



UN GLOBAL PULSE

Scaling What Matters

Innovation for a
Changing World

Annual Report
2025

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As the UN marked its 80th anniversary in 2025, the United Nations stands at a crossroads: reflecting on eight decades of some of humanity's greatest collective achievements, while acknowledging that the **tools of the past are no longer sufficient for the crises of the present**. This moment has sharpened a shared understanding across the system, that transformation is no longer optional, with the launch of the UN80 initiative providing a concrete pathway to reshape how the UN works.



In a moment when technology continues to accelerate at high speed, opportunities for innovations at scale have become even greater. For UN Global Pulse, 2025 was the year of scaling what works. We recognize that people and the planet deserve a United Nations equipped with contemporary tools to meet today's global challenges. Our mission is to **move beyond isolated pilots by investing in high-impact innovations with the potential to transform how the UN operates**. By helping the system to learn by doing, we ensure that innovation becomes a practical pathway to more effective delivery on the ground.

INTRODUCTION

UN Global Pulse's role as a convener is central to this progress. A large building block of this effort is the **UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, which in 2025 evolved into a mature, system-wide platform**. In 2025, the Accelerator supported 22 teams across three cohorts from more than 25 UN organizations. By sharing what we learn, through tools such as business modelling, strategic foresight and adaptive planning, we have helped them move beyond technical fixes to develop human-centred, context-specific scaling strategies.

Through DISHA, our multi-partner AI solutions platform, we showed **how responsible AI can scale for real-world impact**, helping humanitarian responders identify urgent needs up to six times faster by transforming complex data into actionable insights. In Indonesia, the Sea Level Rise project evolved from a **data collaboration into a nationally anchored policy process**, convening 19 ministries and agencies to reframe sea level rise as a systemic development risk and inform high-level policy action. In Uganda, DataCities moved from diagnostics to applied implementation, operationalizing the National Data Strategy in Jinja and Fort Portal and **shifting city-level decision-making toward measurable, evidence-based insights**.

Together, these initiatives serve as **blueprints for change**, demonstrating how collaboration, data and innovation can be scaled and adapted across diverse contexts to drive lasting transformation at national, regional and global levels.

As we look toward the future, **UN Global Pulse is focused on building on this momentum**. We have learned that **scaling does not happen in silos**, it depends on sustained relationships and a willingness to innovate within even the most challenging environments. The UN system continues in its major task of becoming more effective and impactful. The solutions exist, rapid technology, for example, and we are ready to play our part in activating and supporting scaling across entities.

In 2025, we proved that a more collaborative, effective and inclusive United Nations is possible. As we move forward, **it is clear that this transformation cannot be achieved alone**. Shaping real change requires deep partnerships across the UN system, governments, academia and the private sector. This report highlights our milestones in supporting the UN 2.0 agenda, illustrating what transformation looks like in practice **as we work together to build a future that works for everyone, everywhere**.



Photo: UN Photo/Mark Garten

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF MULTI-LATERALISM THROUGH UN80 AND UN 2.0 TRANSFORMATION

In 2025, the United Nations system kicked off a far-reaching change initiative to increase agility, effectiveness, and responsiveness. As the organization marked its 80th anniversary, **the focus of change shifted decisively from experimentation to scale, toward initiatives that could drive systems change, embed new capabilities across institutions and ensure that the UN system remains fit for purpose in the 21st century.** It was within this context that UN Global Pulse contributed, throughout its work, to the UN 2.0 transformation and informing the emerging priorities of the UN80 Initiative.

The UN80 initiative was launched to transform how the UN works. It serves as an ambitious, system-wide effort to respond to a vital question: 'How can the UN adapt to become more agile, integrated, and equipped to respond to today's complex global challenges amid tightening resources?'

Rather than introducing a parallel agenda, UN80 consolidates and accelerates existing transformations, such as UN 2.0, shaping an even stronger and more effective United Nations. Throughout 2025, **UN Global Pulse contributed to the UN 2.0 agenda by helping translate ambition into practice, grounding transformation in evidence, operational experience and scalable solutions. By contributing our expertise to the UN80 Initiative, we helped shape internal processes that align technical innovation with longer-term institutional reform.**

At the heart of UN Global Pulse's contribution to UN 2.0 was a sustained focus on institutional capability-building. As the UN system increasingly recognizes data, digital tools, foresight, inno-

vation and behavioural science as core enablers of delivery, **UN Global Pulse worked closely with senior leadership, technical teams and country offices to strengthen in-entity capacity across these domains.** This support combined strategic advice with hands-on engagement, ensuring that UN 2.0 was not treated as a conceptual framework, but as a practical way of working.

Drawing on years of applied innovation experience, **UN Global Pulse helped inform direction-setting discussions on how UN 2.0 capabilities could be embedded into organizational learning, workforce upskilling and country-level use.** Rather than promoting isolated pilots, the emphasis was on scaling what works – developing shared approaches, codifying lessons learned and enabling interoperability across entities. This shift reflected a broader maturation of the UN innovation ecosystem, moving from experimentation toward institutionalization.

As need for increased effectiveness sharpened, UN Global Pulse provided targeted inputs to reform processes aimed at increasing system efficiency and resilience. Notably, UN Global Pulse contributed expertise **to the design of the Technology Accelerator Programme (TAP), helping to inform future priorities for scalable, high-impact technologies capable of delivering results at scale.**

This work underscored a central premise of UN80: that transformation is not optional, but essential to sustaining the UN's mandate in a changing world.

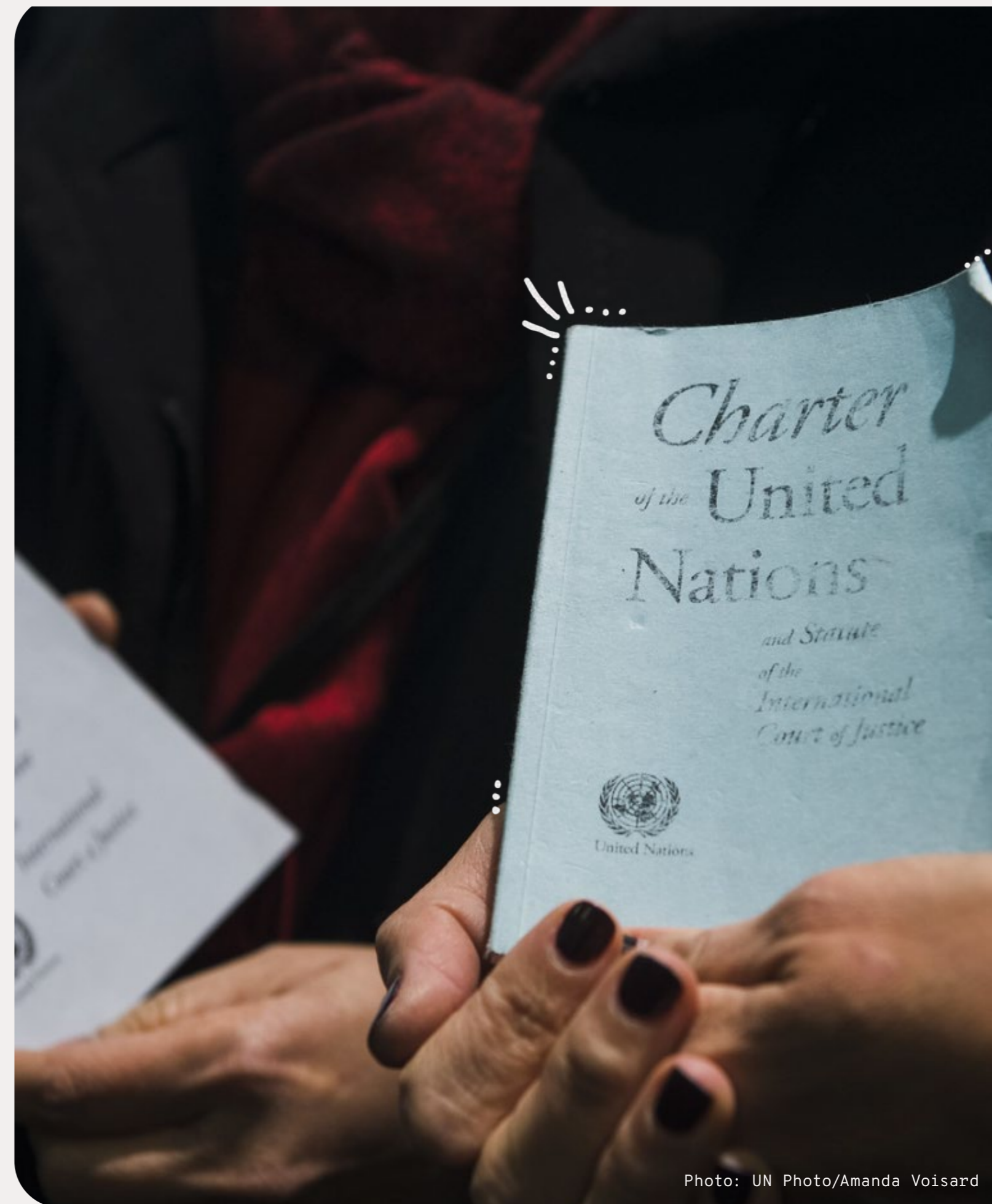


Photo: UN Photo/Amanda Voisard

NETWORK MILESTONES 2025 IN NUMBERS

23
projects

63
events

Highlights:

- UN 2.0 Week
- UN Behavioural Science Week - Webinar
- AI Action Summit
- AI for Good Summit
- UNGA 2025 (UN80)
- STI Forum (6 events)
- UNSSC webinar on Scaling Innovations
- UNICEF SPARK
- Sitra Finnsight Panel
- MEL webinar for LUT University & International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM)
- UN Secretariat Innovation Day Webinar
- GICHD - Innovation Conference 2025 Plenary Session
- PSFN joint Foresight Event
- Web Summit Lisbon
- Regenerative Hackathon

UN Global Pulse Hubs

Asia-Pacific	Europe	Africa	DISHA
8 projects	7 projects	5 projects	3 projects

49
project partners

National and Local Government Partners

- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)
- Bhutan Innovation Lab
- City of Espoo (Finland)
- Embassy of Slovenia in the Nordics
- Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Fort Portal City (Uganda)
- Indonesia Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Indonesian Bappenas
- Ugandan Ministry of ICT and National Governance (MICT&NG)
- Ugandan Ministry of Tourism Wildlife and Antiquities (MTWA)
- Jinja City (Uganda)
- Kemenko IPK
- Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID)
- Uganda Tourism Board (UTB)
- Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)

Civil Society Partners

- Bookhive Indonesia
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- Demos
- Finnpartnership
- Hewlett Foundation
- SKALA

United Nations System Partners

- ESCAP
- FAO
- ILO
- ITU
- OCHA
- UN DCO/RCO
- UNDP
- UNFPA
- UNHCR
- UNIN
- UNICEF
- UNITAR - UNOSAT
- UNOPS
- UN Women
- WFP
- World Bank-UNHCR Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement

Private Sector Partners

- Dalberg
- ESRI
- Globe Telecom
- Google Research
- Hellon
- Kasese Investment Forum
- McKinsey & Company / QuantumBlack
- Sunbird AI
- ToroDev

Academic/Institute Partners

- Aalto University
- ETH Zurich
- KTH Royal Institute of Technology
- University of Helsinki

72

countries reached

■ Countries Reached



- ◆ Afghanistan
- ◆ Armenia
- ◆ Azerbaijan
- ◆ Bangladesh
- ◆ Benin
- ◆ Bolivia
- ◆ Brazil
- ◆ Burkina Faso
- ◆ Burundi
- ◆ Cambodia
- ◆ Cameroon
- ◆ Cape Verde
- ◆ Central African-Republic
- ◆ Chad
- ◆ China
- ◆ Colombia
- ◆ Côte d'Ivoire
- ◆ Cuba
- ◆ DR Congo
- ◆ Denmark
- ◆ Ecuador
- ◆ Ethiopia
- ◆ Fiji
- ◆ Finland
- ◆ Gambia
- ◆ Ghana
- ◆ Guinea
- ◆ Guinea-Bissau
- ◆ Haiti
- ◆ Honduras
- ◆ India
- ◆ Indonesia
- ◆ Iraq
- ◆ Jamaica
- ◆ Jordan
- ◆ Kenya
- ◆ Kiribati
- ◆ Kyrgyzstan
- ◆ Lebanon
- ◆ Liberia
- ◆ Madagascar
- ◆ Malawi
- ◆ Malaysia
- ◆ Maldives
- ◆ Mali
- ◆ Mexico
- ◆ Morocco
- ◆ Mozambique
- ◆ Myanmar
- ◆ Namibia
- ◆ Nauru
- ◆ Nepal
- ◆ New Zealand
- ◆ Nigeria
- ◆ Pakistan
- ◆ Papua New Guinea
- ◆ Peru
- ◆ Philippines
- ◆ Rwanda
- ◆ Samoa
- ◆ Solomon Islands
- ◆ Slovenia
- ◆ Sri Lanka
- ◆ Tonga
- ◆ Timor Leste
- ◆ Tuvalu
- ◆ Uganda
- ◆ UR Tanzania
- ◆ Vanuatu
- ◆ Viet Nam
- ◆ Yemen
- ◆ Zambia

◆ On the List of UN Least Developed Countries (LDCs)

THE UN GLOBAL PULSE INNOVATION PORTFOLIO

UN Global Pulse supports responsible and inclusive innovation across the UN system. We collaborate with partners on new solutions and **support the whole UN family in its transformation towards a UN 2.0.**

Unlike agency-specific innovation offices, UN Global Pulse **operates across mandates and institutional boundaries**, bringing together diverse UN teams and external partners to catalyze responsible, system-wide innovation that **no single entity could advance alone.**

Global Pulse’s innovation portfolio spans a spectrum of innovations across three pillars: **our Regional Hubs embed us into country-specific and region-specific challenges** like adoption to sea level rise in the Asia Pacific region or sustainable tourism in Africa; our Global Catalyst provides a space for scale-up of solutions that are cross-entity and global in nature, like providing platform access to cutting-edge AI models that can be used by UN system teams and a Global Capability Hub that **builds expertise and connects leading innovation teams system-wide. Through this setup, we provide holistic support to UN teams, helping scale the most effective solutions in partnership.**

Central to the vision of a UN 2.0 and Global Pulse’s portfolio uses methods from across the “Quintet of Change,” five modern skill sets – data, strategic foresight, digital, behavioural science and innovation. We embed these capabilities throughout our work to create new solutions using **data, artificial intelligence and digital tools.**

But we also go a step further – using foresight and behavioural insights to identify timely priorities and design approaches fit for real-world adoption. By combining these disciplines, **we ensure innovations are not only ground breaking but also inclusive, responsible and sustainable.**

Our teams work across four continents and are based in Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America. We have specialists in AI, data and social sciences, strategic foresight, digital transformation, social systems, innovation scaling and more. Behind the scenes, others do valuable work in critical areas such as partnerships, monitoring, evaluation and learning, operations and creative communications and design.

The UN 2.0 transformation toolkit:

Behavioural Science: Enabling better choices, e.g., to help enhance access to social services.

Data: Building impactful data ecosystems, e.g., to help raise yields with data-driven agriculture.

Digital: Becoming fluent in digital impact, e.g., to help with inclusive online education platforms.

Innovation: Learning to scale new solutions, e.g., to help expand access to healthcare services.

Strategic Foresight: Learning to navigate uncertainty, e.g., to assist in adapting to climate change trends.

UN Global Pulse Hubs

Asia-Pacific

Europe

Africa

DISHA



SCALING WHAT WORKS

COHORTS 1, 2, 3

384

applications received
across 3 cohorts (2024-2025)

22

innovations teams
participated across 3 cohorts
(2024-2025)

12

entities supported

Across 3 cohorts(2024-2025): FAO, IOM, UNFPA, WFP, WHO, UNODC, UN RCO, ITC, UNHCR, OHCHR/ UN Human Rights, UNRWA, UN Women.

66

countries

were reached by the 22 innovation teams (2024-2025)

480,000 USD

disbursed to 8 selected innovations across 3 cohorts (2024-2025)

4,325,282

direct beneficiaries

an estimated range of direct beneficiaries including communities and smallholder farmers, women and youth groups, migrants and refugees, UN and humanitarian actors, local government and civil society, health professionals, and students.

THE ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME PROVIDES A BLUEPRINT FOR CATALYSING PROVEN INNOVATIONS TO WORK AT SCALE

#INNOVATION

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#EUROPE

Innovation is no longer a luxury for the United Nations; it is essential to building a more agile, future-ready organization capable of responding to accelerating global crises. Yet while many innovation pilots are launched across the UN system, too few achieve lasting, systemic impact.

The UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme was created to address this gap. In just two years, it has strengthened the impact of participating teams and generated growing demand, reflected in increased regional interest and a wider range of projects. Now in its third cohort, the Accelerator Programme continues to expand its reach and value as a catalyst for UN innovation.

In 2023, UN Global Pulse sought to better understand and uncover barriers to scaling innovation in the United Nations. As part of this effort, Global Pulse published "**Scaling the Summit**", a report examining the challenges of scaling across the UN, drawing on experiences and practices of UN agencies and staff.

The report provided a snapshot of a broad and often persistent set of hurdles, including difficulties translating localized pilot initiatives into transnational solutions, limited access to expertise, tools, and skills, and organizational funding models and processes that lack the flexibility required to support iterative approaches.

Photo: UNDP Kenya

Moving a solution from a successful pilot to one that delivers systemic impact requires strengthened innovation strategies that are both sustainable and capable of navigating complex value networks. It also requires dedicated spaces that counter fragmented support systems and siloed learning, offering access to the people, processes and ecosystems needed to test strategies, build team resilience and enable scale.

In response, Global Pulse launched the Accelerator Programme, with two cohorts in 2024. The programme was intentionally designed to equip UN teams with robust strategies and strong evidence for success to scale their innovations. Through a carefully designed, evidence-based curriculum; individualized mentoring and tools; and funding that enables immediate progress in

scaling pathways, the Accelerator Programme embodies the principles of UN 2.0 in practice.

The Programme is designed in two phases. The first phase comprises an immersive experience, including a five-day workshop in which teams develop a comprehensive scaling strategy within a peer-learning environment. Along with the dedicated experts facilitating deep dives into the curriculum, participants benefit from the opportunity to collaborate and learn from each other, a unique offering from the Accelerator that emphasizes cocreation. Following this, the most promising teams demonstrating viable scaling strategies advance to the second phase, where they receive the Catalyst Grant and dedicated mentoring.



Cohort 1 Teams A Glance into Their Progress

From the 14 teams that participated in 2024's cohorts, five were selected to receive grant funding and mentoring support. In 2025, UN Global Pulse followed up with the grantees from the first cohort, **revealing extraordinary results.**

The initiatives touched thousands of more lives and demonstrated a shift in how teams positioned their work, moving beyond technical projects to long-term, locally owned initiatives. Despite logistical and implementation challenges, teams relied on agility and creativity, adopting approaches that reflected ongoing refinement and iteration rooted in human-centred, participatory values.

WHO's Tobacco-Free Farms, an initiative enabling tobacco farmers to transition from tobacco farming to alternative livelihoods, sensitized ~15,000 farmers in Kenya, with 9,927 transitioning into alternative, tobacco-free value chains.

UNFPA's DrugDash, a digital application aiming to improve access to family planning methods for women and girls in Uganda, is expanding coverage to nine districts and reaching approximately 146,000 people.

WFP's Farm2Go, also a digital application supporting smallholder farmers by providing access to vital information on effective agricultural practices, expanded into Latin America with pilots in Cuba and momentum toward scale-up in Haiti, Nicaragua, and the Philippines, enabled in part by Accelerator visibility and catalytic grant support.

Cohort 2 Teams A Glance into Their Progress

2025 also marked the graduation of the second cohort. For this group, the Accelerator introduced a redesigned framework emphasizing evidence-generation, communications and foresight. Follow-up conversations with the teams revealed how integral the Accelerator was in

providing a space to identify challenges that extended beyond technical or operational issues to include strategic and relational dimensions. This enabled teams to develop strategies that were resilient to political, social and institutional dynamics.

BioDAF, an initiative focused on transforming organic waste into protein and fertilizer using black soldier fly larvae, expanded operations through the addition of three new farms.

The ITC's Online Freelancing Toolkit (focused on upskilling women and youth in digital freelancing) is launching an AI-enabled freelancing toolkit in West Africa.

SheCan, a solution promoting financial inclusion for women in lower-income countries, scaled operations in Cameroon and expanded to Bolivia and Ecuador, while securing integration into WFP's core financial inclusion service offering.

The evolution of RCO Colombia's Joint Territorial Solutions labs (focused on enabling collaboration with local actors to identify and design tailored responses to community challenges) into a strategic programme to localize the UN Cooperation Framework across Colombia's engaged provinces by 2027.

IOM's DTM DataKit (focused on standardizing and streamlining data collection for IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)) rollout across 35 countries in the Americas.

MEET OUR THIRD COHORT



AI School and Equality Lab

Powering a Movement Where Women Learn, Build and Govern Safe and Inclusive AI



DIGICILD

Mapping Risk to End Child Labour



DigitalAAP

Where Every Voice Ignites Instant Change



Job Creation Platform

Innovation for Dignified Refugee Employment



Circular Economy Model for E-Waste Management

A Circular Energy Revolution for Climate Resilience and Inclusive Growth



Civic Space Pulse

Monitoring Fundamental Freedoms in Real-Time



School Connect

Designed to Streamline and Standardize School Meal Programme Reporting



Behavioural Insights in Africa

Scaling Behavioural Sciences for People-Centered Health in the African Region

Building on this momentum, the Accelerator further enhanced its curriculum and launched a third cohort in 2025. The call for participants received applications from more than 25 UN organizations. Eight teams participated in the workshops, with three selected to receive grant funding and mentoring: FAO's DIGICHILD, OHCHR's Civic Space Pulse and WFP's School Connect. Through 2026, the teams will work with UN Global Pulse and a range of industry experts to implement their scale strategies and accelerate the impact of their innovative projects.

With each cohort's successes, UN Global Pulse deepens the Accelerator Programme's foundational offerings. Teams often enter the workshops viewing their innovation as distinct or isolated initiatives - but through the Accelerator, the potential for systemic impact becomes clear. Beyond strategic depth, the programme fosters a collaborative learning environment where teams amplify lessons learned and build connections across ideas, people and organizations.

After three cohorts, the Accelerator has solidified its role in advancing the impact of the diverse, creative innovations that have successfully participated. Looking ahead, the Accelerator is gradually reshaping how innovation is perceived, catalyzed and successfully facilitated towards impact across the UN.

With 22 teams now championing the programme's tools and expertise, UN Global Pulse's approach to scaling innovation reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting the UN and refining strategies that advance the UN 2.0 agenda. Each successfully scaled innovation not only delivers tangible results but also strengthens the UN's capacity to create a better future for all.

Abbreviations of UN organizations:

FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
 IOM - International Organization for Migration
 UNFPA - United Nations Population Fund
 WFP - World Food Programme
 WHO - World Health Organisation
 UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
 UN RCO - United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
 ITC - International Trade Centre
 UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 OHCHR - Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
 UNRWA - United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
 UN Women - United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Participating teams gained structured approaches to assessing the long-term sustainability of their innovation's offerings and its system-level impact, drawing on a range of tools, concepts, and frameworks. These approaches informed their scaling strategies and strengthened their ability to articulate clearer visions. Teams also reported gaining evidence-based planning and reporting skills, which directly contributed to higher-quality framing and pitching of their strategies to key partners. The design of the workshops themselves complemented the technical expertise provided with the provision of reflection spaces and peer validation - a unique experience that expanded on the growth of the participating teams.

Structural

The Accelerator Programme contributed to tangible changes in formal structures, processes, partnerships, and ways of working that govern how teams operate. Many teams institutionalized new planning, assessment, and decision-making structures influenced by UN Global Pulse methodologies. Teams strengthened or formalized cross-agency, government, academic, and private-sector partnerships, creating structural conditions for scaling. Similarly, several teams reported progress in embedding innovations within organizational systems and reforms, such as integrating data governance or positioning innovations as core services rather than standalone projects, representing meaningful progress toward institutionalizing innovation and scale within the UN system.

Behavioural

Teams increasingly demonstrated human-centred, participatory, and iterative ways of working, moving away from document-led processes toward co-creation, field proximity, rapid learning, and adaptation. This included closer engagement with beneficiaries, government counterparts, and ecosystem partners, as well as greater tolerance for experimentation and failure as part of innovation practice. There was a clear behavioural shift toward adaptive and resilient planning, with teams recognizing that scaling in the UN context is nonlinear and requires flexibility, contingency planning, and opportunistic use of existing resources. Teams reported greater comfort recalibrating scale strategies to political, institutional, or environmental realities, grounded in a stronger belief that scaling requires visibility, political buy-in, and cross-sector engagement.

Photo: UNRWA/Job Creation Programme

RESPONSIBLE AI IN ACTION: THE DISHA INITIATIVE

Data Insights for Social & Humanitarian Action, also known as DISHA, is a multi-partner initiative led by UN Global Pulse, the Secretary-General's Innovation Lab, that aims to accelerate ethical and responsible access to data and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions to unlock social impact at scale.

By facilitating the availability of reusable data through reliable models, standardized approaches and frameworks, DISHA enables the creation and expansion of actionable insights. These insights are designed to support more effective and inclusive efforts in humanitarian work, peacebuilding and development. **The Socio-Economic Mapping, Damage Assessment Product and Refugee Shelter Mapping are the three main solutions in DISHA's portfolio that leverage AI and dynamic data for natural disaster response.**

50
million
mobile subscribers
represented in anonymized and
aggregated datasets

5.6
million
people
affected across disaster events
supported by SEM analysis

3
UN Entities Support
including UNOCHA, WFP, UNFPA

6
Disaster Events
Activations

ACCELERATING HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN THE PHILIPPINES WITH REAL-TIME DYNAMIC POPULATION DATA

#DATA

#DIGITAL

#INNOVATION

#DISHA

Humanitarian response is often constrained not by a lack of will, but by the absence of timely, actionable information. Evidence from recent disasters consistently shows that in the immediate aftermath of shocks, responders struggle to answer two fundamental questions: **where have people gone, and which communities are now most vulnerable?** Traditional assessment tools like household surveys, damage reports and administrative data tend to provide static or delayed snapshots. In fast-moving emergencies, these information gaps can translate directly into delayed responses, misallocated resources and affected populations left unseen.

This challenge is particularly acute in the Philippines, one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world. Floods, typhoons, earthquakes and landslides regularly trigger large-scale evacuations and temporary displacement. While responders may know where a hazard made landfall, they often lack visibility into secondary effects, for example, where displaced populations relocate, how long they stay and how pre-existing socio-economic vulnerabilities intersect with these movements. The need for dynamic, population-level insight is not theoretical; it becomes evident during every major emergency.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Repeated real-world activations enabled humanitarian organizations to move from theoretical interest to practical understanding of how anonymized mobile phone data can inform preparedness and early response. Partners developed the capacity to interpret population inflows and outflows across different geographic scales and triangulate SEM insights with other information sources. As one UNOCHA partner reflected, *“this technology accelerates our shift from reacting to disasters to proactively anticipating them, ensuring that no one is left behind.”* - Joseph Addawe, Information Management Officer - UNOCHA

Structural

The evergreen data-sharing agreement with Globe Telecom represented a fundamental shift. It institutionalized daily access to critical data and removed the need for ad hoc negotiations during crises. In parallel, standardized onboarding and access mechanisms established by UN Global Pulse enabled multiple agencies to use SEM without bespoke legal or technical arrangements, embedding the solution more firmly within existing humanitarian planning and information management structures.

Behavioural

In 2025, partners increasingly requested SEM insights as a routine input into preparedness and response, rather than as an experimental add-on. Organizations such as Catholic Relief Services (CRS) integrated SEM outputs into collaborative planning and validation processes and promoted wider internal sharing. At the same time, feedback loops between users and the SEM team became more active, reflecting growing trust, a sense of ownership and sustained engagement with the solution.



Photo: UNDP/Philippines

guards, this partnership established the technical and institutional foundations for SEM to operate at scale in support of disaster response.

In 2025, the SEM Solution reached a turning point. Building on earlier pilots, it transitioned from an event-based analytical exercise to a fully operational, continuously managed system under UN Global Pulse. The introduction of a standard user agreement streamlined onboarding for humanitarian partners, substantially lowering barriers to adoption and enabling SEM to support both preparedness and live emergency response.

From June 2025 onwards, SEM was deployed during at least six major disaster events in the Philippines. These included periods of **heavy rains and flooding in July, Super Typhoon Ragasa in September, earthquakes in Cebu and Davao Oriental in October and Typhoon Tino and Super Typhoon Fung Wong in November**. Across these events, SEM provided nationwide, near real-time analysis in support of responses to disasters estimated to have **affected approximately 5.6 million people**.

User adoption expanded significantly over the reporting period. **UNOCHA, WFP, UNFPA and Catholic Relief Services (CRS)** were officially onboarded and became active users of SEM insights. Partners accessed the solution through an interactive dashboard, as well as through curated analytical outputs known as “SEM Fact Packs,”

which were produced during disaster activations. These Fact Packs translated complex analysis into actionable insights by highlighting population inflows and outflows, overlaying vulnerability indicators and presenting comparative trends across affected areas. They were disseminated through humanitarian coordination mechanisms in response to clear partner demand.

Partner feedback continued to play a central role in shaping the evolution of the solution. Requests for greater operational relevance and spatial granularity informed the introduction of tower-based clustering and other refined analytical approaches, enabling abnormal population movement trends to be observed at a finer spatial resolution than municipal boundaries. These enhancements substantially increased the value of SEM insights for operational planning and coordination.

While SEM’s current deployment is focused on the Philippines, it was intentionally designed as a replicable model. Lessons from the 2025 deployments are being consolidated into technical documentation and playbooks to support future adaptation in other disaster-prone contexts. In this way, SEM illustrates how ethical data partnerships, advanced analytics and sustained collaboration with humanitarian actors can transform not just how information is generated, but how decisions are made when they matter most.

DISHA’s Socio-Economic Mapping (SEM) solution was developed in partnership with McKinsey & company to respond directly to the operational gap between disaster occurrence and informed decision-making by leveraging anonymized and aggregated mobile phone data to generate near real-time insights on population movement and vulnerability.

By analysing changes in mobile network activity, including call and message volumes, data usage and tower-level connectivity, the SEM solution identifies abnormal (too low or too high) population counts at a city and village levels, which helps to analyze the likely directions of population flows following an emergency event. These mobility patterns are integrated with poverty nowcasting models trained on official census data and telecom-derived indicators, enabling estimation of relative socio-economic vulnerability at municipal level. Together, these components provide a dynamic view of how displacement and vulnerability intersect, moving beyond static representations of affected areas.

SEM also broadens the analytical focus of disaster response. Rather than examining hazards alone, the solution supports humanitarian actors in understanding where populations have relocated, where pressures on host communities may be emerging, and where assistance may be urgently needed beyond the initial impact area.

To ensure sustainability and operational readiness, SEM was designed as a continuously available system rather than a one-off analytical exercise. In December 2024, UN Global Pulse and Globe Telecom, one of the Philippines’ largest mobile network operators, formalized a landmark evergreen data-sharing agreement.

This agreement enables daily refreshed access to anonymized and aggregated data covering over **50 million subscribers**, representing approximately half of the country’s mobile users. Supported by robust privacy and data protection safe-

29.5
million

impacted where the solution was applied

71%

UNOSAT Analysts
trained to use the DISHA AI-assisted
Damage Assessment solution

6

Live Disaster
Activations

OPERATIONALIZING RESPONSIBLE AI FOR FASTER, SCALABLE DISASTER DAMAGE ASSESSMENT

#DATA

#DIGITAL

#INNOVATION

#DISHA

Across humanitarian crises, rapid damage assessments are among the most vital inputs for effective decision-making. Governments and humanitarian actors depend on timely data to prioritize life-saving responses, plan long-term recovery and strategically allocate scarce resources.

However, traditional approaches remain constrained by human capacity. Manual analysis of high-resolution satellite imagery, while accurate, is inherently slow, often taking 10–14 days for large or complex disasters. In fast-moving emergencies, this delay creates a critical bottleneck, forcing responders to choose between speed, geographic coverage and analytical depth. As climate-driven disasters intensify in both frequency and scale, the global demand for

these essential insights consistently exceeds available human analytical capacity.

Empirical testing of AI-assisted damage assessment in 2024 demonstrated a clear opportunity to resolve these traditional trade-offs. Across nine recent disaster events, AI-supported workflows reduced the time required to produce initial damage assessments by sixfold and expanded the total area analysed by a factor of seven compared to fully manual approaches. These results provided early quantitative evidence that AI, when used responsibly and with human oversight, could significantly enhance humanitarian situational awareness at scale.

UNOSAT (UNITAR's Operational Satellite Applications Programme) sits at the centre of this evolution. As a trusted global provider of satellite-derived products, **UNOSAT translates complex geospatial data into actionable insights for humanitarian actors worldwide.** However, the escalating scale and frequency of modern disasters have placed immense strain on manual workflows. This pressure increasingly limits how quickly and comprehensively damage assessments can be delivered.

Announced at the **Summit of the Future** in 2024, DISHA's AI-assisted Damage Assessment solution was developed in close collaboration between UN Global Pulse, Google Research and UNOSAT. This initiative addresses the analytical supply-demand gap by integrating AI-assisted analysis of satellite imagery directly into UNOSAT's emergency response workflows.

Crucially, the solution seeks to save time by **rapidly identifying potentially damaged structures, while expert validation, quality assurance and contextual interpretation remain firmly in human hands.** This design reflects DISHA's commitment to responsible AI, prioritizing trust, accountability and operational relevance alongside speed and scale.

The past year marked the transition from pilot

testing to operational use. The solution was activated operationally across **six live disaster events**, spanning earthquakes, floods, cyclones and hurricanes in Asia, the Caribbean and Africa, affecting an estimated **29.5 million people.**

During Hurricane Melissa, AI-assisted damage assessments were applied to high-quality optical imagery and achieved approximately **80% accuracy.** As a result, UNOSAT published the DISHA-generated outputs through its standard dissemination channels, including Humanitarian Data Exchange (HDX) and ReliefWeb – an important milestone signalling both technical maturity and institutional trust.

For other activations, **the solution generated AI-derived building footprints that accelerated analysts' broader workflows and supported rapid situational understanding,** even where imagery quality or damage distribution limited full damage classification. The use of the highly reliable Open Buildings model developed by Google Research as a part of the DISHA partnership transformed the building footprints identification step of the damage assessment workflow, saving UNOSAT analysts weeks of painstaking work.

Operational use in 2025 confirmed that, once suitable satellite imagery is available, **AI-assist-**

ed workflows can produce initial results within 1–2 days, compared to up to two weeks for fully manual processes. These gains are particularly valuable for early response planning, where directional insights, rather than perfect precision, can materially improve decision-making.

In 2025, a major focus was scaling internal adoption to drive efficiency in line with the UN80 vision. Through structured training and shadowing sessions, 71% of UNOSAT analysts were onboarded to the solution. This initiative empowered experienced analysts to develop hands-on skills in working with model-generated outputs, enabling more autonomous use and reducing reliance on ad hoc technical support.

While the DISHA Damage Assessment solution is currently centred on supporting UNOSAT operations, **DISHA is actively working to broaden the access to the solution by creating a non-expert-friendly user interface, establishing scalable legal agreement frameworks and publishing performance benchmarks.** These efforts will provide the foundation for responsible adoption by a wider range of humanitarian actors.

Taken together, the progress achieved in 2025 demonstrates not only technical feasibility, but meaningful institutional learning and change. By successfully **operationalizing ethical, human-centred AI at scale, we have shown that it is possible to strengthen humanitarian response** in moments when time and accuracy matter most.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Analysts moved from conceptual exposure to practical application of AI-assisted damage assessment solution in live response contexts. Training and deployments have clarified exactly where AI adds the most value, particularly in producing rapid directional insights, while reinforcing the indispensable role of expert human judgment. As noted by a UNOSAT specialist, the solution enables **“greater levels of accuracy and speed,”** without undermining analytical standards. Lars Bromley, Specialist at the United Nations Institute for Training and Research – UNOSAT).

Structural

In 2025, the solution transitioned from being tested on past disaster data to being repeatedly applied by UNOSAT during live disaster activations. The establishment of standardized workflows, analyst training and legal agreements enabled the solution's availability during disaster activations. Importantly, AI-assisted outputs could be put through UNOSAT's existing governance and quality assurance processes once performance thresholds were met, **aligning innovation with accountability.**

Behavioural

A measurable shift is emerging in analyst practice. **Rather than conducting end-to-end manual assessments, analysts increasingly use AI outputs for first-pass analysis and focus their expertise on validation, interpretation and synthesis.** Live deployments, especially during Hurricane Melissa, have helped to build confidence in the solution and demonstrated tangible efficiency gains. **AI-assisted analysis is increasingly becoming a routine component of UNOSAT's damage assessment toolkit.**

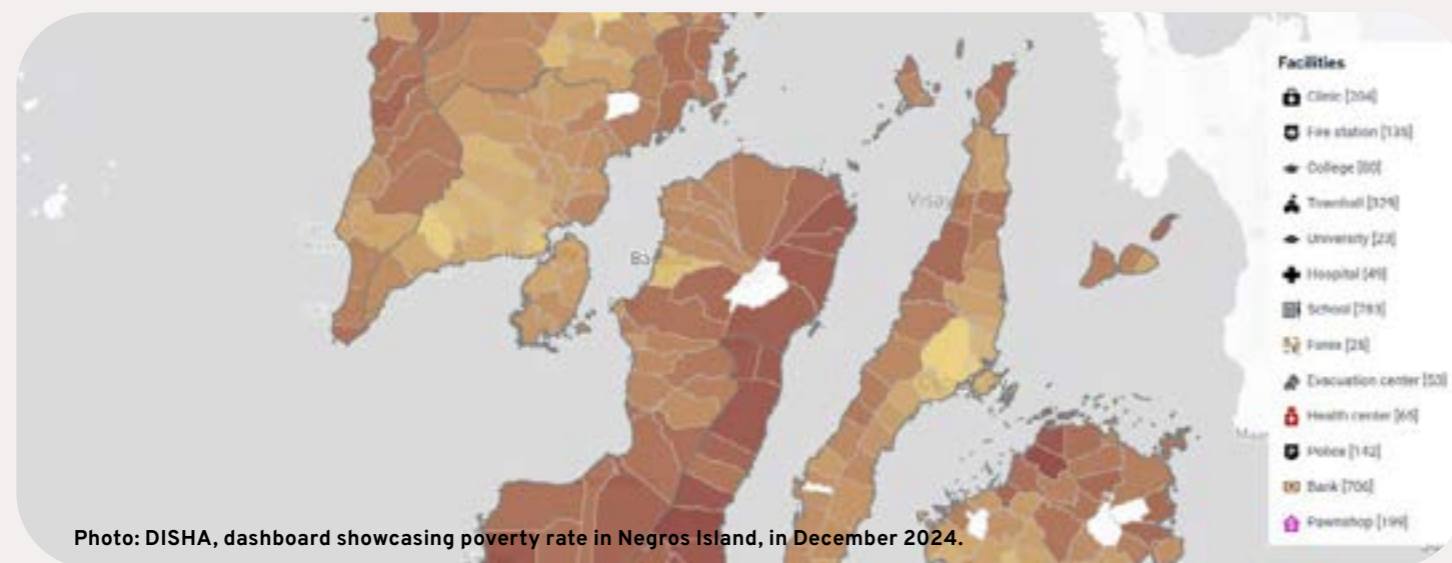


Photo: DISHA, dashboard showcasing poverty rate in Negros Island, in December 2024.

60

Displacement Settlements

to be mapped by mid-2026

3

Partners

including UNHCR, UNOSAT and Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC)



SCALING PROVEN AI FOR REFUGEE SHELTER MAPPING

#DATA

#DIGITAL

#INNOVATION

#DISHA

Accurate, up-to-date information on shelter locations is a foundational requirement for effective humanitarian planning, service delivery and protection in displacement settings. **However, in many refugee and displacement settlements, shelter maps remain outdated or incomplete.** This gap reflects not a lack of importance, but to the operational reality that settlement environments are highly dynamic and heterogeneous. Shelters are often informal, densely packed and subject to frequent change due to population movements, weather events or evolving camp layouts.

Conventional shelter mapping approaches rely heavily on large-scale manual digitization of satellite imagery. This process is time-intensive, costly and difficult to repeat at the frequency required to remain operationally relevant in fast-changing environments. These characteristics make it practically impossible to keep settlement maps up-to-date.

As a result, humanitarian actors face persistent information gaps that limit their ability to plan and respond effectively, particularly given that comprehensive global shelter mapping exercises have not been conducted for several years.

The Refugee Shelter Mapping solution was developed in direct response to this pressing need. Rather than starting from scratch, the solution scales proven capabilities from DISHA's existing Damage Assessment solution. In particular, it repurposes early-stage components of the damage assessment workflow, most notably AI-assisted building footprint detection from high-resolution satellite imagery powered by the Open Building model developed by Google Research, and applies it to the distinct operational challenge of mapping refugee and displacement shelters.

This approach reflects DISHA's broader strategy of scaling impact by transferring validated analytical methods across humanitarian use cases, while maintaining human validation and oversight.

The solution aims to shift shelter mapping from infrequent, labor-intensive exercises to a regular, scalable and cost-effective model. By combining AI-assisted analysis with structured human validation and humanitarians-led interpretation, the solution delivers timely, high-quality settlement data that is fit for operational decision-making.

By mid-2026, the solution is expected to deliver AI-assisted shelter mapping for approximately 60 refugee and displacement settlements globally, subject to satellite image availability and operational priorities. In 2025, the initiative progressed from conceptual exploration into operational readiness. Through close co-design with UNHCR's Geographics Information System (GIS) and analytical teams, the scope, objectives and quality requirements were defined to ensure alignment with UNHCR workflows and decision-making needs.

Technically, the work validated that building footprint detection models originally developed for damage assessment could be successfully adapted to diverse settlement contexts, including informal and rapidly changing environments. This included refining workflows to support more frequent updates rather than one-off mapping exercises, confirming both technical feasibility and operational relevance. In parallel, a global delivery pipeline was established to define processes for settlement selection, satellite image acquisition, AI processing and human validation. **This pipeline positions the solution for global scale-up in subsequent phases.**

Over the longer-term, the ambition is for Refugee Shelter Mapping to become a trusted and regularly used DISHA product, alongside established solutions such as Damage Assessment. **The solution has the potential to transform how settle-**

ment data is produced and maintained by demonstrating quality, operational value, scalability and ethical use of AI, supporting UNHCR and other humanitarian actors with timely, evidence-based insights into some of the world's most complex displacement contexts.



Photo: UNHCR, Aerial view of Niger



How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

The initiative strengthened shared understanding across UN Global Pulse, UNOSAT and UNHCR of how validated AI-assisted analytical methods can be responsibly transferred across humanitarian use cases. **This reinforced DISHA's approach to scaling. Rather than developing bespoke tools for each challenge, proven analytical capabilities can be adapted to new contexts, provided that quality thresholds, human oversight and partner ownership are maintained.** Learning in 2025 focused on feasibility, data quality and suitability for humanitarian operations, laying the foundation for future deployment.

Structural

The project established a formal collaboration and delivery framework between the partner organizations, supported by Joint Data Center on Forced Displacement (JDC). While no new operational systems were institutionalized in 2025, this framework created the enabling conditions for future integration into routine humanitarian processes.

Behavioural

As the initiative remains in its early stages, changes in routine practice are expected once shelter mapping outputs are delivered at scale and actively used by UNHCR teams and humanitarian partners in operational contexts.

Photo: UNHCR, Aerial view of Niger

86

Participants

attended a two-day workshop in Jakarta



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

13

Policy Recommendations

resulted from the two-day workshops consulting government ministries/agencies and academic institutions

19

Stakeholders Consulted*

**from government ministries/agencies and academic institution including: Ministry of National Development Planning, National Research and Innovation Agency, Ministry of Agrarian Affairs and Spatial Planning, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Transportation, Geospatial Information Agency, Ministry of Public Works, Coordinating Ministry for Political and Security Affairs, Hasanuddin University, Central Bureau of Statistics, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Transportation Policy Agency, The Pemali Juana River Basin (Ministry of Public Works), Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, North Coast Management Authority/Java North Coast Sea, Indonesian Agency for Meteorological, Climatological, and Geophysics, Ministry of Tourism.*

SUPPORTING THE INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL SEA LEVEL RISE POLICY

#DATA

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#DIGITAL

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation, sits on the frontlines of climate change. With more than 17,000 islands and extensive low-lying coastlines, the impacts of sea level rise are no longer abstract projections but lived realities for millions of Indonesians. Scientific and economic evidence underscores the scale of the challenge: climate change is projected to cost Indonesia approximately USD 8.1 billion, equivalent to 1.4% of its current GDP, by 2050.

Even a modest sea level rise of 1 meter could **inundate 13,800 kilometers of coastline, displace an estimated 2.8 million people**, and generate annual economic losses of **up to USD 1.5 billion**. These risks are compounded by rapid urbanization in coastal zones, socioeconomic

vulnerabilities in small island and fishing communities, and the complexity of governing climate adaptation across multiple sectors and levels of government.

Building on an **earlier collaboration** with the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) on sea level rise data and digital innovation, the United Nations Global Pulse Asia Pacific Hub partnered with the Government of Indonesia to support the formulation of a National Sea Level Rise Policy. This policy is envisioned as a critical structural mechanism to enable coherent, evidence-based planning and response to sea level rise at the national level.

The initiative aims to strengthen shared under-

Illustration: UN Global Pulse



standing across institutions of sea level rise as a systemic, long-term risk with interlinked environmental, social, economic, and governance dimensions. It also primarily aims to inform and refine a national White Paper on sea level rise that can translate evidence and foresight into coordinated policy actions. And by enabling more anticipatory, collaborative, and data-driven decision-making across ministries and levels of government, the initiative supports Indonesia in acting early rather than reacting.

In 2025, UN Global Pulse supported the Government of Indonesia through a series of national-level workshops designed to inform the development of the sea level rise policy. These workshops were co-organised with the Coordinating Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development and convened a broad range of stakeholders from UN agencies, government agencies, research institutions, and universities.

A defining feature of this engagement was the application of strategic foresight as a policy innovation tool. During the workshops, participants worked through multiple future scenarios of sea level rise, examining drivers, impacts, and policy implications

across key domains including coastal protection, community adaptation, socioeconomic development, and governance. This scenario-based approach enabled participants to move beyond sectoral silos and short-term planning horizons, encouraging more integrated and forward-looking policy thinking.

The milestone culminated in a dedicated high-level session with senior government officials, including the Deputy for Coordination of Regional Development Equity, Agrarian Affairs, and Spatial Planning at the Coordinating Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development. This session created a bridge between technical deliberations and executive-level decision-making, reinforcing political ownership of the policy agenda.

Indonesia's experience demonstrates that sea level rise is a systemic, long-term national development risk that cannot be addressed through isolated sectoral actions. The milestone highlights the value of strategic foresight in helping policymakers navigate uncertainty, align priorities across ministries, and design more resilient, forward-looking responses. Strong cross-sector and cross-level coordination,

underpinned by robust data and meaningful community engagement, emerged as essential enablers of effective adaptation. Together, these insights position the National Sea Level Rise Policy and White Paper as pivotal tools for strengthening anticipatory governance and advancing Indonesia's leadership on climate resilience in the Asia Pacific.

Looking ahead, Indonesia's National Sea Level Rise Policy lays the groundwork for long-term, anticipatory governance that aligns climate resilience with sustainable development. By integrating data, strategic foresight, and cross-sector collaboration, the initiative advances the SDGs, particularly climate action, resilient infrastructure, and inclusive communities, while operationalizing the UN 2.0 agenda and scaling the Quintet of Change in practice.

Most importantly, it strengthens institutions and systems to plan beyond short-term horizons, enabling future generations to inherit governance frameworks that protect lives, livelihoods, and the planet in the face of rising seas.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

The workshops deepened stakeholders' understanding of sea level rise as a multifaceted risk and clarified the distinct yet interdependent roles of different institutions. The use of strategic foresight and policy blueprint tools introduced new ways of working, increasing awareness of innovation methods that can be applied to other complex policy challenges in Indonesia.

Structural

Insights generated through the workshops are feeding directly into the refinement of a national White Paper on sea level rise. The White Paper represents a concrete opportunity to convert shared understanding into actionable policy frameworks, coordination mechanisms, and strategic priorities.

Behavioural

The White Paper is expected to serve as a reference point for future decisions and investments, guiding ministries toward more anticipatory, coordinated, and evidence-based action.

2

Cities

Jinja and Fort Portal – Uganda’s newly designated cities serving as pilot sites for applied data solutions

9

Tourism Sites

engaged in Tourism Activity Tracker pilots (5 in Fort Portal, 4 in Jinja)

12,600

Visitor Reviews Analysed

TripAdvisor data spanning 2007–2025, capturing perspectives from over 130 countries.

330

Survey Respondents

collected across the Fort Portal City Marathon (125) and Makerere Run (204).

BUILDING DATA SYSTEMS FOR UGANDA’S NEW CITIES

#DATA

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#DIGITAL

#AFRICA

Uganda created ten new cities in recent years, upgrading towns now home to hundreds of thousands of residents each – people expecting better services, smarter planning, and economic growth. Uganda’s newly developed National Data Strategy articulates an ambitious vision for evidence-based governance. But operationalizing that vision at the city level – building the infrastructure to collect, govern, and use data locally – remains a work in progress.

DataCities Uganda, a collaboration among UN Global Pulse Uganda, Sunbird AI, and ToroDev, set out to strengthen data infrastructure, starting with Jinja and Fort Portal. Initiated in October

2023, the project moved from diagnostics in 2024 to piloting applied solutions in 2025, with tourism as the proving ground.

A Tourism Activity Tracker deployed across nine sites encountered immediate obstacles: connectivity gaps, inconsistent record-keeping, and operators hesitant to share what they considered commercially sensitive data. The tool was redesigned, shifting from real-time digital entry to scanning paper registers via Optical Character Recognition. What looked like a setback became a lesson: solutions that don’t align with existing practices don’t get adopted.



Photo: UN Global Pulse Africa

Photo: Unsplash/Yoel Winkler

Parallel efforts opened other windows. UN Global Pulse analysed 12,600 visitor reviews – TripAdvisor data spanning 2007–2025 (8,653 for Jinja, 3,987 for Fort Portal), capturing perspectives from over 130 countries for Jinja and 92 for Fort Portal. A Tourism Data Story Bank catalogued and geolocated assets, later expanding through the Uganda Tourism Board to cover 10 cities and 35 districts.

The project also tested data-driven event planning. A socio-economic assessment of the Fort Portal City Marathon – 780 attendees, 125 surveyed – combined participant feedback with expenditure analysis. A perception survey at the Makerere Run captured 204 responses on logistics and services.

City officials saw visitor perceptions systematically documented for the first time. Project leads noted that officials were especially interested in “seeing what people actually think about our city and the services it offers.”

But the deeper shift was structural. UN Global Pulse supported the co-creation of five-year Strategic Plans for Statistics – mandatory instruments that had never received this level of participatory input. Jinja's plan was formally approved by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics. Fort Portal's remained in progress at year-end.

The process surfaced questions that don't arise until someone tries to use the data. As one project lead observed, these needs “emerged organically once cities started asking who updates the data, how often, and who is responsible.”

The approach is designed to travel. Teams in Tanzania, Kenya, and Sierra Leone are exploring whether the model transfers – evidence that national data strategies can be operationalised locally, one city at a time.



Photo: UN Global Pulse Africa

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

City authorities gained a new understanding of how perception data, visitor feedback, and expenditure patterns can inform planning. The Fort Portal Marathon and Makerere Run surveys showed stakeholders what visitors actually think – evidence that challenged assumptions. The process also identified gaps: partners noted the absence of localized social accounting matrices needed for robust subnational impact analysis.

Structural

Five-year Strategic Plans for Statistics now provide institutional frameworks for how data is generated, shared, and used across city departments. Piloting the Tourism Activity Tracker and advancing the Tourism Data Story Bank catalysed governance discussions around data ownership, update responsibilities, and sustainability.

Behavioural

City officials are increasingly open to systematic data collection to assess performance, identify gaps, and inform planning. Project leads described this as a “data journey with the cities” – iterative experimentation rather than a one-off deployment.

Photo: UN Global Pulse Africa

MOMENTUM FOR TRANSFORMATION

UN 2.0 Transformation Toolkit

DIGITAL

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

DATA

INNOVATION

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

DATA

Collecting data from more diverse sources and improving how we govern, handle and use it for better insights and action.

1

Scoping Report Produced

that includes UN Global Pulse's People&Planet Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) Assessment Framework that embeds equity, accessibility, and ecological considerations into future digital climate tools.

14

Pacific Island Countries and Territories

assessed for the scoping report including Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FMS), Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu

23

Stakeholders Engaged

at regional and local levels through interviews and discussions including Australia (DFAT), Indonesia (IndoAid), New Zealand, Ireland, European Union (EU), Canada, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), Pacific Community (SPC), Asian Development Bank (ADB), RIMES (Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System), UN Multi-Country Office (Micronesia), UNDP, UNOPS, ESCAP, UNDRR, Pacific Islands Universities Research Network (PIURN), Papua New Guinea University of Technology, University of Melbourne, UN Resident Coordinator Office - Papua New Guinea, MET (Meteorology Office, Timor-Leste), Civil Protection Authority (Timor-Leste), Climate Adaptation Authority (Timor-Leste), Ministry of Planning and Strategic Investment (Timor-Leste), Office of the President, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Kiribati)



Photo: Unsplash/ Bob Brewer

PATHWAYS TO CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN PACIFIC ISLAND NATIONS

#BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

#DATA

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

Pacific Island countries are experiencing increasingly severe and immediate impacts from sea level rise, affecting coastal settlements, critical infrastructure, livelihoods and long-term development prospects. While the region has benefited from substantial investments in disaster risk reduction, monitoring systems and climate science, challenges persist in translating available data into anticipatory planning, prioritised adaptation choices, and investment-ready decisions.

Gaps remain in integrating climate, geospatial, and socio-economic data, in institutional capacity to use such data for forward-looking planning, and in the availability of practical decision-support tools aligned with national development and

adaptation priorities. As a result, sea level rise is often addressed reactively rather than systematically embedded in planning, budgeting, and policy processes.

In 2025, with support from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific and Finland hubs initiated a regional scoping exercise across **14 Pacific Island countries and territories**. The aim was to explore how a data-driven sea level rise decision-support approach, previously piloted in Indonesia, could be adapted to Pacific contexts.

Photo: Unsplash/ Nicolas Weldingh

The assessment examined institutional readiness, data ecosystems, stakeholder priorities and governance conditions relevant to sea level rise adaptation planning. Throughout the year, UN Global Pulse conducted desk reviews and held consultations and expert interviews with stakeholders, including UN agencies, national and local government bodies, academia and multilateral organizations. This helped build a clearer understanding of both regional and country-specific contexts, including shared challenges and opportunities.

A central outcome was the identification of different 'readiness clusters', recognising that Pacific Island countries and territories vary significantly in exposure, capacity and interest in adopting new digital technologies and tools. The scoping exercise also supported the development of the **People&Planet GEDSI Assessment Framework**, ensuring that equity, accessibility and ecological considerations are embedded into future tools from the outset. Through clear recommendations and implementation pathways, this activity provided a practical basis for next-step planning, future piloting and resource mobilization.

The scoping resulted in the publication of **Turning the Tide: Strengthening Climate Resilience in Pacific Nations Through the Use of Data, AI, and Technological Innovation – Scoping Report (2025)**. The report highlights how digital decision-support tools, when grounded in government priorities, inclusive design principles, and sustainable data pipelines, could strengthen climate adaptation planning in the Pacific. It also emphasizes the importance of aligning with existing national systems, regional institutions, and coordination mechanisms, rather than introducing duplicative platforms.

As sea level rise continues to reshape development realities across the Pacific, this scoping exercise provides a strategic foundation for responsible and inclusive innovation. UN Global Pulse is helping lay the groundwork for scalable, sustainable approaches that advance the UN 2.0 agenda by strengthening institutional capacity to deliver more resilient outcomes, particularly for communities on the frontlines of climate change.



Photo: Unsplash/ Marthn Luther

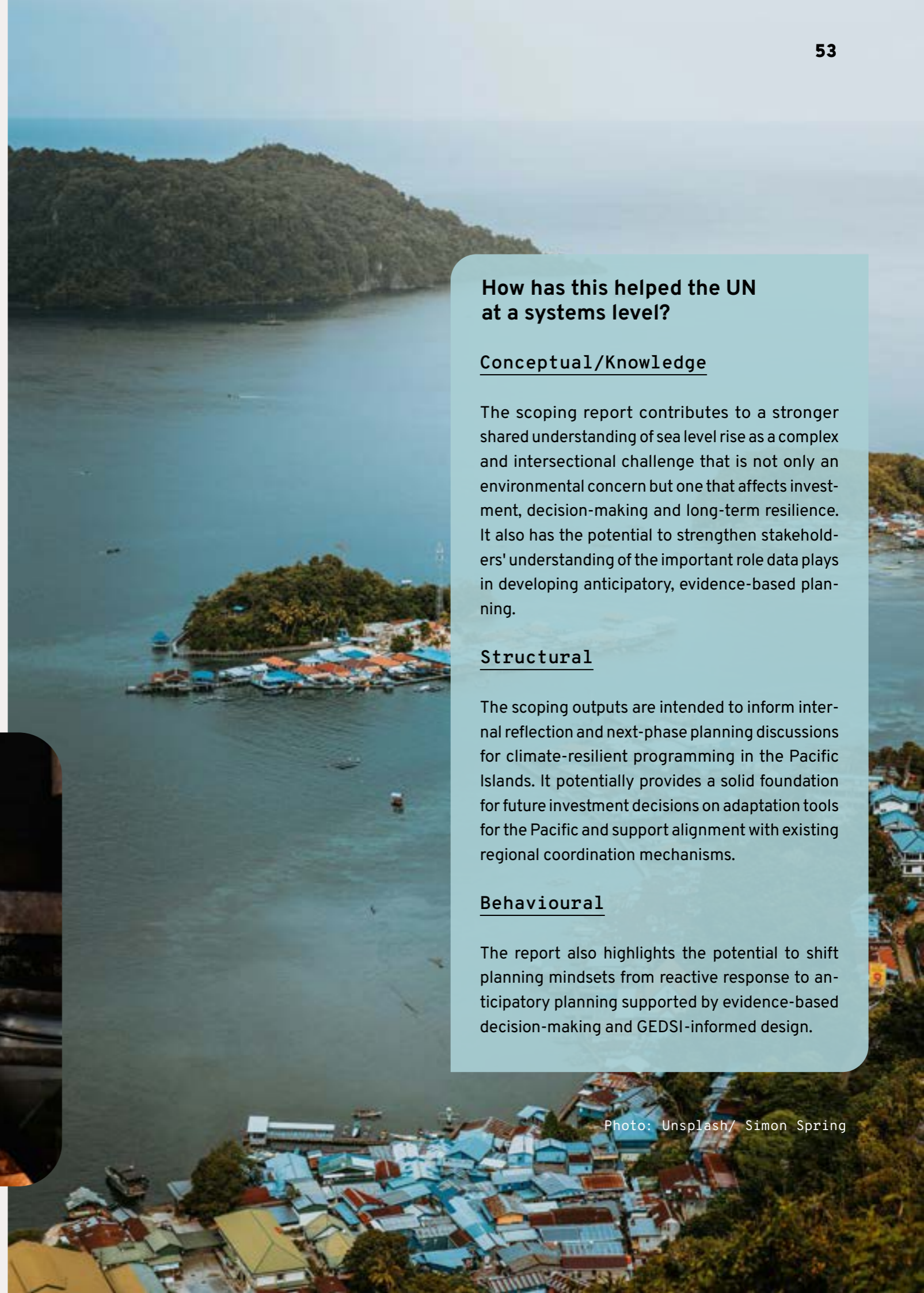


Photo: Unsplash/ Simon Spring

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

The scoping report contributes to a stronger shared understanding of sea level rise as a complex and intersectional challenge that is not only an environmental concern but one that affects investment, decision-making and long-term resilience. It also has the potential to strengthen stakeholders' understanding of the important role data plays in developing anticipatory, evidence-based planning.

Structural

The scoping outputs are intended to inform internal reflection and next-phase planning discussions for climate-resilient programming in the Pacific Islands. It potentially provides a solid foundation for future investment decisions on adaptation tools for the Pacific and support alignment with existing regional coordination mechanisms.

Behavioural

The report also highlights the potential to shift planning mindsets from reactive response to anticipatory planning supported by evidence-based decision-making and GEDSI-informed design.

4

Datasets Integrated

Socioeconomic Survey Data, Basic Education Data, Health Infrastructure Data and Spatial Flood Projections

25

Stakeholders Consulted

from across various ministries and agencies including: the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning, the Indonesian Department of Home Affairs, SKALA project, and West Nusa Tenggara provincial government

3

Policy Briefs

prepared for the Government of Indonesia



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

INTEGRATING A CLIMATE LENS INTO BASIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN WEST NUSA TENGGARA

#DIGITAL

#DATA

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

The Government of Indonesia has made meaningful progress in reducing its vulnerability to climate change and adapting to future impacts through improved planning, enhanced resource management, and stronger coordination. However, gaps remain in translating national level policies and expertise at local government levels and local action plans.

UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific has worked in close partnership with the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) to support the Government of Indonesia in addressing these challenges.

Through this collaboration, an innovative data-driven solution was co-created to help government stakeholders identify areas requiring targeted interventions for sea level rise. This partnership demonstrated how data analytics and visualization can strengthen evidence-based planning, and highlighting how embedding such approaches at the subnational levels can support the way future risks are anticipated and managed.

In 2025, UN Global Pulse expanded this work through collaboration with the Synergy and Collaboration for Basic Services (SKALA) Programme. This programme, supported by the Government of Australia, promotes locally driven

Photo: Flickr/CGIAR

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The project raised awareness of sea level rise and generated new, location-specific knowledge about its potential impacts in West Nusa Tenggara. The outputs helped provincial stakeholders better understand climate risks in relation to infrastructure resilience and service delivery, providing critical input for building smarter and more adaptive community services. Among collaborating stakeholders, the project also broadened mindsets on digital innovation, demonstrating how integrating advanced analytics into existing planning processes can improve policy and decision-making.

Structural

The sea level rise analysis produced through this project is now being used by government stakeholders to inform planning across government agencies at the regional level. By embedding cli-

mate risk analysis into planning tools, the project contributed to more coordinated, data-driven, and evidence-based institutional processes, strengthening the foundation for climate-resilient service delivery.

Behavioural

The project influenced how stakeholders perceive sea level rise and the role of innovation in development planning. Stakeholders showed increased recognition of the urgency of sea level rise for Indonesia, particularly at the subnational level where basic services are delivered. At the same time, the use of innovative tools encouraged more creative ways of working and openness to different perspectives. Stakeholders increasingly viewed sea level rise not only as an environmental issue, but as a multifaceted development challenge, and gained practical tools to plan for and respond to it.

solutions to strengthen subnational governance and inclusive service delivery in vulnerable regions. Building on the solution developed with Bappenas, a pilot was launched in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) to evaluate how the data-driven tool can support the integration of sea level rise risk into basic service planning.

By combining spatial climate projections with Regsosek (Socioeconomic Registry) and other administrative datasets, the pilot produced the first integrated vulnerability analysis focused on education, health, and social services in coastal areas. This pilot provided provincial and district governments strong evidence on how climate data can be used for more than environmental analysis, but also for planning adaptive basic services.

Key outputs from the collaboration include an interactive dashboard, a narrative-based data story, and a draft policy brief designed to enhance local decision-makers' understanding of sea level rise risks and their implications for service delivery and poverty reduction. The success of the NTB pilot provided a strong proof of concept for scaling this approach to other SKALA-supported provinces.

The methodology applied through the SKALA collaboration—combining spatial climate projects with socioeconomic data and translating them into accessible dashboards and rich data stories—demonstrates clear value for informing provincial planning processes.

By leveraging UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific's capabilities in data innovation, foresight, and systems thinking, this initiative contributes to the SDGs and UN 2.0 agenda by scaling innovations that help government institutions anticipate risk, allocate resources more effectively, and deliver more resilient public services for the most vulnerable communities impacted by climate change.



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

UN 2.0 Transformation Toolkit

DIGITAL

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

DATA

INNOVATION

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

DIGITAL

Shifting to digitally-enabled solutions that improve connectivity, service delivery, collaboration and decision-making.

8

Partners Engaged

From UN agencies and the national and state governments including: the National Government of the Federated States of Micronesia, State Governments of Pohnpei, Yap, Chuuk, and Kosrae, UN Multi-Country Coordinator Office (MCO), UN ESCAP, UNOPS

1

Scoping Report

Produced with practical guidelines for capability building and recommendations for SDGs localization

1

Prototype Dashboard Developed

LOCALIZING THE SDGS IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

#DIGITAL

#DATA

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a nation of small island developing states spread over 600 islands in the North Pacific. It is home to an estimated **120,000 people** concentrated across the nation's four main states: Yap, Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae. FSM faces complex intersectional challenges, including geographic dispersion, environmental vulnerability, and limited resources, which present obstacles to localizing global commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

A notable barrier faced by many Pacific Island nations is the limited availability of data; yet, reliable and accessible data is essential for developing interventions that align with local needs. With the SDGs 2030 target looming ever closer,

it is imperative that accessible data is available to ensure meaningful impact.

Expanding on the critical groundwork established in 2024, UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific continued its year-long collaboration with the FSM national and state governments, ESCAP, UNOPS, and the UN Multi-Country Coordinator Office (UNMCO) for FSM, to support the localization of the SDGs. This initiative set out to examine potential innovative solutions, including exploring ways to increase the quality, efficiency, and accessibility of local SDG data collection and reporting. In doing so, it aims to strengthen local ownership of the goals and support more informed policy and programme design.



Photo: UN in Micronesia / Carlota Nunez

Photo: UN in Micronesia



Photos: UN in Micronesia

In 2025, the initiative focused on better understanding the local context and testing practical technology-driven solutions. UN Global Pulse conducted in-depth research into FSM's SDG data and reporting needs, including a field mission to engage various stakeholders on the ground. The results fed into a prototype dashboard that was developed using a co-design approach. The dashboard allows for collating, updating and communicating national-level SDGs data from multiple sources, with a key feature being its modular design which makes it easier for new datasets to be added as needs evolve, and creates flexibility for its users.

In the future, this prototype can be scaled for more reporting parameters and users within FSM, such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), but it can also be applied to other Pacific Islands nations.

By strengthening data ecosystems, building institutional capacity, and embedding innovation with our locally-based partners, this initiative contributes to more inclusive, evidence-based decision-making. Over time, these strengthened systems can enable institutions to adapt more effectively to emerging challenges, support accountability, and ensure that future generations benefit from policies grounded in locally-owned data that speaks to their needs.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

This initiative provided national and state government stakeholders with a better awareness of the SDGs and how they can be localized within the nation's policies and programs. All partners and stakeholders were exposed to the UN 2.0 capabilities, particularly data innovation and digital solutions, which can enhance their work and impact.

Structural

Through a collaborative governance arrangement with government partners and UN agencies, the initiative fostered a shared understanding of local needs and barriers to SDG localization in FSM. It also identified opportunities to streamline country-level data collection and reporting, focusing on digital and innovative tools to manage multi-agency inputs and diverse local priorities.

Behavioural

Following delivery of the prototype, UN agencies and government partners are exploring how innovation capabilities—such as a digital dashboard—can be integrated into programs and policies to better localize the SDGs and improve outcomes for communities and the environment in FSM.

360

Stakeholders Engaged

Across Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo (POATE) 2025 (300 participants) and the Future of Tourism 2040 national foresight workshop (60 stakeholders).

2780

Visitor Reviews Analysed

TripAdvisor data for Kasese District spanning 2010-2025, reflecting perspectives from over 92 countries.

14

Hotels

are pilot testing privacy-preserving data sharing in Kasese District.

313

Surveys Conducted

Elgon Half Marathon socio-economic impact assessment (171 runners and 142 local businesses interviewed).

2

Regions

Rwenzori and Busoga, focal areas for district and regional-level tourism data and digital innovation.

ADVANCING UGANDA'S TOURISM THROUGH DATA AND DIGITAL INNOVATION

#DIGITAL

#DATA

#INNOVATION

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#AFRICA

In 2024, Uganda's tourism sector earned USD 1.28 billion – about 26% surge from the previous year – and supported over 800,000 jobs. International arrivals reached nearly 1.4 million. CNN, National Geographic, The New York Times and Lonely Planet have all listed Uganda as a top destination. Building on this success, the government has designated tourism as one of their primary sectors to focus on in its strategy to grow the economy by 2040.

But ambition alone doesn't close the gap between where the sector is and where it needs to be to support the country's economic vision. **The gaps are bridged through reliable, consistent data.**

In January 2025, UN Global Pulse launched a two-year initiative to build on this. Working with national and local government teams, private-sector operators, resident communities and technology providers, the initiative approached Uganda as a testbed for data and digitally enabled tourism planning, generating lessons that informed a scalable model across East Africa.

The initiative operates on two tracks. **The first focuses on data foundations:** mapping who collects data across the tourism value chain, building platforms to improve data availability and coordination and piloting approaches that make sharing viable even when commercial sen-

sitivities are involved. In Kasese District, 14 hotels are participating in a privacy-preserving, data-sharing pilot designed to surface aggregated occupancy insights without exposing competitive information. Behavioural barrier mapping will accompany the pilot, surfacing trust, incentives and governance dynamics that no technical solution alone could resolve.

The second track explores digital innovation. At the 2025 Pearl of Africa Tourism Expo (POATE), Uganda's premier tourism trade expo, UN Global Pulse demonstrated practical applications of data for tourism planning: future scenario narratives, interactive dashboards, tourism maps and AI-enabled tools. Over three days, approximately 300 participants – **policymakers, tourism authorities, private-sector operators and innovators – engaged through guided interactions and targeted discussions.**

Similarly, another substantive policy engagement to note was when UN Global Pulse co-hosted a national foresight workshop with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities in Jinja, **convening 60 stakeholders from the central government, districts, the private sector and academia.** The focus of the session was on developing a shared vision for Uganda's tourism sector toward 2040. Outputs included a national vision statement, priority transformation pathways and flagship initiatives at subnational, national and regional levels.

Parallel work tested how data can inform specific decisions. A socio-economic impact assessment of the Elgon Half Marathon, conducted with UNDP and local event organisers, surveyed 171 runners and 142 local businesses to understand visitor profiles, spending patterns and effects on the local economy. Results are still undergoing partner validation, but the process generated methodological insights that are now informing discussions on future, larger-scale assessments.

Analysis of nearly 2,800 TripAdvisor reviews for Kasese District demonstrated how user-generated content can complement traditional data sources, offering evidence of visitor perceptions and service quality that official systems don't capture. The use of geospatial tools also extended the project's reach. Building on DataCities' work, the team delivered a storymap for the Rwenzori region showcasing tourism attractions – a practical resource that sparked interest in similar applications in Kasese and beyond.

Behavioural change remains early. But participation in pilots, foresight exercises and applied assessments signal growing openness to experimentation and increasingly recognises **that trust-building and iterative learning matter as much as technical capability.**



Photo: Rwenzori / Wikimedia Commons

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Partners gained exposure to analytical approaches they had not previously encountered – socio-economic impact assessment, geospatial visualisation, user-generated data analysis and privacy-preserving data sharing. Engagements at POATE 2025 and the Future of Tourism 2040 workshop clarified how data, AI and digital tools can support tourism planning across governance levels. Stakeholders developed greater familiarity with process requirements – data governance, trust, coordination, readiness – needed to translate digital concepts into actionable insights.

Structural

The Future of Tourism 2040 workshop established shared reference points intended to inform future planning instruments, including updates to the national Tourism Master Plan. Pilot activities surfaced concrete governance, incentives and coordination considerations relevant to formalizing data-sharing arrangements between public and private actors.

Behavioural

Participation in pilots and foresight exercises indicated growing stakeholder openness to experimenting with data-driven approaches and using new evidence sources to assess performance. Project engagements highlighted increasing recognition that trust-building, preparation and iterative learning are key enablers of sustained collaboration.

Photo: MoAfrica



INNOVATION

Generating, testing and scaling up novel ideas that bring sustainable benefits for people and planet.

5

Day Capacity Building Workshop

hosted in Jakarta

4

Capabilities and Methodologies

introduced to the BIL team during the workshop including: strategic foresight, data innovation, service design, and policy blueprinting.

3

Published Blogs



Click to Read More:
Bhutan Innovation Lab
Stories



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE AND CAPACITY WITH THE BHUTAN INNOVATION LAB

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#DATA

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

Best known for its picturesque mountain landscapes and unique philosophy of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan is also the world's smallest land-locked developing country—one that is rapidly changing and has ambitious goals for its future. In 2023, Bhutan reached a major milestone by graduating from Least Developed Country status, despite facing many ongoing development challenges. While its land-locked status remains its biggest issue, Bhutan also faces challenges with climate change, food security, rising youth unemployment, and emigration of the working population.

Responding to these complex and interconnected challenges requires agility and innovation, which is why the Bhutan Innovation Lab (BIL) was established by the Royal Government of Bhutan in 2024. Anchored in the Prime Minister's Office and in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the lab aims to strengthen Bhutan's policy infrastructure and foster an ecosystem that is resilient, future-ready, and capable of driving transformative change. Since its establishment, the lab has successfully engaged in policy initiatives, but they recognized a need to expand their knowledge and enhance their skill set to deliver better solutions.

Photo: Unsplash/ Aaron Santelices

In 2025, BIL partnered with UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific to establish a Knowledge Partnership—the first of its kind for both organizations. Central to this collaboration was a week-long workshop designed to equip the Bhutan team with powerful tools and methodologies, such as user-centred design, mixed-methods approaches, creative problem-solving, and forward-thinking strategies. These tools were intended to support the lab in improving public service delivery, strengthening policy development and implementation, and driving meaningful change towards the future.

This collaboration between UN Global Pulse and the Bhutan Innovation Lab was more than just a capacity-building initiative. It represented a shared investment in framing how organizations learn, adapt, and deliver impact in an increasingly complex and multifaceted reality. It contributed to strengthening Bhutan's national systems that underpin effective, inclusive, and adaptive policymaking and service delivery.

By embedding tools such as foresight, data analytics, and human-centred design into the ecosystem, this partnership provided BIL with the capacity to develop more responsive policies that better address the country's biggest challenges. It also advances the UN 2.0 agenda by demonstrating how innovative capabilities can be applied to local contexts and translated into practical, future-ready solutions.

"We've learned many tools we can take back to our country as every tool shared connects to BIL's work. Strategic foresight might be the most relevant tool for us to anticipate and plan our national innovation strategy."

-Bhutan Innovation Lab Team Member

"I plan to use Ecosystem Mapping and Policy Blueprinting with stakeholders to develop a comprehensive National Action Plan on Addressing Substance Abuse."

-Bhutan Innovation Lab Team Member



How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

This partnership strengthened the Bhutan Innovation Lab's capacity to design resilient, adaptive, and citizen-centred solutions, increased their ability to reimagine policymaking in practice, and strengthened their positioning as a national platform for innovative governance. Additionally, the BIL team gained knowledge about diverse innovative approaches to inform policymaking and planning processes. For the UN Global Pulse team, this partnership enabled us to advocate for and build capacity on the UN 2.0 capabilities, particularly foresight and data.

Structural

Following the engagement with UN Global Pulse, the BIL team initiated structural changes within their organization. They created new roles, such as a Service Design Lead, and expanded their repertoire of service offerings by adding innovative tools, such as Policy Blueprinting. The lab also identified national issues where the tools and methodologies they learned could be applied, embedding **service design** and **policy blueprinting** into their project pipeline moving forward.

Behavioural

After the knowledge partnership activities, BIL began to actively apply the tools introduced during the workshop, demonstrating clear behavioural change and practical uptake. For example, they immediately applied service blueprinting as part of their process of developing a national health policy. Additionally, the policy blueprinting that was initiated during the workshop was also carried forward through stakeholder consultations and discussions for the national drug policy work.



1,185
Registered Attendees
Including 43% UN Staff

8
Events
Including Webinars and Roundtables



Photo: WFP/Innovation Accelerator

100%
Reported Improved
Understanding of
Innovation Scaling

Survey respondents reported improved understanding of innovation scaling tools and approaches after participating in a webinar, with 63% experiencing moderate to significant improvement

Click to watch a webinar:
Exploring Key Elements for Drafting
a Scaling Strategy



ENABLING SCALING THROUGH REFLECTIVE SPACES FOR SHARING BEST PRACTICES

#INNOVATION

#EUROPE

In a system where innovation often stalls after successful pilots, the Innovation Scaling Group emerged as a dedicated community to **support the expansion and dissemination of knowledge, expertise and good practices around innovation scaling and to advance innovation as a core pillar of the UN 2.0 agenda**. Established by UN Global Pulse and the UN Innovation Network (UNIN), the Group was created as a response to research conducted by Global Pulse on the barriers of scaling in the UN system. It serves as a collective space to consolidate knowledge, surface practical lessons and foster peer exchange on how to move innovations beyond the

pilot stage toward scale in complex institutional environments.

In 2025, the Innovation Scaling Group, now in its second year, continued to facilitate exchange between members interested in scaling. It deepened its relevance and depth, and increased its engagement. The Group shifted from broad awareness-raising toward more **practice-oriented exchange among scaling practitioners across the UN system**.

The Group's second year built on earlier achievements by promoting new ways of thinking and

Photo: Unsplash/ Marek Piwnicki

engaging senior scaling experts through smaller group discussions. It provided a dedicated space for honest exchange, strengthening the UN's collective capacity to navigate the systemic barriers that prevent high-impact solutions from reaching their maximum potential for impact.

During the second year, the Group delivered four **targeted webinars that translated complex policy into practical guidance for UN practitioners and shared useful tools, such as the UNICEF Innovation MEL Toolkit, to support scaling efforts.** It also highlighted real-world scaling success stories from the UN Global Pulse Accelerator, including FAO's BioDAF and WFP's SheCan initiatives, demonstrating how scaling strategies are translated from concept to implementation.

Moreover, the newly initiated Expert Roundtable series convened scaling specialists from 14 UN entities to address the practical realities of scaling. These discussions contributed to the exchange of ideas and understanding how to collaborate to overcome bottlenecks, reinforcing the practicality and value of bringing together experts from across the network to work on challenges together.

Scaling is a long journey with many pivots and obstacles. Sharing good practices and lessons learned prepares UN colleagues in navigating these challenges, propelling them towards their potential impact in effective ways. In this context, the Innovation Scaling Group is a critical enabler of the UN 2.0 transformation, strengthening how the UN approaches scaling across its system. By providing purposeful spaces for candid and sincere reflection, shared learning and experimentation, the Group cultivates the mindset and skills required to accelerate impact and amplify successful solutions across the UN ecosystem.

Photo: WFP/Innovation Accelerator



How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

In 2025, the Innovation Scaling Group strengthened participants' conceptual understanding of innovation scaling by providing practical exposure to frameworks, tools, and real-world experiences shared by peers across the UN system and partner organizations. Webinar discussions helped participants better understand how scaling can be approached in practice- particularly how to navigate uncertainty, evidence needs, and collaboration within complex institutional environments.

Structural

The establishment of the expert roundtable series represents a meaningful step toward more sustained, cross-entity collaboration on scaling challenges. By convening a consistent group of scaling practitioners across UN entities, the project has begun to foster informal coordination and shared reflection that may support future structural alignment.

Behavioural

Continued participation in webinars and roundtables suggests growing confidence and readiness among participants to engage more intentionally with innovation scaling in their respective roles, even as concrete behavioural shifts are expected to take longer to materialize.

Photo: Unsplash/ Roberto Shumski

2

Advocacy Events

Hosted in Jakarta

150

Participants

attended both in-person Pulse Talk events

5

Partners

engaged from UN agencies, government institutions, and public organisations including: UNOPS, UN Women, SAFEnet, Indonesian National Commission for Violence against Women, Bookhive Indonesia.



Watch online:

Pulse Talk: Creating Safe Online Spaces & Beyond: Addressing Online Violence Against Women & Girls



Photo: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

PULSE TALK SERIES: ADVOCATING FOR SAFER DIGITAL SPACES

#DIGITAL

#INNOVATION

#ASIA PACIFIC

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has significantly transformed our society. For women and girls, these tools have created new opportunities to access and participate in digital spaces, contributing to progress toward gender equality. Yet these same digital platforms have also become spaces where violence against women, girls, and marginalized groups are amplified—often reflecting and reinforcing existing inequalities.

Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls (TFVAWG) remains difficult to address at scale for various reasons. The absence of a shared global definition creates challenges with data collection and limits the evidence needed to

develop effective policy and prevention mechanisms. As online violence evolves alongside digital transformation, institutions must act proactively to better understand and respond to it.

In 2025, aligning with the global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign to focus on digital violence, UN Global Pulse partnered with multiple organizations to host two Pulse Talk events focused on technology-facilitated violence against women and girls. These events aimed to raise awareness, provide a platform for sharing lived experiences, and foster a collective understanding of the issue.

Photo: Unsplash/ Denissa Devy

The first Pulse Talk was co-hosted by UN Global Pulse in collaboration with UNOPS and UN Women, bringing together over 95 participants in person alongside 250 online viewers. Speakers included representatives from Indonesia's National Commission for Violence Against Women, a youth advocate from UN Women, and the Southeast Asian Freedom of Expression Network (SAFEnet).

The discussions explore how TFVAWG presents itself, what current responses look like, and how existing challenges and gaps in those responses can be addressed more effectively. The conversations underscored the complexity of the issue, emphasizing the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration and putting those most vulnerable at the forefront of the conversation.

The second Pulse Talk took a different approach. In collaboration with Bookhive Indonesia—an Indonesian community-based initiative that provides free books in public spaces—UN Global Pulse hosted a Bibliobattle focused on digital violence. This interactive format invited participants to pitch books related to the theme, sparking dialogue through storytelling rather than a formal panel discussion. This refreshing experience was UN Global Pulse's first engagement with this form of advocacy, and it demonstrated the power of narrative and literature to deepen understanding on thematic issues, engage new audiences, and encourage reflection that goes beyond "traditional" fora.

As digital technologies advance and continue to shape how societies function, addressing violence

against the most vulnerable members is essential to ensuring that digital progress does not come at the expense of safety and inclusion. These activities align with the UN 2.0 agenda on developing inclusive innovations that are grounded in real-world impact. By experimenting with new forms of engagement, UN Global Pulse also supports scaling approaches that connect evidence and storytelling for a more inclusive and responsive digital future.



"Ensuring that girls and women can thrive safely in online environments free of harassment, bullying, and violence is going to benefit the whole of society. This means that not only its victims but everyone else is affected to some extent by online violence."

Gita Sabharwal, UN Resident Coordinator in Indonesia



Photos: UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific

"As we explore the benefits of digital technologies, it is equally important to acknowledge their unintended consequences. We have a clear stance on VAWG in our mid-term and long-term agendas, and we are firmly committed to reducing its prevalence in Indonesia."

Dr. Agung Indrajit, (Former) Head of the Centre for Data and Information for Development Planning, Bappenas

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

The 2025 Pulse Talk events strengthened participants' understanding of technology-facilitated violence against women and girls, including its prevalence, forms, and impacts. They clarified the current landscape of digital violence in Indonesia by highlighting emerging practices that promote digital safety, as well as the gaps in national responses. The discussions fostered shared understanding among stakeholders, supporting cross-sector learning and alignment. Additionally, hearing directly from young people and civil society grounded the issue in lived experience and reinforced the urgency of addressing the impacts of online violence on safety, inclusion, and participation.

Structural

The discussions underscored that technology-facilitated violence against women and girls cannot be addressed in silos—it requires a coordinated, system-wide response spanning policy, legal frameworks, education, and inclusive design. Clear priorities emerged for cross-sector action, including closing gaps in existing legislation, strengthening survivor-centred reporting mechanisms, and investing in digital literacy to equip society with the skills to recognize, prevent, and respond to abuse. The use of storytelling-based public engagement also demonstrated new ways to raise awareness of digital violence beyond expert audiences.

Behavioural

While behavioural change takes time, these events reinforced the importance of coordinated, multi-stakeholder partnerships for advancing inclusive digital transformation. Engaging diverse audiences through formal platforms and forms of creative advocacy, the Pulse Talk series discussions introduced new perspectives and encouraged reflection on how responses to TFVAWG can be shaped to reflect broader societal realities.

Photo: Unsplash/Simon Spring



STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Using structured methods to navigate change, imagine better futures and make the right decisions today.

170

Participants

Attended workshops and events.

4

Countries Reached

Finland, Denmark, UAE and New Zealand.

200

Downloads of Published Game

Attended workshops and events.



Click to play:
The Buzzing Futures
Discussion Game

TURNING FORESIGHT INTO ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY RESILIENCE

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#EUROPE

Pollinators support 87.5 percent of flowering plant species and 35 percent of global crop **production**. Their decline therefore represents one of the most pressing ecological crises of our time, with direct implications for food security and economic stability. In response, the Embassy of Slovenia in the Nordics, building on its leadership in establishing World Bee Day, **advanced the Bee Diplomacy agenda. This initiative leverages innovation to address the interconnected risks facing biodiversity.**

Against this backdrop, the Embassy approached UN Global Pulse to explore **how strategic foresight, systems thinking and creative storytell-**

ing could help stakeholders reframe how they understand pollinator futures. Addressing complex ecological challenges requires opening new forms of dialogue, asking future-oriented questions and engaging a diverse range of actors in co-creating insights. What began as a single workshop evolved into a multi-event, regional series and the development of an interactive discussion tool, responding to a growing demand for more inclusive approaches to diplomacy.

In 2025, the project focused on **translating abstract uncertainties into shared strategic insight** through a regional workshop in Copenhagen. By integrating storytelling with foresight

Photo: Unsplash/ Brad Huchteman

methods, the workshop enabled participants to move beyond pessimistic narratives and identify cross-sector opportunities. This was followed by a diplomatic session in Helsinki, where foreign policy leaders applied foresight concepts to explore the role of diplomacy in addressing planetary challenges.

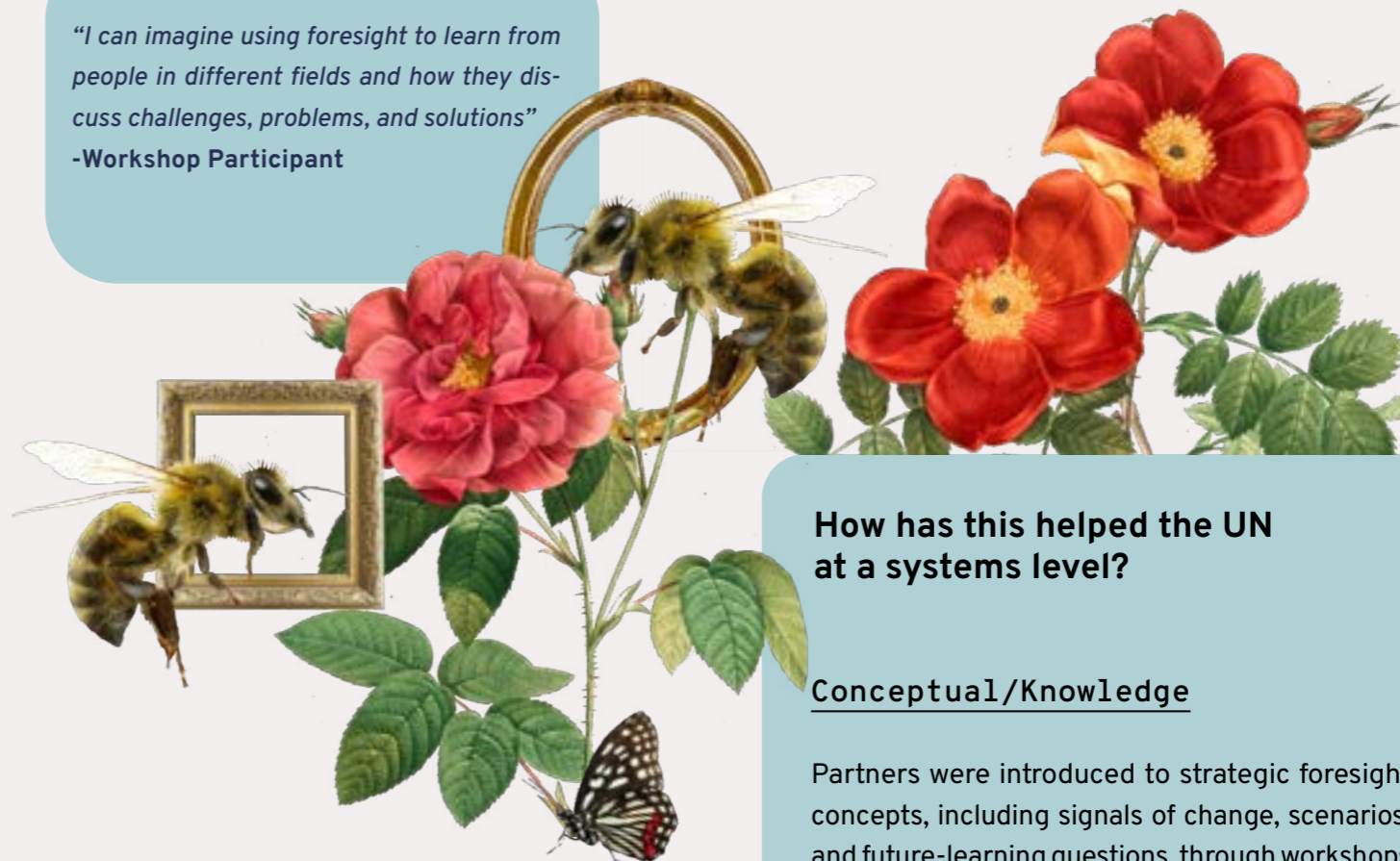
The project marked a significant milestone with the launch of the **Buzzing Futures card game** on World Bee Day. Designed to translate systems thinking into an accessible format and engaging format, the tool is suitable for schools, ministries and community settings. Its global reach was further expanded at the Dubai Futures Forum, where UN Global Pulse presented the game to an international audience, generating interest in adapting the methodology across diverse institutional contexts.



Photos: UN Global Pulse Europe

"I can imagine using foresight to learn from people in different fields and how they discuss challenges, problems, and solutions"
-Workshop Participant

"I can imagine using foresight in contradictory issues. This method is a way to step back a little bit and take a broader look on alternative future"
-Workshop Participant



How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Partners were introduced to strategic foresight concepts, including signals of change, scenarios, and future-learning questions, through workshops and the Buzzing Futures discussion tool. Several participants reported improved understanding of how foresight can support multistakeholder dialogue.

Structural

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovenia disseminated the Buzzing Futures game across its global network of embassies. Early interest in formal adoption emerged from educational authorities in New Zealand and government officials in the United Arab Emirates.

Behavioural

Participants demonstrated greater openness and curiosity when discussing long-term uncertainty, indicating a shift in how complex sustainability challenges are approached. The workshops also fostered cross-sector connections, with researchers and policy officers proactively seeking new collaborations beyond the project.

Play proved to be a powerful force for policy innovation. Through storytelling prompts, foresight exercises and engagement with the game, participants began to overcome the paralysis often associated with climate and biodiversity challenges. Conversations shifted toward constructive, action-oriented dialogue. These creative, non-technical entry points are essential for democratizing foresight and making strategic discussions accessible to non-experts. The Bee Diplomacy project provides this accessibility, inviting playfulness and co-creation as pathways for building resilience.

The project also serves as a model for advancing the UN 2.0 agenda, placing imagination, learning and systems thinking at the core of transformation. By scaling tools that position imagination as a strategic capability, the project supports a shift from reactive crisis management toward more inclusive, intentional and just futures - for all of us who share this planet.

~20

Core Stakeholders

Senior management and technical staff from FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF)

30

Additional Stakeholders Added

Engaged during validation workshops to test and refine strategy recommendations

4

Foresight Scenario Workshops

Focused on stress-testing the five pillars of Uganda's Digital Agriculture Strategy

Photo: FAO Uganda



STRESS-TESTING UGANDA'S DIGITAL AGRICULTURE STRATEGY

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#AFRICA

Over 70% of Uganda's 46 million people derive livelihoods from agriculture, either directly or indirectly, most of whom are in rural areas and have limited access to technology and extension services. Yet the sector remains central to national development, contributing **26.1% to the country's GDP in Financial Year 2024/2025**. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has committed to modernizing the sector through technology and data to improve productivity, strengthen food systems and deliver better services to farmers.

But digital transformation keeps hitting the same walls—interventions are disconnected from what

farmers need, policy cycles that have been blocked for years, revenue models that collapse when conditions shift and planning that resists change.

In light of this, FAO Uganda led the development of a national Digital Agriculture Strategy to realise the MAAIF's vision, proposing an approach that was technically grounded, with clear ambitions and guidelines. In order to stress test the strategy and ensure it was future-proof, Global Pulse Uganda, in partnership with Global Pulse Finland, collaborated with FAO Uganda to strengthen the strategy by **grounding it in evidence-based, anticipatory planning**.

Photo: FAO Uganda



Photo: FAO Uganda

Throughout 2025, the initiative engaged **15–20 core stakeholders** from FAO Uganda and MAAIF across four scenario workshops. The four workshops were used to assess the strategy across different futures for technology access, governance, funding and agricultural development. An additional 30 stakeholders participated in validation sessions.

Each of the strategy's pillars was assessed against the predicted scenarios. The process revealed significant gaps within the strategy. Some interventions were too abstract and disconnected from farmers' realities. Over-reliance on policy amendments—which can take up to a decade in Uganda—threatened to delay impact indefinitely. Revenue models assumed economic stability that couldn't be guaranteed, while technology-first approaches risked adding complexity rather than solving problems.

The exercise shifted the strategy's underlying logic. Digital agriculture was reframed from a technology deployment challenge into a user-centred design problem, focusing on centring farmers' needs and enhancing their productivity rather than adding another layer of complexity to their work.

The revised strategy now incorporates adaptive governance mechanisms and pragmatic implementation pathways that bypass lengthy policy cycles, enhanced with a clearer focus on farmer needs. Reflecting on this shift with MAAIF, it was noted that strategies such as these were truly of value when they **are intentionally shaped for the people they serve.**

The initiative's impact extends beyond the original strategy development. FAO has expressed interest in applying foresight methodologies to other initiatives, including work with the World Bank. Staff have begun attending foresight events independently, demonstrating sustained engagement. What began as a strategy exercise evolved into an institutional planning capacity, laying the **groundwork for more resilient, adaptive programming aligned with stakeholder needs.**

Uganda's experience demonstrates that effective digital strategies require futures literacy—the capacity to anticipate change, test assumptions and design for adaptability. By embedding foresight into strategy development, the initiative positions Uganda to lead in forward-looking agricultural development planning.



Photo: FAO Uganda

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Partners gained practical familiarity with scenario development, stress-testing and “what-if” analysis—tools most had not previously encountered. The process reframed digital agriculture from a technology challenge into a user-centred design problem, enabling a more grounded, farmer-focused strategy.

Structural

The Digital Agriculture Strategy was revised to incorporate scenario-based stress testing and adaptive implementation approaches. Governance and policy pillars were adjusted to prioritise practical, timely solutions over lengthy policy cycles. FAO and MAAIF leadership recognised the potential to embed foresight into other strategic processes, signalling early institutionalisation.

Behavioural

Staff began actively considering future scenarios when designing interventions. User-centred thinking has become more habitual—strategies are increasingly designed with farmers' realities in mind. Partners demonstrated sustained curiosity, independently attending foresight events and seeking opportunities to apply the methodology.

~20

SDG Technical Working Group members trained in foresight practices

~12

UN Deputies and Senior Leadership across all three workshops

2

Foresight Training Workshops

delivered in Kampala for technical teams and UN leadership



Click for more on: Uganda's UN Cooperation Framework

EMBEDDING FORESIGHT INTO UGANDA'S UN COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#AFRICA

When Uganda's UN Country Team began designing its new Cooperation Framework – a five-year blueprint shaping how UN resources are assigned, and which partnerships, opportunities and communities to prioritise – one would ask: how do you plan for five years when the country's social, political and economic spheres are ever-evolving every few months? Although designed for stability, the framework required strategic guardrails that supported the country through shifting dynamics and uncertainty.

That's why UN Global Pulse partnered with RCO (UN Resident Coordinator's Office) Uganda to integrate strategic foresight directly into the

framework's design. The engagement began in June 2024 with regional training across African RCOs, then moved to Uganda-specific work from August onward, where UN Global Pulse Uganda facilitated workshops with the SDG Technical Working Group and senior deputies, with roughly 25 to 30 participants in total.

The methodology combined country analysis, trend mapping, and scenario exercises. Participants explored plausible futures: funding contractions, governance shifts, and regional instability. They stress-tested the draft framework against each of these futures, building clarity on pathways that would hold and pathways that would fracture.

Photo: UN Uganda

The process changed how participants approached strategy. As one noted: “It’s not just academic; it has real implications and utility.” Uganda’s Cooperation Framework now explicitly documents that foresight informed its design – and will continue to guide implementation. Adaptive checkpoints are built into the structure, creating regular moments to reassess assumptions and adjust course, with committed time, and resources to sustain the practice.

The behavioural shifts are already visible. Staff trained in the workshops began applying scenario thinking in unrelated discussions and referencing methodologies in other areas of work, making foresight a cognitive muscle rather than a one-off workshop exercise. Documentation and reference materials have been developed for replication across other country teams – proof that anticipatory planning can be embedded in how the UN designs, implements, and adapts strategy.



Photo: UN Uganda



Photo: Unsplash/ Random Institute

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

Participants progressed from unfamiliarity with foresight to practical fluency, gaining hands-on experience in scenario development, “what-if” analysis, and anticipatory thinking. These skills enabled teams to integrate foresight directly into the design of the Cooperation Framework. Leadership developed confidence in advocating for anticipatory approaches across the UN country team.

Structural

Uganda’s Cooperation Framework now formalises foresight as part of standard operational processes. The RCO established regular review sessions for real-time course correction. Senior leadership institutionalised support through dedicated resources, ensuring the practice is embedded rather than episodic.

Behavioural

Staff across the RCO and technical working groups began routinely applying scenario thinking and trend monitoring in planning discussions. Team members demonstrated increased willingness to consider alternative futures and adapt accordingly. These shifts create a foundation for sustained adaptive planning across the UN country team.

Photo: Unsplash/ Random Institute



BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Fostering our understanding of human nature and how people act and make decisions in order to improve our choices.

3

Workshops

Focused on Theory of Change, Evidence
and Behavioural Change

25+

Stakeholders

across all three workshops

15

UN Agencies Represented

including UNDP, RCO, WFP, UNICEF,
UNHCR, UNFPA, UN Women

STRENGTHENING COLOMBIA'S TERRITORIAL PLANNING THROUGH EVIDENCE AND BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

#INNOVATION

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

#EUROPE

Colombia's territorial diversity, shaped by legacies of armed conflict, climate vulnerability, migration pressures, and persistent institutional asymmetries, demands planning approaches that are adaptive, participatory, and systems-oriented. Yet traditional linear planning models have proven insufficient for the UN system to respond effectively to uncertainty, overlapping crises, and rapidly evolving territorial contexts.

UN coordination and planning with local stakeholders are often constrained by structural challenges, including top-down programming disconnected from community priorities, siloed interventions driven by multiple UN mandates operating in parallel, uneven participation of local actors in decision-making, and centralized financing and approval processes that limit local adaptability. As a result, territorial implementation plans frequently struggle to reflect local priorities or adapt dynamically to the realities on the ground.

To address these challenges, in 2024 the Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) in Colombia launched the Joint Territorial Solutions Lab, an initiative designed to strengthen joint planning and programming at the local level. The Lab developed and tested a 10-step prototyping methodology aimed at enabling UN entities to align around shared territorial goals, co-create tailored solutions with communities, strengthen local ownership, and foster more collaborative, efficient, and impactful interagency work. Following participation in the second cohort of the UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, and building on lessons from pilot experiences in Guaviare and Buenaventura, the RCO further adapted this approach.

Photo: RCO Colombia

Photo: Colombia, Wikicommons

In 2025, the RCO launched the Cooperation Framework (CF) Localization Initiative, designed to bring the UN Cooperation Framework to the territorial level and strengthen joint planning and programming among UN entities and local stakeholders.

Grounded in joint diagnostics, participatory planning sessions, and a systems-informed methodology, the initiative seeks to reshape not only what UN actors plan together, but how they plan together. Piloted across three departments, Cauca, Guaviare, and La Guajira, reaching an estimated 2.7 million people, the initiative responds to the need for more inclusive, adaptive, and context-aware planning approaches that align collective UN action with local priorities and realities.

The CF Localization Initiative has both operational and systemic objectives. At its core, it aims to shift UN engagement from fragmented, output-driven coordination toward joint, adaptive, participatory, evidence-informed, and people-centred territorial planning. Operationally, it strengthens how UN agencies, local governments, civil society, academia, and other stakeholders jointly design, implement, and monitor Territorial Action Plans (Planes de Acción Territorial – PAT).

PATs serve as the primary interagency operational instrument in prioritized territories, promoting coherence across humanitarian, peacebuilding, and development programming while preserving functional clarity between these agendas. The process also reinforces the UN's commitment to a more strategic, sustained, and articulated territorial presence—particularly in historically excluded regions such as La Guajira and Chocó.

Despite the successful deployment of the CF Localization Initiative across the three pilot departments, the RCO identified a critical gap: **the need to better understand and evidence changes in behaviours, relationships, and coordination practices among UN entities and local stakeholders resulting from this new joint territorial**

programming approach. Traditional monitoring and evaluation frameworks were insufficient to capture these behavioural and institutional shifts, leaving open questions about what meaningful change looks like compared to previous or status quo territorial planning models.

To respond to this need, UN Global Pulse partnered with the RCO in a collaborative project to strengthen the initiative's learning and evidence base. The project aimed to: **(i) formalize a Theory of Change for the CF Localization process, integrating qualitative and quantitative measures to track progress and demonstrate value added; (ii) co-design methodologies to assess qualitative dimensions of impact, including behavioural change and perceived value, among both internal UN staff and external local stakeholders; and (iii) provide recommendations to enhance monitoring and evaluation tools in support of ongoing piloting efforts**, with a focus on capturing evidence of interagency collaboration and territorial-level impact.

During the second half of 2025, the project advanced implementation and learning through a series of structured, participatory engagements. Two Theory of Change development and validation workshops, along with one behavioural change and evidence-needs workshop, were conducted across the pilot territories, engaging approximately 25 participants representing more than 15 UN entities. These engagements applied futures thinking and foresight tools to test Theory of Change outcomes, identify risks, and co-design adaptive strategies, alongside behavioural science approaches to unpack expected behavioural shifts. In particular, the Capability–Opportunity–Motivation (COM-B) model was used to identify and analyze the behavioural changes anticipated as a result of the CF Localization Initiative. The process generated preliminary insights into coordination dynamics, data use, and participatory planning gaps, directly informing the ongoing development of a strengthened monitoring and evaluation framework for the CF Localization Initiative.

A distinguishing feature of the process was the deliberate integration of futures thinking, foresight tools, and behavioural science approaches. These methods were used to test assumptions, surface risks, and co-design adaptive strategies, while also unpacking the human and institutional drivers shaping coordination and implementation.

The engagements generated early but actionable insights into coordination bottlenecks, data-use challenges, and participatory planning gaps. Equally important, they strengthened trust and relationships among territorial actors, laying the groundwork for more coherent, sustained, and locally grounded implementation of Territorial Action Plans.

UN Global Pulse's project support to the RCO's CF Localization Initiative has shown that strengthening localization is as much about changing mindsets and behaviours as it is about improving tools and plans. By grounding action in evidence, embracing uncertainty through foresight and putting people and systems at the centre of planning, the project is advancing the UN 2.0 transformation agenda – laying the groundwork for more resilient, inclusive, and effective territorial action in Colombia that can be sustained and scaled over time.



Photo: RCO Colombia

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

There is a noticeable shift toward resilience-oriented thinking, with staff increasingly open to integrating foresight, scenario planning, and anticipatory approaches into their work. Evidence is no longer viewed solely through a quantitative or reporting lens; instead, there is growing interest in behavioural, qualitative, and context-specific insights that capture how change actually happens on the ground. Participation in co-design processes has also strengthened systems awareness, encouraging staff to consider interdependencies between actors, incentives, and processes rather than isolated interventions.

Structural

While changes remain emergent, the initiative has begun to influence how planning and coordination may be formalized in the future. The RCO is experimenting with incorporating anticipatory thinking into planning cycles, exploring clearer coordination rhythms, and reflecting on how evidence flows across teams. These discussions signal early movement toward more adaptive and collaborative structures that could be institutionalized over time.

Behavioural

Early signals point to meaningful shifts in day-to-day practice. Staff are increasingly considering uncertainty, risk, and adaptation in planning discussions, paying closer attention to people, behaviours, and local dynamics, and demonstrating greater willingness to test, learn, reflect, and adapt based on evidence. Together, these changes suggest the emergence of a learning-oriented culture that values iteration and adaptation over rigidity and collaboration over silos.

Photo: Unsplash/ Sofia

35

Participants

Attended a three-day workshop in Brasília.

18

UN Agencies Represented

including FAO, IFAD, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, RCO, UN WOMEN, UN-HABITAT, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNODC, UNOPS, WFP.

720

Attendees Across Two Major Events

3

Resources Published

1000 Downloads



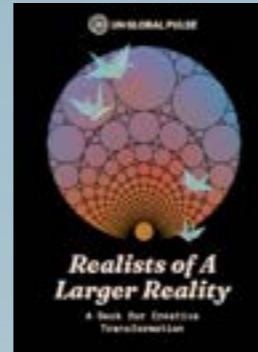
The Collective Dreaming Deck is an interactive card-based game designed to support speculative scenario building.

1300 Downloads



Beyond Numbers is designed to inspire approaches for breaking down silos through a multidisciplinary framework for more integrated, participatory and meaningful impact reporting.

500 Downloads



Realists of a Larger Reality prompts for reflection, experimentation and creative expression, that were derived from our Creative Competency Model



Photo: UN Global Pulse Europe

PLACING PARTICIPATION AND CREATIVITY AT THE HEART OF SYSTEMS CHANGE

#INNOVATION

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

#BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

#EUROPE

At UN Global Pulse, we believe imagination is a driving force for innovation. In 2024, we partnered with the University of Oslo to explore how creative and innovative practices—ways of imagining possibilities beyond current experiences—could help the UN navigate global complexity.

In 2025, the project deepened its scope, shifting toward supporting the application and institutional integration of its approaches through strategic facilitation and multidisciplinary methods. The second phase of this project emerged in response to a concrete institutional challenge identified by Brazil's UN Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO):

the persistent disconnect between Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) teams and Communications teams across the 24 UN agencies operating in the country.

While MEL teams captured the breadth of the UN's contributions to the Cooperation Framework, these insights often remained inaccessible beyond datasets. Meanwhile, Communications teams struggled to craft compelling narratives without early access to this rigorous data. The resulting siloing led to fragmented reporting that did not capture the full, integrated impact of the UN Country Team (UNCT).

Photos: UN Global Pulse Europe



“Taking a moment to think, imagine, and create is essential, especially in emergency contexts.”

Workshop Participant

Phase two was designed to directly address this collaboration gap. The RCO requested support to strengthen cross-team relationships, navigate the complexities of the UNCT’s annual reporting cycle, improve alignment between data and narrative, and cultivate new capabilities scalable across agencies. In practice, this created a structured opportunity for MEL and Communications colleagues to co-design solutions and to collectively rethink how impact is communicated at the country level.

The project was delivered with a three-day intensive workshop in Brasília. Using a combination of ethnographic research, practice-based training, and innovative exercises, the workshop was tailored to the regional and cultural context of UNCT Brazil. For the first time, MEL and Communications staff came together to conduct a collective diagnostic, building a shared understanding of the challenges and laying the groundwork for more integrated reporting practices at the country level. Participants left the workshop with practical approaches for weaving data, insights, and human stories together in more compelling narratives.

Learnings from this second phase in Brazil directly informed the development and refinement of the Beyond Numbers publication, strengthening



its methodological foundation and broadening the use of narrative-led, participatory, and creative approaches. These learnings were also integrated into the UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, shaping the curriculum for its 2025 cohort. To further amplify the project’s impact, it was featured at UN 2.0 Week and UN Innovation Day, generating momentum for continued knowledge exchange and cross-agency collaboration.

As the UN approaches its 80th anniversary, the work in Brazil demonstrates that imagination is essential for transformation. This project offers a novel approach to multilateral work by redefining how the UN understands, communicates, and co-creates impact. It directly supports UN 2.0 transformation efforts, offering a practical model to translate principles into practice.

By shifting from siloed to co-owned, interdisciplinary approaches, the project strengthens the legitimacy and resilience of UN interventions. It fosters a culture of curiosity, belonging, and accountability, ensuring that those most affected by, and working to address global challenges, play a meaningful role in shaping the responses.



How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/Knowledge

The workshop generated clear shifts in awareness, knowledge, and confidence across both Communications and MEL professionals in Brasília. Despite varied prior exposure to storytelling or speculative methods, 100% of survey respondents reported learning something new, with 60% describing significant new insights. There were clear indicators of strengthened foundational knowledge, enabling MEL and Communications teams to work more intentionally together—an important early shift in a previously siloed system where cross-functional exchange was not the norm.

Structural

While the workshop did not formally change institutional policies or create new governance structures, it did stimulate early structural signals—new routines, relationships, and ways of working within and across agencies. One such signal was the development of cross-functional relationships between teams, which enabled them to share information more seamlessly and coordinate planning cycles. For Global Pulse, a structural change was reflected from the integration of workshop insights into the ‘Beyond Numbers’ publication and the informed advisory support for subsequent Global Pulse Accelerator Programme cohorts (e.g., mentoring and curriculum).

Behavioural

Participants reported some early shifts in behaviours, habits, and informal ways of working, which are essential precursors to longer-term systems change. Key behavioural changes emerging from the workshop include a greater willingness to collaborate, increased motivation to apply new methods and approaches, new habits of reflection and intentionality, and a greater appreciation for colleagues’ roles, realities, and constraints.

PARTNERING FOR INNOVATION

PARTNERSHIPS AT UN GLOBAL PULSE

108

TOGETHER, WE CO-CREATE IMPACTFUL SOLUTIONS FOR PEOPLE AND PLANET

Partnerships are at the core of everything we do. Through collaboration, UN Global Pulse co-creates and accelerates innovative solutions that respond to today's challenges while anticipating those of tomorrow, helping to shape more inclusive, resilient and sustainable futures.

We bring together a diverse network of partners from the private sector, academia, civil society and across the United Nations system. United by a shared commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the Secretary-General's vision for a future-oriented United Nations, **our partners play a critical role in advancing innovative solutions that matter.**

Our partnerships operate at multiple levels – from global convenings and knowledge generation to the co-design and delivery of programmes on the ground. In each collaboration, we foster environments that encourage **experimentation, enable knowledge exchange and support the scaling of effective solutions.** This approach allows us to build dynamic innovation ecosystems that amplify impact far beyond individual initiatives.

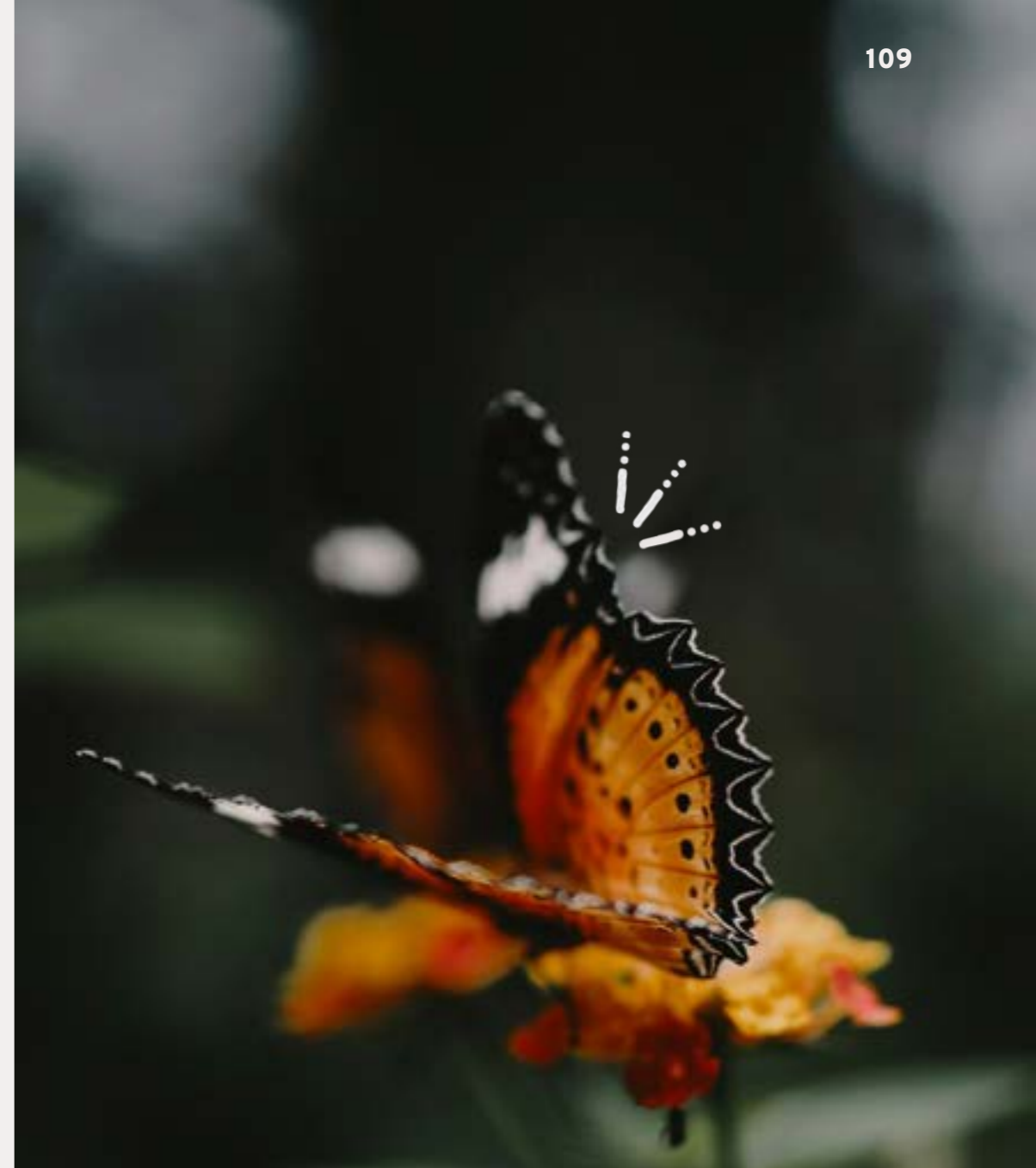
What distinguishes our approach is our ability to connect, accelerate and scale. We act as a bridge across the UN system and beyond, unlocking collaboration in complex environments and ensuring that the right actors come together at the right time. With agility and a focus on results, we translate global priorities into local impact – shortening the distance between ambition and implementation.

We also place strong emphasis on achieving systemic impact. Moving beyond iso-

lated pilots, we apply expertise to identify what works and scale it effectively. In doing so, we help ensure that solutions reach the people and communities who need them most.

Our partnerships demonstrate the power of collaboration to drive meaningful change. Whether working with the private sector to develop data-innovation tools to inform disaster response, collaborating with academic institutions to generate new insights, or engaging UN teams to convene critical conversations about what it takes to scale technology responsibly, **each partnership contributes to a stronger, more connected ecosystem for impact.**

As we look ahead, we continue to expand and deepen our partnerships – inviting new collaborators to join us in shaping solutions that improve lives and safeguard our planet for generations to come.



AUSTRALIA'S DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (DFAT) ENABLING REGIONAL COLLABORATION AND DATA-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

The partnership between the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) demonstrates **how long-term collaboration can advance the use of data, technology and innovation to support inclusive and sustainable development.** Since 2014, this partnership has contributed to strengthening evidence-informed policymaking, digital transformation and regional cooperation across Indonesia and the wider Asia Pacific.

A key value of this partnership for DFAT has been the **access to expertise on data innovation capabilities within government systems.** Through engagement with UN Global Pulse, DFAT has supported the application of artificial intelligence, big data analytics, machine learning and strategic foresight in development planning. It has also facilitated connections between DFAT and government institutions such as the Indonesian Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), **enabling deeper dialogue on how data and AI can inform national planning and programme design.**

In 2025, the partnership placed a strong emphasis on building institutional capacity. Targeted initiatives **strengthened analytical capabilities within government counterparts,** while an ongoing fellowship programme contributed to **developing a new generation of data professionals within Bappenas.** These efforts are particularly important as Indonesia continues to position itself as an emerging development partner, with growing engagement in South-South and Triangular Cooperation, in particular with the Pacific Islands.

At the sub-national level, the partnership has also delivered tangible results. Led by Bappenas and in collaboration with the DFAT-supported SKALA

Programme, UN Global Pulse piloted an innovative, data-driven solution to support more data-informed decision-making for program and policy development in West Nusa Tenggara.

Furthermore, UN Global Pulse's strong regional network of UN agencies has been strategically beneficial to the efforts of the Governments of Indonesia and Australia to map digital transformation priorities and projects in Pacific Island countries.

At its core, **the partnership reflects a shared commitment to responsible innovation.** By strengthening institutional capability, regional cooperation, and the long-term sustainability of development investments, **it supports more sustainable and scalable approaches to development.**

There is strong potential to further deepen this collaboration. Expanding engagement across government entities, development partners, the private sector and philanthropic actors could unlock new opportunities for impact. In parallel, exploring multi-partner funding models and strengthening alignment with the shared priorities of Indonesia and Australia, specifically in the Pacific, will be critical to scaling impact in a resource-constrained environment.

Ultimately, this partnership highlights how sustained collaboration and a shared vision can advance data-driven development, strengthen regional cooperation and enable innovation to move beyond pilots toward lasting, system-level impact.

"UN Global Pulse' innovation capabilities are helping to strengthen inclusive development planning and future-proofing decision-making processes."



Photo: UNDP Pacific Office in Fiji

"This partnership lays a strong foundation for deeper engagement between Australia, Indonesia and the Pacific on digital transformation."

THE INDONESIAN MINISTRY OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING (BAPPENAS)

STRENGTHENING DATA-DRIVEN AND ANTICIPATORY PLANNING IN INDONESIA

The partnership between Indonesia's Ministry of National Development Planning/Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) and UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific demonstrates how sustained collaboration can support the integration of data, technology and innovation in national development planning. Built over years, this partnership reflects a shared commitment to **advancing evidence-based, anticipatory and sustainable approaches in support of Indonesia's development priorities.**

A cornerstone of the collaboration in 2025 was advancing data-informed decision-making in national policy processes. Through the development of a Decision Support System for the Free Nutritious Meals Program, data analytics supported more accurate beneficiary identification, enhanced targeting, and supported early risk mitigation in policy design. **This work illustrates how data-driven tools can enhance both the effectiveness and inclusivity of large-scale social programmes.**

In parallel, the partnership made important progress in integrating climate risk into development planning. A pilot on sea level rise in West Nusa Tenggara (NTB) demonstrated how climate considerations can be embedded in infrastructure, public service delivery and long-term resilience strategies. The development of a dashboard prototype and accompanying data story further supported engagement with policymakers, highlighting the broader socio-economic implications of sea-level rise for development planning, beyond its environmental dimensions.

These initiatives contribute to a broader, shared vision of strengthening Indonesia's capacity to anticipate and respond to complex, interconnected challenges. By embedding analytical tools within institutional processes, the partner-

ship has demonstrated how innovation should not be confined to standalone exercises, but should be part of ongoing policy dialogue and coordination across government. What began as technical exercises became reference points for coordination across ministries and partners. For Bappenas, this reinforced the idea that **data innovation can move beyond experimentation and become an increasingly important source for policymaking.**

An important feature of the partnership in 2025 has been its emphasis on responsible innovation. Rather than introducing parallel systems, efforts have focused on strengthening existing governance mechanisms and workflows. All tools were developed using official government datasets and aligned with national data standards. The handover, including the sea level rise dashboard, further reinforces the government's ability to continue scaling and adapting these solutions over time.

At its core, the collaboration reflects a strong model of cross-sector partnership. UN Global Pulse contributed analytical expertise and introduced new methodologies, while Bappenas has ensured the work aligned with Indonesia's national development agenda. **Together, the partnership helped strengthen coordination across ministries and supported Indonesia's ability to respond to complex challenges such as climate change.**

Looking ahead, Bappenas sees strong potential to build on the strong foundations established through this long-standing partnership. Planned initiatives such as the development of a Socio-Economic Warning System (SEWS) reflect an internal shift towards more anticipatory policy intelligence, while other initiatives, such as the National Rice Ecosystem Monitoring System, aim

to further strengthen long-term planning.

Beyond the national level, there is also growing potential to share these approaches regionally. By leveraging its experience, **Indonesia can play an important role as a knowledge partner within ASEAN and among Pacific Island countries, contributing to South-South and Triangular Cooperation on data-driven development.**

Together, this partnership highlights how long-term collaboration, aligned vision and a focus on **responsible innovation can move data and technology beyond pilot initiatives toward scalable solutions** that strengthen policymaking and deliver lasting impact.

"The collaboration strengthened Bappenas' mandate to advance evidence-based and anticipatory development planning."



Photo: UNRCO/Vanuatu

"When innovation is integrated into planning systems, it strengthens coordination and supports better decisions."

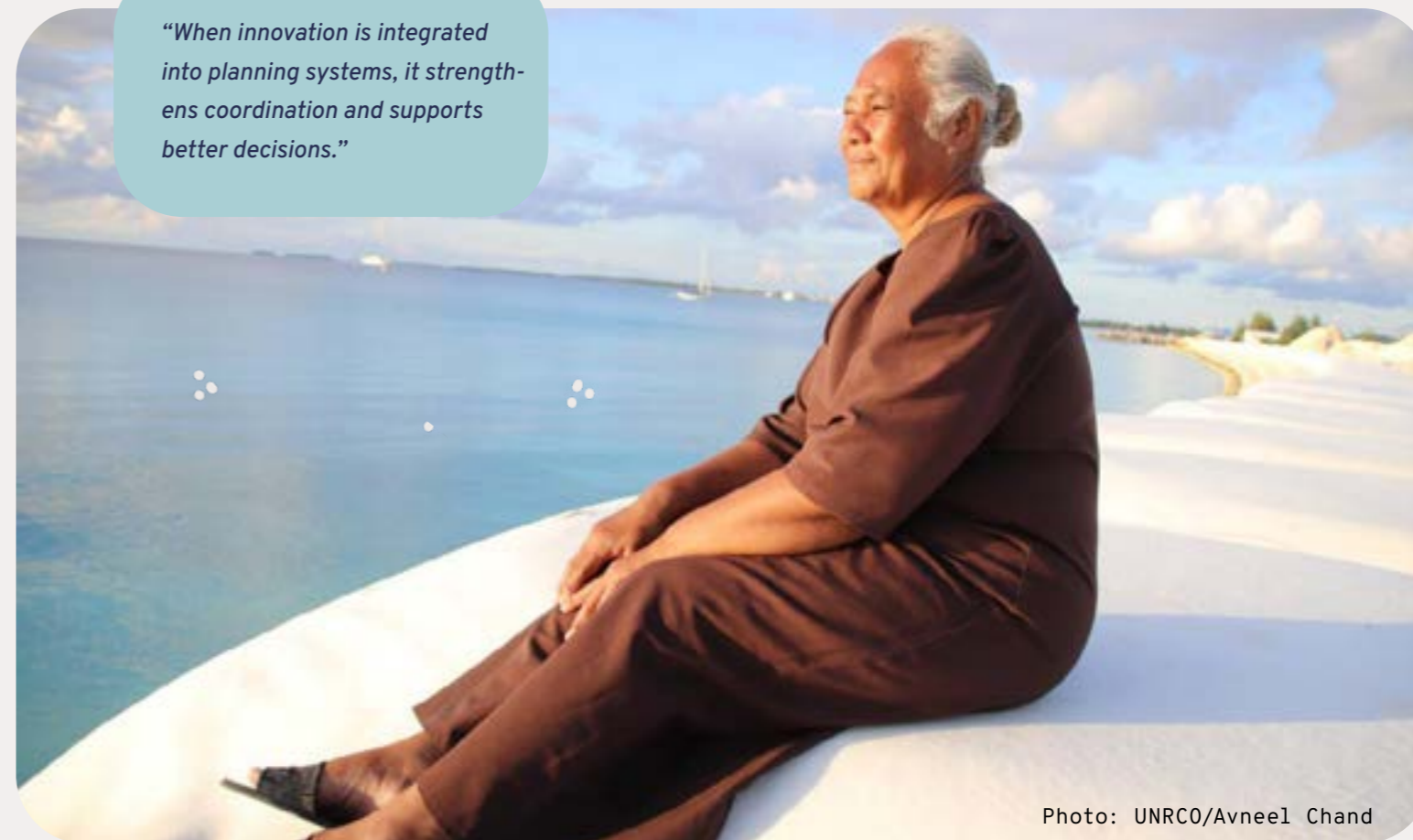


Photo: UNRCO/Avneel Chand

MCKINSEY & COMPANY

ADVANCING RESPONSIBLE, SCALABLE AI WHERE IT MATTERS MOST

For the last several years, McKinsey & Company and its AI arm, QuantumBlack, have been a strategic partner to UN Global Pulse, providing pro bono resources and technological expertise to develop, validate and iteratively improve UN Global Pulse's flagship artificial intelligence (AI) programme for humanitarian and development impact. Data Insights for Social & Humanitarian Action, also known as DISHA, is UN Global Pulse's multi-partner initiative that aims to accelerate ethical and responsible access to data and AI solutions to unlock social impact at scale. McKinsey contributes to DISHA as a part of its Noble Intelligence Initiative, a programme that harnesses artificial intelligence and other advanced technologies to address social and humanitarian crises.

In 2025, the collaboration between McKinsey & Company and UN Global Pulse demonstrated how cross-sector partnerships can translate emerging technologies into practical solutions for humanitarian good.

What made this collaboration particularly impactful was how quickly a shared language and trust developed across different institutional perspectives, accelerating the move from experimentation to practical application. Together with its private sector, humanitarian, and philanthropic partners, DISHA has so far delivered three concrete solutions for crisis response and resilience planning. **An AI-assisted Damage Assessment solution reduced time to insight by more than sixfold while expanding geographic coverage sevenfold. Socio-Economic Mapping solution supported more than 10 non-governmental organizations in the Philippines, informing their response to six natural disaster events that affected over 5.6 million people.** DISHA's newest solution, AI-assisted Refugee Shelter Map-

ping, will for the first time enable humanitarians to access up-to-date maps of all major refugee settlements around the world.

The greatest opportunity now lies in translating these initial solutions into repeatable, responsible approaches that can be adopted across regions and institutions – expanding their reach while continuing to strengthen the governance, trust, and institutional readiness that enable real-world deployment and also codifying the ways of working that made them successful.

“The collaboration between McKinsey and UN Global Pulse shows how a trusted UN platform and private-sector expertise can come together to advance responsible, scalable data and AI innovation in service of public institutions and the communities that they serve.”

Paul Beaumont, Partner, Quantum-Black, AI by McKinsey

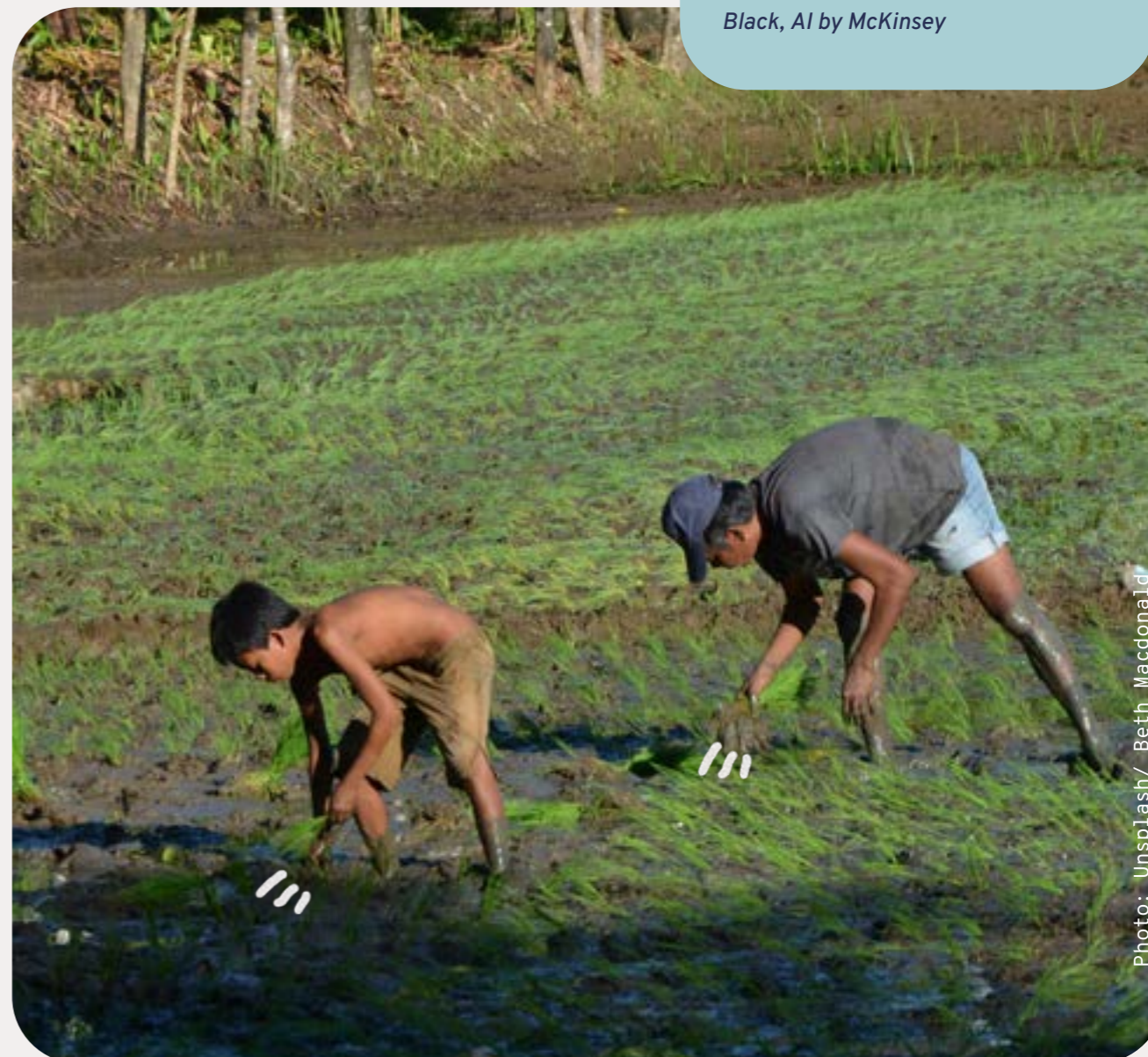


Photo: Unsplash/ Beth Macdonald



Photo:WFP / School Connect

MINISTRY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF FINLAND

CHAMPIONING RESPONSIBLE INNOVATION FOR GLOBAL IMPACT

The partnership between the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and UN Global Pulse **demonstrates how shared ambition and collaboration can accelerate responsible innovation across the United Nations system and beyond.** Grounded in a mutual commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, this collaboration focuses on strengthening the role of data, technology and innovation in delivering more effective and inclusive outcomes for people and planet.

A cornerstone of the partnership is the UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, which has rapidly evolved into a flagship initiative for innovation within the UN. Over the past year, the programme has gained significant traction, expanding its reach, attracting a growing number of applicants and deepening engagement across UN entities and Finnish stakeholders alike. Together, the partners have supported the identification and scaling of solutions with the potential to deliver real-world impact.

This work is closely aligned with a broader, shared vision: **enabling the UN system to more effectively adopt and apply new technologies in support of development and humanitarian goals.** By fostering experimentation and supporting innovation at scale, the partnership helps improve how the UN delivers on its mandate.

Strategic moments of engagement have further amplified this collaboration in 2025. A joint side event at the UN Science, Technology and Innovation Forum in New York in 2025 helped raise awareness, strengthen connections and expand dialogue among Member States and UN actors. In parallel, convenings in Helsinki during the Accelerator's implementation phase created opportunities to deepen collaboration, exchange knowledge and build lasting relationships across sectors.

At its core, the partnership reflects a commitment to working across institutional boundaries. By connecting stakeholders from across the

UN system, governments and external partners, it enables more coordinated and harmonized approaches to innovation. This system-wide perspective is critical to reducing fragmentation and unlocking collective impact.

Over time, the partnership has contributed to a broader shift in how innovation is approached within the UN system. There is growing momentum toward shared tools, services and approaches that can benefit multiple agencies, **moving beyond siloed efforts toward more integrated and scalable solutions.** In this context, the collaboration serves as an example of how trust, alignment and a shared vision can enable system-level change.

Moving forward, advancing the responsible use of AI and data remains a key area for continued collaboration, ensuring that innovation is guided by ethical principles and aligned with UN values.

Together, this partnership highlights what is

possible when diverse actors come together around a common purpose – demonstrating how collaboration can move innovation beyond pilots and into scalable solutions that deliver lasting impact.

“UN Global Pulse has proven to be a credible and trusted partner across the UN system. Through our collaboration, we are not only supporting innovation, we are helping to build the shared tools and approaches needed to deliver impact at a truly global scale.”

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

FROM DIALOGUE TO ACTION

UN GLOBAL PULSE'S KEY ENGAGEMENTS IN 2025

UN Global Pulse approaches public engagement as a core part of how we work, not as an add-on, but as an expression of our commitment to working out loud. By sharing what we try, what we learn, and what works, we aim to catalyze broader action across the UN system and beyond, so that progress in one place can spark progress everywhere.

AI Action Summit 2025 – Paris, France

The AI Action Summit in Paris was an important moment for UN Global Pulse's AI work. The summit brought together heads of state and global leaders from scientific, cultural, policy and business communities around a shared objective which is ensuring that artificial intelligence serves everyone everywhere for good.

For UN Global Pulse, the Summit was an opportunity to showcase our AI initiative (DISHA)'s transition from innovation to scale. Presented as a flagship example of responsible AI in action, DISHA demonstrated how advanced analytics can dramatically reduce the time required to assess post-disaster damage by up to sixfold, enabling humanitarian actors to identify where food, shelter and medical assistance are most urgently needed. The visit of UN Secretary-General António Guterres to the DISHA affirmed a shared vision for a safer, more resilient and more responsive global system.



Photo: United Nations



Photo: United Nations

UN 2.0 Week 2025 – Global

UN Global Pulse's strategic contributions to the UN 2.0 Transformation were reinforced and made visible through a series of key moments in 2025, including the **UN 2.0 Week**. The week in its second year built momentum around the transformation agenda, bringing together over 25,000 UN colleagues, leaders and partners. **UN Global Pulse played a role sharing evidence-based lessons from UN innovation practice and highlighting the concrete opportunities presented by AI and advanced data initiatives.**

Through high-level panels co-hosted with Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General, Global Pulse shared with participants our experiences on AI partnerships and AI scaling. Complementing these global panels, Global Pulse co-hosted thematic side events, including the **"We the Peoples"** session and an **Asia Pacific (APAC)-focused Quintet** session, which emphasized inclusive transformation and regional collaboration. **Together, these engagements reinforced Global Pulse's role as both a thought-leader and a practical partner in the UN 2.0 journey.**



Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum – New York, USA

The focus on evidence and delivery continued at the 2025 Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Forum. **Here, UN Global Pulse contributed to global discussions on how innovation can accelerate progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in a context of widening gaps and limited resources.** Global Pulse hosted three in-person side events in New York, bringing together policymakers, practitioners and partners to explore applied approaches to data-driven decision-making and system-wide learning.

A key milestone at the STI Forum was the launch of the 2025 UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, signaling a renewed emphasis on scaling mature solutions with demonstrated impact. This marked a clear evolution in Global Pulse's portfolio, from supporting early-stage experimentation to enabling solutions ready for system-wide adoption. These engagements positioned Global Pulse at the intersection of innovation policy, implementation and global partnership-building.

In all, UN Global Pulse's public engagements across 2025 **allowed our teams across the globe to share our experiences of transformation grounded in evidence and practice.**

80th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA80) – New York, USA

The trajectory toward scale was further reflected during the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly. **As global attention turned to the UN's anniversary and its future relevance, UN Global Pulse maintained a strong presence across high-level engagements.**

One of the flagship moments for UN Global Pulse at UNGA80 was a high-level UN 2.0 event convened in the context of the UN's 80th anniversary. Anchored in the United Nations' enduring mission for peace, development and human rights, the event invited global audiences to explore how the UN is transforming to meet today's challenges.

Senior leaders, including the Deputy Secretary-General, Under-Secretary-General for Policy and Assistant Secretaries-General, highlighted how UN 2.0 is leveraging data, digital tools, and responsible AI to deliver smarter, faster and more inclusive solutions for the SDGs. UN Global Pulse's contributions, including through DISHA, grounded these discussions in the operational reality of how innovation can be operationalized in humanitarian and development contexts. DISHA also formed part of the UN 2.0 exhibition, allowing delegates and partners to engage directly with practical applications of data, digital tools, responsible AI and behavioural science.



LOOKING FORWARD

As the United Nations enters its ninth decade, UN80 is more than a commemoration of the past; **it is a call to ensure the UN can deliver its mandates effectively and credibly.**

As Guy Ryder, Under-Secretary for Policy, has emphasized, UN80 provides the system with a single coordination and accountability framework to advance reform: **united to deliver better.** It brings transformation under one roof, **offering a clear and coherent pathway to drive change** at a moment when the world cannot afford fragmentation or inertia.

From contributing our AI expertise to the new Technology Accelerator Platform to advising on the joint UN system data commons, UN Global Pulse's contribution to UN80 will focus on **turning ambition into practice** and supporting new innovation capabilities throughout the implementation of the initiative.

This is work we are already doing: scaling artificial intelligence to support urgent humanitarian response and ground-level decision-making and translating data collaboration into nationally anchored policy processes. These are not pilots awaiting proof. They are blueprints already informing what comes next.

Responsible innovation and technology are not ends in themselves, but enablers of trust, effectiveness and impact. **By connecting data, digital tools and human-centred approaches,** we help the UN move faster where it matters most, while remaining grounded in ethics, inclusion and accountability.

In 2025, our hubs operated as a connected system across Asia Pacific, Africa, Europe and North America, united by a shared commitment to scaling what works.

Through the Accelerator Programme, we supported teams across the UN system to move their most impactful solutions beyond pilots and into sustained, institutional practice – equipping them with the strategic, human-centred capacities needed to scale responsibly. Moving forward, we aim to expand the Accelerator to new regionally focused challenges, while deepening its focus on data and digital technologies as the core enablers of system-wide transformation.

By enabling partners to lead, supporting UN teams that do great work, building AI models for use across humanitarian and development contexts, and creating the conditions for responsible adoption at scale, we accelerate what works in the service of people and planet. As the Secretary-General has emphasized, **the UN is not merely a meeting place, but a moral compass;** it must turn decisions into action, and scaling innovation is central to that mission.

Looking ahead, UN Global Pulse will continue to support the UN80 initiative and UN 2.0 by strengthening partnerships across the UN system, governments, academia, philanthropy and the private sector. We will deepen collaboration between our hubs, **sharpen our global focus on emerging technologies and continue to invest in innovations with the highest potential to deliver impact at scale.**

The future is ours to build, and by accelerating what works, responsibly and together, we are helping shape a United Nations that is ready not just for today's challenges, but for those still to come.

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