



IN BRIEF

EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT OF UN WOMEN FLAGSHIP PROGRAMME INITIATIVES AND THEMATIC PRIORITIES OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2018-2021

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WHAT WAS EVALUATED?

The Flagship Programme Initiatives (FPIs) were developed in 2015 with the goal of creating high-impact, scalable initiatives that would build upon and supplement the Entity’s ongoing programmatic work.

The FPIs represent both operational and programming instruments, as well as a roadmap for the implementation of the SP’s Thematic Priorities (TPs). The FPIs were envisioned as a new programming modality for UN Women to move away from a tradition of numerous, small- scale and fragmented interventions towards strategic, multi-year engagement frameworks delivered coherently across regions and countries, and at a requisite scale to achieve transformational changes in GEWE. The FPIs also aimed to further boost UN Women’s resource mobilization and strategic partnership endeavours.

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Analyse whether and **how the FPIs have realized their stated intent** to ensure that UN Women fully leverages its triple mandate in an integrated manner to become “fitter and funded for purpose” to deliver against the SDGs and the ideals of UN system reform.
- Inform organizational **learning** and **accountability** for past performance.
- Provide **useful lessons** to feed into future corporate programmatic thinking and practice and serve as key inputs to the development of the UN Women SP 2022–2025.

The evaluation is intended to be used primarily by UN Women’s leadership, policy thematic divisions and other headquarters divisions that support different aspects of UN Women’s programme implementation at global, regional and country levels.

EVALUATION OVERARCHING QUESTIONS:

1. To what extent have FPI/TP approaches improved and focused **strategic programming**?
2. To what extent has the FPI approach strengthened **governance, quality assurance, monitoring** and **knowledge management**?
3. To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced **engagement of partners** around common GEWE goals?
4. To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced collaboration and **system-wide coordination on GEWE** among UN agencies at global and country levels?
5. To what extent has the FPI approach enhanced **resource mobilization** and donor relations, and provided flexible and predictable funding?

CONTEXT					
	10 th anniversary of the establishment of UN Women	25 th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action	20 th anniversary of UN Security Council Resolution 1325	A 5-year milestone for achieving the SDGs	COVID-19 pandemic

EVALUATION APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY



Desk review

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



Five case studies and Focus group Interviews:

MEWGC, LEAP, CSA, 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%)



Mixed-methods

and conducted by a multi-disciplinary team

112

stakeholders interviewed

5

focus group interviews

5

case studies

280+

documents reviewed

2

online surveys

156

survey respondents

WHAT DID THE EVALUATION CONCLUDE?

CONCLUSION 1: 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 SP objectives towards GEWE. The FPIs represented a way of consolidating UN Women's then fragmented and subscale programme footprint using coherent approaches that could be scaled up as well as aggregated for corporate results monitoring and reporting.

CONCLUSION 2: The FPI implementation experience during 2016–2017 and under SP 2018–2021 revealed successes and challenges, as well as adjustments and adaptation based on results. However, as FPIs represented the Entity's first experiences with transformative programming, both successes and challenges hold valuable lessons in programming and change management for the next SP.

CONCLUSION 3: The FPIs were highly successful in embedding a corporate mind-shift towards programmatic approaches, and also demonstrated the scalable impact of focused and standard approaches unified by clear theories of change, facilitated by global and regional policy support. Generally, these approaches are now used in UN Women's programming.

CONCLUSION 4: Elements that were weak and constrained several FPIs from performing to their potential were: quality assurance mechanisms, resource mobilization, financial tracking and reporting, corporate performance monitoring against FPI differentiator metrics, and initiatives around structured partnerships.

CONCLUSION 5: UN Women has elaborated a cogent approach on collaborative and comparative advantage in delivering its mandate over the years; however, its strategic position for UN system coordination is shaped by several factors including the extent to which the UN and other partners recognize its added value and demand for its thematic UN coordination efforts.

CONCLUSION 6: FPIs were not stand-alone and independent modalities and their success depended to a great extent on the overall enabling environment and business processes. Although much emphasis went into substantive programmatic aspects, a similar degree of emphasis was not evident in corporate level monitoring of their performance to draw lessons and adapt from the implementation experience. Clear accountabilities for business processes and overall leadership of FPIs as corporate programming instruments were not established.

CONCLUSION 7: FPIs exhibited a huge diversity of performance, results and early impacts. However, the common success factors across FPIs validated the FPI logic and rationale of coherence and standardization, programming and scale, predictable funding, strong partnerships and effective monitoring and knowledge management.

CONCLUSION 8: In summation, the FPIs were a bold and ambitious corporate initiative and carried risks associated with any major corporate change endeavour. The FPIs intervention logic remains highly relevant to UN Women's SPs, and their experiences – both successes and failings – provide valuable lessons for the continuance and reinforcement of programmatic approaches.

HOW CAN UN WOMEN IMPROVE?



RECOMMENDATION 1

UN Women should **explicitly state thematic programme focus**, field delivery footprint and reaffirm “second generation FPIs” as a programmatic instrument based on field capacity and resource mobilization targets in the next SP 2022–2025.



RECOMMENDATION 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 FPIs” in PPID.



RECOMMENDATION 3

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



RECOMMENDATION 4

UN Women should **develop global, regional and country “second generation” FPI modalities** for each of the planned GEWE pillars, with theories of change and analysis of actions that link the normative support, UN system coordination and operational activities aspects of UN Women’s integrated mandate. In addition, differentiate actions and results at the global, regional and country level.



RECOMMENDATION 5

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



RECOMMENDATION 6

UN Women should **implement a full integration of its strategic planning**, budgeting, results monitoring and financial systems so that planning, resource mobilization, budgets and expenditure of SP initiatives are clearly reported through the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.