EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT OF
UN WOMEN FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME INITIATIVES
AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN

February 2021
To what extent has the FPI approach improved and focused strategic programming?

To what extent has the FPI approach strengthened governance, quality assurance, monitoring, reporting and knowledge management?

To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced collaboration and system-wide coordination on GEWE among UN agencies at global and country levels?

To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced engagement of partners around common GEWE goals?

To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced resource mobilization and donor relations, flexible and predictable funding?
Evaluation approach and methodology

**Mixed-methods:**
Organizational effectiveness assessment, theory-based evaluation approaches and appreciative enquiry.

**Conducted by a multi-disciplinary team:**
Evaluators from IES and one auditor from IAS.

**Desk review**
and synthesis
Portfolio analysis
and review of UN Women management systems, reports and internal assessments

**Focus group Interviews:**
MEWGC, LEAP, CRA,
Safe Cities and RO
Strategic Planning Specialists

**Five case studies:**
MEWGC, LEAP, CRA, A2J, Safe Cities

**Surveys conducted**
and remote semi-structured interviews of UN Women staff and partners. 23% total response rate for surveys (HQ:26%, RO: 11%, and CO:58%)

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112 stakeholders interviewed
5 focus group Interviews
5 case studies
280+ documents reviewed
2 online surveys
156 survey respondents
Conclusions
The FPIs were a much needed and significant corporate initiative to strengthen UN-Women’s programmatic focus, thematic coherence and operational effectiveness to attain the Strategic Plan’s GEWE-related objectives. The FPIs represented a way to consolidate UN-Women’s previously fragmented and subscale programming using coherent approaches that could be scaled up and combined for corporate results monitoring and reporting.

FPI implementation during 2016–2017 and under the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 revealed successes and challenges, as well as results-based adjustments and adaptations. However, as the FPIs represented UN-Women’s first experiences with transformative programming, both successes and challenges hold valuable lessons in programming and change management for the next Strategic Plan.
The FPIs were highly successful in shifting the corporate mindset towards programmatic approaches, and also demonstrated the scalable impact of focused and standard approaches unified by clear theories of change and facilitated by global and regional policy support. Generally, these approaches are now used in UN-Women’s programming.

Elements that were weak and constrained several FPIs from performing to their potential included: quality assurance mechanisms; resource mobilization; financial tracking and reporting; corporate performance monitoring against FPI differentiator metrics; and initiatives around structured partnerships.
UN-Women has developed a cogent approach of collaborative and comparative advantage in delivering its mandate over the years. However, several factors shape the organization’s strategic position for United Nations system coordination, such as the extent to which the United Nations and other partners recognize its added value as well as demand for its thematic United Nations coordination efforts.

The FPIs were not stand-alone, independent modalities and their success largely depended on the overall enabling environment and business processes. Although much emphasis was placed on substantive programmatic aspects of the FPIs, a similar degree of emphasis was not placed on corporate-level monitoring of their performance and in turn on drawing lessons and adapting from implementation experiences. Clear accountabilities for business processes and overall leadership of the FPIs as corporate programming instruments were not established.
The performance, results and early impacts of the FPIs varied greatly. However, the common success factors across the FPIs validated their logic and rationale of coherence and standardization, programming and scale, predictable funding, strong partnerships and effective monitoring and knowledge management.

In summation, the FPIs were a bold and ambitious corporate initiative and carried risks associated with any major corporate change endeavour. The FPI intervention logic remains highly relevant to UN-Women’s Strategic Plans, and their experiences provide valuable lessons for the continuation and reinforcement of programmatic approaches.
Recommendations
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1. UN-Women should **explicitly state its thematic programme focus and field delivery footprint** and reaffirm ‘second-generation FPIs’ as a programmatic instrument based on field capacity and resource mobilization targets in its Strategic Plan 2022–2025.

2. UN-Women senior leadership should **drive accountability for implementation of agreed corporate programmatic approaches** and supporting business processes by **clearly anchoring oversight and supervisory responsibilities for the next generation of FPIs** in the Policy, Programme and Intergovernmental Division (PPID).

3. UN-Women should **clearly define how it will leverage its United Nations coordination mandate** and United Nations reform to amplify GEWE results through its programming and establish its own programmatic footprint, to ensure that UN-Women is recognized as the key thematic programme leader.
Recommendations

4. Develop global, regional and country-level second-generation FPI modalities for each of the planned GEWE pillars, with theories of change and analysis of actions that link normative support, United Nations system coordination, and operational activities of UN-Women’s integrated mandate. Actions and results should also be differentiated at the global, regional and country levels.

5. UN-Women should establish clear responsibilities and an accountability framework for each planned GEWE pillar/impact area across the whole organization.

6. UN-Women should fully integrate its strategic planning, budgeting, results monitoring and financial systems so that planning, resource mobilization, budgets and expenditure of Strategic Plan initiatives are clearly reported through the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.
THANK YOU

IES corporate evaluation reports are available at: gate.unwomen.org/