the 12 months?

Limited Results: None of planned incubation activities/roadmaps or pilot solutions were rolled out.

Moderate Results: Planned incubation activities/roadmaps or pilots began but remain at the early stages or within the limited scope at the time of the JP closure.

Good Results: Planned incubation activities/roadmaps and pilot solutions are fully operational and validated.

Excellent Results: All planned incubation activities/roadmaps and pilot solutions are completed and validated ahead of schedule, showing promising potential or early sign of scale-up.

Not Applicable: The JP did not plan to incubate ideas, roadmaps or conduct pilots during this phase.

1.c. Sustainability and scalability potential: To what extent did the JP achieve in establishing pathways for future viability and scale-up of the innovations/solutions beyond the 12-month implementation?

Marginal Achievement: Concrete sustainability or scale-up plan was developed but not operationalized; only preliminary discussion with potential partners/funders took place.

Moderate Achievement: Sustainability and scale-up strategies were rolled out; potential scale-up pathways identified; active engagement with potential partners/funders underway.

Solid Achievement: Comprehensive sustainability and scale-up strategies achieved a broad uptake; viable pathways for expansion secured; engagement with potential partners/funders deepened and showing promising outcomes.

Exceptional Achievement: Robust sustainability and scale-up plans were implemented ahead of schedule; multiple viable scale-up pathways activated; strong commitments from partners/funders obtained; additional opportunities for expansion identified beyond initial plans.

Not Applicable: The JP has not yet reached the stage of planning for sustainability and scalability.

RESULTS OF THE JP

A. Results-Based Narrative

2. Overall results of the JP (600 words / 1.5 pages max)

Shaping next-generation policy and regulatory frameworks for systemic transformation

- Design of national and local digital transformation strategies embedding gender equality and innovative governance.

- Strengthened public management and institutionalized gender-responsive planning at municipal level, advancing SDG Target 16.7 on inclusive decision-making.
- Adoption in Sarchí of the Municipal Policy on Gender Equality, developed through a participatory process involving women, youth, and people with disabilities. The policy ensures public budgets and services align with gender priorities and serves as a template for other municipalities.
- Establishment of municipal Digital Labs (LINCAs) offering women entrepreneurs access to digital tools and tailored training, advancing SDG 5.a on women's economic rights and 5.b on enabling technology.
- Development of a tool kit of digital tools to strengthen local governance and planning. Tools will support municipalities generate evidence-based policies, improve data management and access to information, promote inclusive urban planning (SDG 11.3 and 16.10).
- Enhanced data governance training local officials on Power BI and co-creating dashboards in finance, social services, and infrastructure. These tools now inform local decision-making, improve transparency, and strengthen accountability, advancing SDG 16.6 and 16.10.
- Roll out of the ROSRA tool to assess municipal revenue gaps and generated tailored policy recommendations. In Palmares, for example, only 61% of potential property tax is collected, with 46% lost to valuation gaps—highlighting clear reform opportunities. Findings reshaped fiscal strategies and informed VLRs, contributing to SDG 11.a on balanced development.
- Development of Costa Rica's first comprehensive mapping of illegal lending schemes and follow-up action including an inter-agency task force, risk campaigns, and financial inclusion programs. (SDG 16 and 8.10)

Unlocking new pipelines of solutions

- Embedding LINCAs with a gender-empowering component aimed at boosting women entrepreneurship, business cocreation and community-driven solutions. (CF output 3.2.)

Empowering key stakeholders to lead transformative change

- Over 500 women in Sarchí, Atenas, and Palmares gained new skills in digital literacy, financial education, AI, business management, leadership, and innovation—advancing SDG 5.b on technology for empowerment.
- More than 90 municipal and national officials trained to integrate gender-transformative digital tools into governance and planning, strengthening accountability (SDG 16.6) and inclusive urbanization (SDG 11.3).
- Incubation methodologies and toolkits enabling women to design, test, and scale new business solutions, advancing SDGs 4.4, 5.a and 5.b.
- Establishment of a national alliance between LINCAs and the Canton Network, expanding collaboration among institutions, municipalities, and communities. This synergy strengthened SDG localization and led to Palmares joining the Network alongside Sarchí and Atenas.

Scalable and sustainable transformation

- New partnership among UN agencies (UN Women, UNDP, UN-Habitat), government (MICITT, IFAM), and academia, to accelerate SDG localization: three municipalities

joined the SDG Cities Global Community; nationally, Costa Rica signed up to the Partnership Platform for the Acceleration of the SDGs, advancing frameworks for policy coherence (SDG 17.14).

- With MICITT, municipal management units supported to establish LINCAs as hubs for civic innovation and peer learning. The three LINCAs now form a connected network that sustains exchange of good practices and promotes replication to other municipalities.
- Strengthening the Pro-SDG Canton Network with technical tools and gender-transformative strategies has created clear pathways for replication, financing, and long-term scale.

3. Constraints, adjustments and lessons (500 words / 1 page max)

Constraints and Adjustments

- **Digital Divide and Access:** Women, particularly in rural and marginalized communities, faced systemic barriers to accessing digital tools and participating in decision-making processes. To overcome initial resistance the JP marketed the LINCAs as safe and inclusive spaces where women could experiment with emerging technologies. The JP also offered coaching and peer-learning to promote women as innovators and decision-makers.
- **Capacity Gaps:** Municipalities faced critical challenges in digital management, fiscal efficiency, and participatory governance. To close these gaps, the JP interlinked the Community Innovation Labs (LINCAs) with the municipal government in the three cantons, delivering tailored technical support in data management, gender-responsive planning, municipal finance, and territorial governance. This shift allowed municipalities to move beyond diagnostic exercises and to actual start implementing concrete solutions, strengthening institutional responsiveness and alignment with the 2030 Agenda.
- **Delays in implementation:** Several planned activities, including training of public officials and co-creation workshops, experienced delays and were rescheduled to begin in early 2025. The JP mitigated these delays by prioritizing activities that directly built women's capacities and strengthened municipal systems, ensuring that progress on core outcomes continued while rescheduled activities are launched in the next phase.
- **Information availability:** Because this is an illicit lending market, public data on usage and territorial incidence are scarce. The JP mitigated these constraints through structured fieldwork interviews and cross-agency triangulation. Key lesson: mixed-methods evidence and community-anchored reporting are essential to designing targeted interventions.

Lessons Learned

- **Empowerment Through Technology:** Equipping women with capacities and digital tools unlocked entrepreneurship and leadership opportunities. Women who had never engaged with digital technologies gained confidence to launch projects, innovate in their business models or products, develop prototypes, and expand their businesses. For example, women used the LINCAs to develop small-scale projects like 3D printing prototypes for their businesses. This underscores that

when technology is embedded in human-centered spaces, it becomes a powerful enabler of self-confidence and agency.

- **The Value of Localized Innovation:** The JP demonstrated that innovation is most impactful when there are co-creation processes with local actors. Human-centered design within the LINC's allowed women and community leaders to undertake projects directly relevant to their needs. Tangible results included the adoption of a Gender Equality Cantonal Policy in Sarchí and initiatives for older persons in Atenas and Palmares. This reinforced that locally owned and co-created solutions drive deeper relevance and sustainability.
- **Scaling Up Requires a Phased Approach:** The JP demonstrated that scaling up requires consolidating successes in initial cantons before expanding to new territories. A phased, cluster-based approach ensures that lessons are institutionalized and that the model adapts to diverse territorial contexts. Embedding the model in the Pro-SDG Canton Network provides a national platform for expansion while maintaining a solid base of localized results. To ensure alignment with the national LINC rollout and the Pro-SDG Canton Network's growth strategy, a two-year next phase is proposed, focused on municipal clusters adapted to available resources and local conditions.

4. Scale up and pathways for transformative systems change (Select all that apply)

Please select all relevant pathways that the JP applied with the aim of scaling up systematic transformation:

Capacity-building & local ownership: Strengthening capacity of individuals, local institutions and communities to independently implement and sustain activities; or transferring ownership and management to local organizations for sustained impact.

Cross-sectoral collaboration & partnerships: Partnering with diverse stakeholder groups to address interconnected issues and amplify impact; engaging with private and public sector to replicate successful programme components; or institutionalize participatory governance mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and intensify effectiveness.

Policy integration & mainstreaming: Incorporating successful programme elements into national or local policies and regulations to ensure wider adoption and impact; or integrating programme components into existing systems and structures for wider reach, efficiency and sustainability.

Resource mobilization & financial sustainability: Developing innovative financing mechanisms and attracting new donors/investors to ensure financial sustainability and expansion; or influencing existing financing mechanisms or diversifying resource streams to support long-term programme viability and growth.

People-centred technology adoption & innovation: Leveraging technology and solutions to increase reach, efficiency, impact of activities; or using technology and innovation to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration and scale-up of impact.

Others. Please specify: _____

5. Measures taken with a focus on sustainability (500 words / 1 page max)

1. Financial, Institutional and Community-Level Sustainability

- **Institutional integration:** Embedding interventions within existing government-led structures such as the Pro-SDG Canton Network and the Community Innovation Labs (LINC), ensuring that tested models are now part of Costa Rica's institutional architecture.
- **Strengthened municipal capacity:** Close collaboration with municipal officials to improve data governance systems. Training in Power BI and hands-on support in creating interactive dashboards for finance, social services, and infrastructure equipped local governments with permanent tools for evidence-based decision-making.
- **Institutional capacity diagnostics:** The JP applied three assessment tools on governance, planning and revenue collection, enabling municipalities to identify institutional gaps, strengthen information management, and design more informed public policies. These diagnostics positioned municipalities to continue improving governance beyond the project's timeframe through the SDG Canton Network.
- **Financial sustainability:** By strengthening women's capacities to independently access financial services, digital platforms and new markets, the Joint Programme promoted their economic self-sufficiency. This approach reduced reliance on external support and helped position women as sustainable economic actors in the long term.

2. Enabling Actions Supporting Sustainability and Ownership

- **Participatory approach:** The JP employed a participatory approach, engaging women leaders, local governments, and civil society in co-designing solutions, securing ownership and long-term relevance of innovations.
- **Gender-transformative governance:** Incorporating gender-transformative governance practices into municipal structures ensured that women's participation in decision-making is not a temporary outcome but a sustained feature of local governance.
- **Knowledge products and visibility:** The JP produced systematization reports, training toolkits, and documented innovation models, creating knowledge products embedded in the learning offer of IFAM and of the UN so that municipalities and communities can continue to use for replication and scaling up.

3. Exit Strategy for Scalability and Replication

- **Mainstreaming into government systems:** The JP mainstreamed its methodologies and digital platforms into national and municipal programs, enabling continuation through institutional budgets and mandates rather than short-term project funding.
- **Replication pathways.** The LINC were positioned as demonstration hubs within the Pro-SDG Canton Network and the LINC programme. Replication pathways were designed to facilitate adaptation and scaling of these models.
- **Strategic partnerships for scale:** The exit strategy relied on continued collaboration between UN agencies, national ministries, IFAM, and the increased

incorporation of private sector actors, providing not only funding, but also technical expertise and capacity-building resources.

- **Evidence and advocacy:** The JP invested in evidence and advocacy by documenting results in systematization exercises and case studies, providing policymakers with proof of impact and a solid base for national replication.

B. Indicator-Based Performance Update

This section is based upon the JP results framework and workplan.

6. The JP results framework (Upload Excel)

Please assess the JP performance against the indicators identified in the ProDoc's Annex 1: Integrated results framework, namely 1) JP outputs and 2) JP contribution to Joint SDG Fund global indicators.

7. Key documents produced by the JP (Upload max. 10 files if available)

Please feel free to share up to 10 key documents, including, but not limited to, policy briefs, strategy papers, guidance notes, knowledge products and training materials that the JP would like to bring to the attention of the Joint SDG Fund at the global level. File types can be Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF, image, video and audio, but each file size must be below 1GB.

- Showcase SDG
- Video
- VLR
- Política IEG
- Propuesta Sostenibilidad y Alianzas
- Proceso metodológico
- Dashboard
- Presentacion CDN
- Guía de datos con enfoque de género

8. Number of people directly benefited by the JP

Direct beneficiaries are individuals, groups or organizations who actively participate in JP activities and directly benefit from its interventions, such as civil servants attending workshops, small business owners receiving training, or households accessing services provided by the JP. It is important to disaggregate the primary beneficiaries by sex and age as per table below when possible.

Type of engagement	Total Number of People	Number of Women and Girls*	Number of Children (ages	Number of Youth (ages 15 – 24)*
			n (ages	

			of 0-14) *	
Training/workshops for targeted groups	<p>632 total participants in training and workshops:</p> <p>534 people trained on digital transformation and innovation</p> <p>98 public servants from national and municipal level, trained on data management, and digital tools</p>	<p>517 total participant in in training and workshops:</p> <p>469 women trained on digital transformation and innovation</p> <p>48 women public servants trained on data management and digital tools.</p>		
Awareness raising campaign for broad audience	<p>320 total participants in awareness events:</p> <p>49 participants in Sarchí's LINC activation ceremony</p> <p>101 participants in Atenas LINC activation ceremony</p> <p>70 participants in Palmares LINC activation ceremony</p> <p>100 participants in Foro Urbano Regional SICA (FURSICA)</p> <p>Note: Approximately</p>	<p>163 total women participants:</p> <p>42 women Sarchí's LINC activation ceremony</p> <p>69 women participants in Atenas LINC activation ceremony</p> <p>52 women participants in Palmares activation ceremony (approximately)</p>		

	1,000 people were reached as audience members and customers during the entrepreneurship fairs and the graduation of participants from workshops and training sessions.			
Dialogues/consultations with relevant stakeholders	87 people consulted on Public Policy processes	59 women consulted on public policy processes.		11 participants between the ages 15-24
Coordination meetings with key partners	88 total participants in meetings with key partners.	61 women participants		
Access to expanded services				
Others (Please specify): _____				

** Note that it is allowed to have overlaps in the reporting of women/girls and children/youth columns.*

9. Contributions to marginalized and vulnerable groups (250 words / 0.5 page max)

In bullet points, please provide a summary of how the JP benefited the marginalized and vulnerable groups identified in the ProDoc. Include results achieved at both institutional/policy and local/human levels. Please find the 20 standard LNOB groups in footnote 28 on page 17 of the UNSDG Output Indicator Framework's [Implementation Guide](#).

Institutional / Policy Level Results

- **Integration of gender and inclusion in municipal planning:** The JP strengthened local governments to institutionalize gender-responsive and inclusive digital governance, ensuring that women are systematically considered in SDG localization.
- **Capacity development of public institutions:** Municipal institutions adopted the Joint Programme's methodologies for digital inclusion, entrepreneurship support, and participatory governance. This created long-term mechanisms that benefit excluded groups, as demonstrated by the creation of the Local Public Policy for Gender Equality in Sarchí. The policy was formulated through an inclusive, participatory process that incorporated **consultation groups with youth, persons**

with disabilities, and communities in conditions of vulnerability, ensuring that diverse voices shaped priorities and that the resulting framework reflects the needs of all sectors of society.

- **Policy dialogue and advocacy:** The JP facilitated multi-stakeholder dialogues that elevated the voices of women entrepreneurs and community leaders, ensuring their needs influenced policy spaces and institutional frameworks.

Local / Human Level Results

- **Low-income and rural communities:** Community Innovation Labs (LINC)s expanded access to digital infrastructure and skills for groups traditionally excluded from technological tools, reducing the digital divide.
- **Multiplier effect through peer learning:** Women leaders who participated in the Joint Programme have taken on roles as community trainers and role models, sharing knowledge and creating opportunities for others in their communities — including older women, informal workers and migrants.
- **Enhanced participation in decision-making:** Women seek not only economic benefits but also strengthened political agency, actively influencing community-level governance and problem-solving processes
- The JP produced evidence on the consumption of illicit lending among LNOB groups—including low-income (especially women) households, informal workers, migrants, and at-risk youth—, and providing actionable insights to tailor prevention messaging, reporting pathways, and future access-to-formal-credit initiatives.

10. Financial resources mobilized/leveraged

Please indicate the financial resources (in USD) mobilized or leveraged through the JP. Please clarify the source of funding/financing and the source type, such as PUNOs and Government contributions, public-private partnerships, private sector investments, and financial commitments from IFIs, DFIs and other donors.

Source of Funding/Financing	Type of Source (e.g. PUNO, PPP, DFI, donor, etc.)	Expected amount planned in the ProDoc	Actual amount mobilized as initially planned in the ProDoc	Additional amount newly mobilized beyond the ProDoc expectation
UN Women co-funding	PUNO (in-kind support)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$
UN Habitat co-funding	PUNO (in-kind support)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$
UNDP co-funding	PUNO (in-kind support)	\$75,000	\$75,000	\$
UNODC – Center of	PUNO	\$30,000	\$ 25,000	

Excellence in Statistical Information on government, crime, victimization and justice for Latin America and the Caribbean				
IFAM co-funding	Institutional Budget	\$230,000		
MICITT co-funding			\$170,000 in equipment for the LINC's	

11. Cross-cutting issues and principles of leaving no one behind (LNOB)

For each question, select the relevant response. If yes, please list 1-2 examples of actions taken/results delivered, and if no, please provide a brief 1-2 sentence explanation in the table.

Question	Yes	No	Comment
The JP has adequately implemented environmental and social standards/safeguards to avoid and address adverse impacts on people and the planet.	X		The JP supported inclusive consultations, and digital tools for local governance, which strengthen both social safeguards and environmentally sustainable planning.
The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address human rights issues, undertaking and drawing upon relevant human rights analysis.	X		By bridging the digital divide and promoting inclusive participation, the JP advanced the right to access information, participation in governance, and equal opportunities for women and communities.
The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address structural inequalities facing women and girls.	X		Women received targeted digital skills training, entrepreneurship incubation, and

			leadership development, which enhanced their economic and political empowerment
The JP has demonstrated positive results / effects for youth in accordance with the principles in Youth 2030.	X		While the focus was on women, young women entrepreneurs and community leaders benefited significantly from digital training and innovation labs, aligning with Youth 2030 priorities.
The JP has developed or operationalized a strategy to address structural inequalities facing marginalized and vulnerable persons in any other LNOB groups. Please specify which groups: _____	X		Beyond women, the JP worked with local authorities and rural communities, ensuring inclusive digital access and governance mechanisms. Vulnerable groups were also included in consultations for the national gender equality public policy, with a strong focus on digital inclusion.

C. Strategic Communications and Partnership Update

12. Strategic communications

Please provide the links to written articles published by the JP, or the draft outline of a written article to be finalized in the coming weeks. Examples of human-interest stories, practical guidance on storytelling, other useful tools to produce impactful written articles can be found in the Joint SDG Fund's [Communications Guideline for Seed Funding Tracks](#) on [UNSDG Knowledge Portal](#) (NB: PUNOs may need to request access first).

List of links to written articles of human-interest stories:

- <https://jointsdgifund.org/article/transforming-territories-costa-rica-digital-innovation-and-womens-leadership>
- <https://dplnews.com/programa-conjunto-de-naciones-unidas-transforma-territorios-en-costa-rica-con-innovacion-digital-y-liderazgo-de-las-mujeres/>
- <https://crc891.com/nacionales/mas-de-300-personas-se-capacitan-en-inteligencia-artificial-y-herramientas-digitales/>
- <https://delfino.cr/2025/08/programa-de-naciones-unidas-impulsa-transformacion-digital-con-liderazgo-femenino-en-tres-cantones>
- <https://costarica.un.org/es/300346-programa-conjunto-de-naciones-unidas-transforma-territorios-en-costa-rica-con-innovaci%C3%B3n>

- <https://elsoldeoccidente.com/cantonales/palmares/palmares-inaugura-laboratorio-de-innovacion-comunitaria-linc/>
- <https://jointsdgfund.org/publication/case-study-accelerating-sdg-localization-through-digital-transformation-costa-rica>
- <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/traditional-sweets-digital-brand-cultural-legacy-dalais-rojas>
- <https://periodicomitierra.com/actualidad/costa-rica-impulsa-la-innovacion-regional-con-la-apertura-de-un-nuevo-laboratorio-en>
- <https://www.noticiaslagaritacr.com/2025/05/27/costa-rica-impulsa-2/>
- <https://jointsdgfund.org/article/paper-digital-journey-costa-rican-writer>
- <https://elguardian.cr/mujeres-emprendedoras-y-lideresas-protagonizan-proy/>

Draft outline of a written article of a human-interest story (500 words / 1 page max)

From Traditional Sweets to a Digital Brand: The Cultural Legacy of Dalais Rojas

- **Cultural roots in Sarchí, Costa Rica**
 - Sarchí is known as the cradle of Costa Rican craftsmanship, home to the iconic painted oxcarts recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage.
 - In this setting, Dalais Rojas carries forward a family tradition of making *cajetas* — traditional sweets — started by her grandmother nearly a century ago.
- **Family heritage and resilience**
 - Dalais grew up in Bajos del Toro Amarillo, where her father instilled the value of working “with love” as the secret to success.
 - Her grandmother made *cajetas* to support the family; her father learned the craft at age seven.
 - During the pandemic, facing financial hardship, Dalais revived this tradition with her husband, initially to cover school expenses for her children.
- **Creation of Herencias de mi Tierra Sarchí**
 - Dalais formalized her venture under the brand name “Herencias de mi Tierra Sarchí” (“Heritage from My Land Sarchí”).
 - Each product incorporates Sarchí’s cultural identity — from painted “colochitos” (curly strokes) to oxcart symbols.
 - Beyond *cajetas*, she expanded to other traditional snacks such as *chicharrones*, *plátanos*, and *yuquitas*.
- **Support from the Joint SDG Fund**
 - Through the joint programme on digital transformation for local development, implemented by the UN Resident Coordinator’s Office, UN Women, UNDP, and UN-Habitat:
 - Dalais received training in leadership, artificial intelligence, marketing, and digital tools.
 - She learned to professionalize her production, improve packaging, and establish a recognizable brand.
 - She now participates in local fairs, uses digital platforms, and dreams of exporting her products globally.

- **Community impact and value chains**
 - Her growing enterprise benefits suppliers and farmers, creating a local value chain:
 - Milk producers, sugar suppliers, and coconut collectors (including women from Limón) now depend on her business.
 - This multiplier effect extends benefits to families, artisans, and distributors across regions.
- **Empowerment and leadership**
 - Once a woman who had not completed sixth grade, Dalais now holds certifications and university-level training gained through the programme.
 - She sees herself as an empowered leader and role model: “Women have so much to offer the world.”
 - Her philosophy: “Limitations are in the mind. If you stay stuck, nothing changes.”
- **Future aspirations**
 - Dalais hopes to provide employment to women facing similar struggles, particularly mothers unable to send their children to school.
 - She envisions her factory and brand as symbols of possibility: proof that persistence and community support can turn hardship into opportunity.
 - Her legacy honors her grandmother while adapting cultural traditions to the digital economy.
- **Broader significance**
 - Dalais’s story illustrates how cultural heritage and digital innovation can converge for sustainable development.
 - Her journey demonstrates that with the right support, women entrepreneurs can lead inclusive economic growth while preserving local identity.

13. Strategic partnerships (Select all that apply)

What type of partnerships established during the JP made important contribution to the JP objectives?

- National Government Institutions (Please specify): IFAM and MICITT
- Sub-national Government Institutions (Please specify): Local Government of Atenas, Palmares and Sarchí
- International Financial Institutions & Development Finance Institutions (Please specify): _____
- Private Sector Companies or Industry Associations (Please specify): _____
- Civil Society Organizations, Philanthropic Organizations and Foundation (Please specify): Palmares Older Persons Network (REPAM), Impact Hub San José.
- Academic/Research Institutions (Please specify): Costa Rica National University (UNA) and National Technical University (UTN).
- Bilateral Development Partners (Please specify): _____
- Labour Unions or Organizations (Please specify): _____
- Others (Please specify): _____SDG Cities Global Community and Partnership Platform for the Localization of the SDGs.

ANNEX: SDG Localization Marker Survey

ONLY for the JPs with SDG Localization's Marker 3 to respond.

- 1) Please report on the SDG Localization monitoring indicators below. If an indicator is not applicable to your joint programme kindly state NA and briefly justify in the “Means of Verification” column.

Indicator	Baseline (year)	Target (year)	Evidence or means of verification
Number and type of local and regional governments and relevant local development stakeholders actively engaged in the programme design.	0 local governments	3 local governments	Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs).
Number and type of local and regional governments and relevant local development stakeholders with clear roles and responsibilities within the programme.	0 local governments	3 local governments	National Steering Committee agreements. Captures formal assignment of roles.
Number and type of persons or representative organizations involved in activities developed with the primary aim of enhancing local populations' ownership and inclusion in sustainable development processes at the subnational level, led by local development stakeholders.	0	534 participants in trainings/workshops, 98 trained public servants at local and national level, 320 in awareness events, 60 political stakeholders, 88 key partners	Attendance and participation records from events. Includes both individuals and representative organizations.

<p>Number and type of specific events, publications, or training materials aimed primarily at building capacity for local sustainable development/SDG localization in local development stakeholders.</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>Publications (4 total)</p> <p>Two human-interest stories showcasing personal experiences of programme participants, highlighting impact at the individual and community levels.</p> <p>Two comprehensive communication materials presenting in-depth information, resources and programme outcomes for wider dissemination.</p> <p>Events (5 total)</p> <p>Three LINC opening ceremonies, marking the official launch and engagement with local stakeholders.</p> <p>Two entrepreneur fairs and graduation events, celebrating participants who</p>	<p>SDG Fund webpage, social media posts, and event documentation.</p> <p>Tracks knowledge products and outreach activities.</p> <p>Costa Rica UN webpage: https://costarica.un.org/es/299593-caja-de-herramientas-para-la-transformaci%C3%B3n-digital-y-el-desarrollo-sostenible</p>
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	<p>completed workshops and training sessions, and providing platforms to showcase their initiatives.</p> <p>Seven Municipal Data Management Dashboards (Power BI): Interactive tools that provide municipalities with evidence-based insights to strengthen decision-making and governance.</p> <p>One online toolkit equipped with: Methodologies, guidelines and practical examples, Digital platforms to modernize municipal management with innovative tools, Resources to support women and entrepreneurs in creating and growing businesses and community initiatives, Mechanisms to foster collaboration</p>	
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		among institutions, the private sector and civil society, Strategies to promote inclusive and sustainable development, ensuring no one is left behind.	
Number and type/description of specific coherent policies, regulations, and/or tools developed to enhance SDG	0	2 public policy proposals, 6 institutional capacity tool analysis reports,	Approved local policies, technical analysis reports, and ROSRA

localization (Disaggregated on policies, regulations, or tools focused on cross-sectoral or cross-level policy coherence).		3 financial revenue tool analysis, 3 VLRs.	recommendation report.
Number and type/description of mechanisms or activities developed to improve the transparent and accountable financing of SDG localization.	0	1 (ROSRA tool on Own Source Revenue reform)	ROSRA recommendation report.
Number and type of relevant initiatives/processes that the projects contribute to reach large scale, transformative impact.	0	7- 2 public policy proposals, 3 LINC opening ceremonies, 2 Entrepreneur fairs and graduation of participants in workshops and training	Municipal beneficiary records and documentation from partner institutions.
Percentage of programmatic expenditures allocated explicitly to activities that directly impact local sustainable development processes and systems (e.g. food systems value chains, local health or education systems, energy and water management, local economic development, local climate action, multilevel governance) embedded in local SDG-related priorities which are expressed in local strategies.	0%	100%	Budget proposals from participating institutions.
Number and type of local financial tools/instruments developed or strengthened to support SDG implementation at local level.	0	1 (ROSRA tool on Own Source Revenue reform)	ROSRA recommendation report.
Total amount (in USD) of additional public and private sector resources mobilized for local SDG implementation at the local level.	0	US\$ 230,000	UNS and public institutional financial reports. Reflects resource mobilization outcomes.
Percentage of results contributing to SDG localization that have met their preplanned target/milestones.	0%	100%	VLRs and municipal strategic plans.
Number of local and regional governments and/or local service	0	3 local governments	VLRs. Indicates institutionalization

providers integrating aspects of policy coherence for sustainable development into their monitoring and reporting processes.			of coherence in reporting systems.
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2) What action areas has your JP prioritized since launch to advance the SDGs at the local level? (Select all that apply)

- Empowering local authorities and communities (e.g. capacity building, leadership development, technical support)
- Facilitating multi-stakeholder engagement (e.g. participatory planning processes, community consultations)
- Strengthening multi-level governance (e.g. vertical coordination, central-local policy alignment)
- Localizing SDG financing (e.g. municipal finance mechanisms, local resource mobilization, local SDG budgeting)
- Enhancing local data systems (e.g. disaggregated data collection, community-based monitoring)
- Expanding social service access (e.g. last-mile delivery, integrated service provision)
- Others (please specify): _____

3) To what extent has funding from the joint programme budget be directly channelled or mobilized to local-level actors (e.g. local governments, local community organizations, local service providers) to support SDG Localization efforts in the reporting period?

- 0% i.e. no resource has been directed to local-level actors.
- 1-24% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 25-49% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 50-74% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.
- 75-100% of total programme funding directed to local-level actors.

4) Please describe how the territorial or localization approach is applied in your joint programme. Include the following key aspects into your response.

- Alignment between joint programme and local development plans and integration of results in local processes, frameworks and SDG monitoring system.
- Role of subnational-level (local and regional) governments and other key local institutions/stakeholders in the implementation of the joint programme.
- Description on how capacities and innovation of local stakeholders for integrating SDG and multi-actor collaboration are identified and reinforced.

Alignment with Local Development Plans and SDG Monitoring

- The Joint Programme (JP) was explicitly designed around Costa Rica's national and local frameworks for SDG localization, ensuring strong policy alignment and integration into existing planning processes. In this line, [SDG monitoring data dashboard](#) was developed, which revised data for the selected indicators of the

municipalities and assisted the elaboration of the VLRs developed during the project.

- The *Pro SDG Canton Network* provided the institutional foundation for embedding JP activities in municipal development plans. This network links local governments with the national SDG architecture, enabling the results of the JP to be mainstreamed into official planning, budgeting, and monitoring mechanisms.
- Community Innovation Labs (LINC)s served as platforms for piloting inclusive solutions at the local level, while generating practical knowledge and data that feed into the SDG monitoring system. By integrating indicators on gender, digital inclusion, and entrepreneurship into municipal development agendas, the JP ensured results are not isolated projects but contributions to systemic SDG progress.

Role of Subnational Governments and Local Institutions

- Municipalities were central in the implementation of the JP mobilizing communities, co-designing solutions, and embedding JP methodologies into their institutional practices.
- IFAM partnered with UN agencies to strengthen municipalities' technical capacity in areas such as digital governance, gender mainstreaming, and participatory planning.

Strengthening Local Capacities and Innovation for SDG Integration

- The JP emphasized a participatory, co-creation approach, building on the existing capacities of women leaders, community leaders, and municipal governments. Rather than introducing external models, it reinforced and scaled local innovations.
- Training programmes focused on digital skills, entrepreneurship, innovation, and leadership empowered women entrepreneurs to become multipliers of knowledge in their communities. This not only sustained results but also fostered peer-to-peer learning models that reinforced collective capacity.
- Municipal officials received technical assistance and training on SDG localization tools, gender-responsive planning, and digital transformation strategies, embedding innovation within institutional frameworks. Through targeted training in Power BI and tailored support for the development of interactive dashboards in areas such as finance, social services, and infrastructure, municipalities were equipped with sustainable tools for evidence-based planning and decision-making.
- Institutional Capacity diagnostics: To complement these efforts, the JP deployed assessment tools on governance, planning and own source revenue collection, enabling municipalities to systematically identify institutional gaps, enhance information management practices, and design more effective public policies. These diagnostics laid the foundation for continuous improvements in governance well beyond the JP's implementation period.
- The JP promoted multi-actor collaboration by creating spaces for dialogue and joint problem-solving between national ministries, municipalities, private sector actors, and civil society organizations. These platforms helped identify synergies and reinforced the culture of cross-sector partnerships as a basis for sustainable SDG implementation.

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