# Evaluation Office

**Evaluation of the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the UNFPA Strategic Plan, 2014-2017**

*Workshop on Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 – 4 May, 2017*

# Evaluation objectives, scope and approach

# Purpose and justification

- To feed into the preparation of the new UNFPA Strategic Plan with independent evaluative evidence and lessons learned

- To feed into the reform of the GRI

- To learn from the design and implementation of the UNFPA Business Model to provide lessons that can be used by other United Nations entities
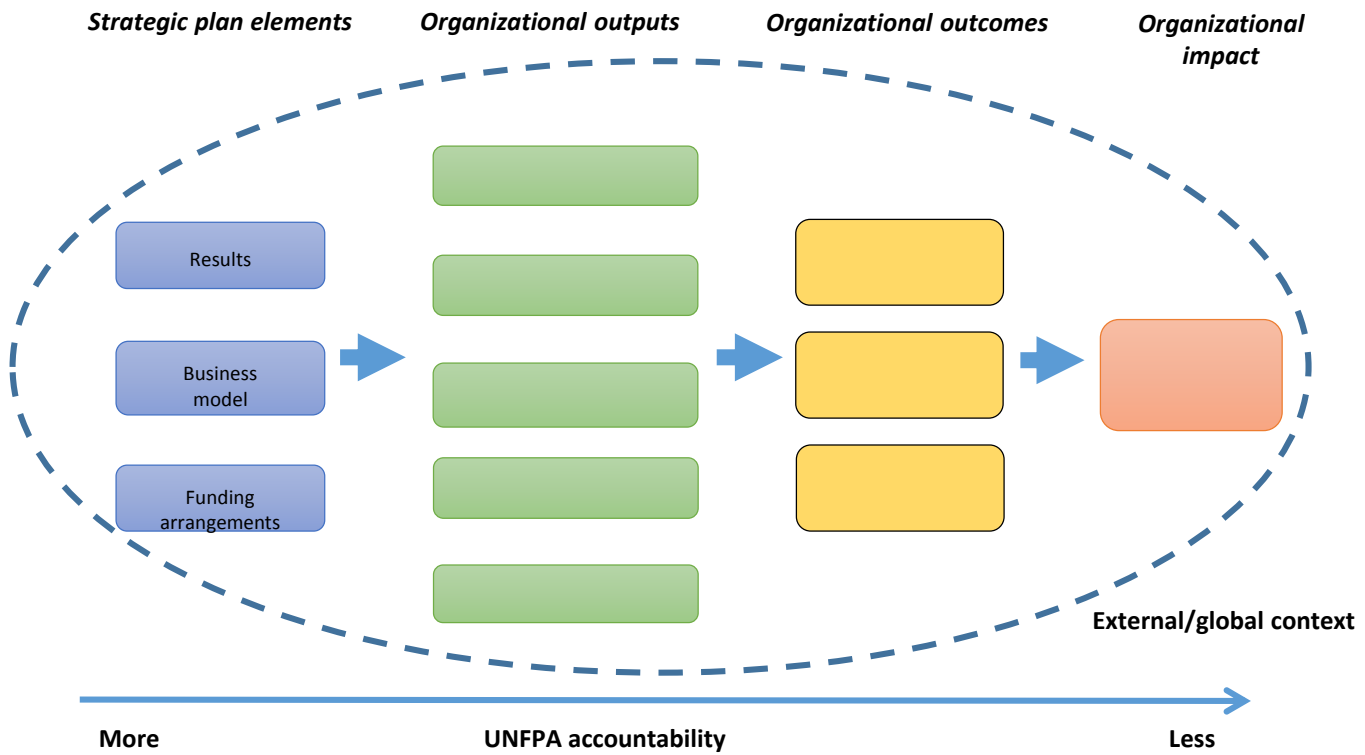
# Objectives

- To assess whether the key elements of the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the Strategic Plan have helped UNFPA to strengthen its performance

- To identify the factors that can explain why the elements of the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the Strategic Plan have been successful or not.

- To provide recommendations for strengthening the strategic planning architecture for consideration by the UNFPA executive board.

# Scope of the evaluation

| I: Results | II: Business Model | III: Funding arrangements |
|---|---|---|
| Integrated Results Framework outcomes and outputs | Country classification | Resources allocation system |
| | Modes of engagement | Global and regional interventions |
| Theories of change | Humanitarian assistance | |

# Evaluation team

- **Co-team leaders**: Hicham Daoudi (Evaluation Office) and Michael Reynolds (International consultant)

- **Strategic development expert**: Faith Tempest

- **Research assistant**: Judit Szonyi

Strategic plan elements    Organizational outputs    Organizational outcomes    Organizational impact

Results

Business model

Funding arrangements

External/global context

More          UNFPA accountability          Less

# Intervention logic of the architecture supporting the operationalization of the SP

**Strategic plan elements**

**Organizational outputs**

**Organizational outcomes**

**Organizational impact**

## Strategic plan elements

**Results**
- IRF outcomes and outputs
- Theories of change

**Business model**
- Country classification
- Modes of engagement
- Humanitarian assistance

**Funding arrangements**
- Resource allocation system
- Global and regional interventions
- Other resources

## Organizational outputs

- Connection between development and management results made clear
- Development results captured at impact, outcome and output level
- Programmes focused on most important areas / Bull's Eye
- Mechanisms to respond to different types of changes in context in place and applied
- Results based approach enhanced
- Culture of partnership promoted
- Humanitarian action mainstreamed in all outcomes
- COs guided to modes of engagement most appropriate to operational context
- Human resources aligned to modes of engagement
- Financial resources aligned to needs of country
- Resource allocation aligned with strategic direction
- Channels of resources for responses to emerging issues (incl. hum. crises) established and used
- Integrated picture of financial resources by 2017
- Improved mobilization of resources

## Organizational outcomes

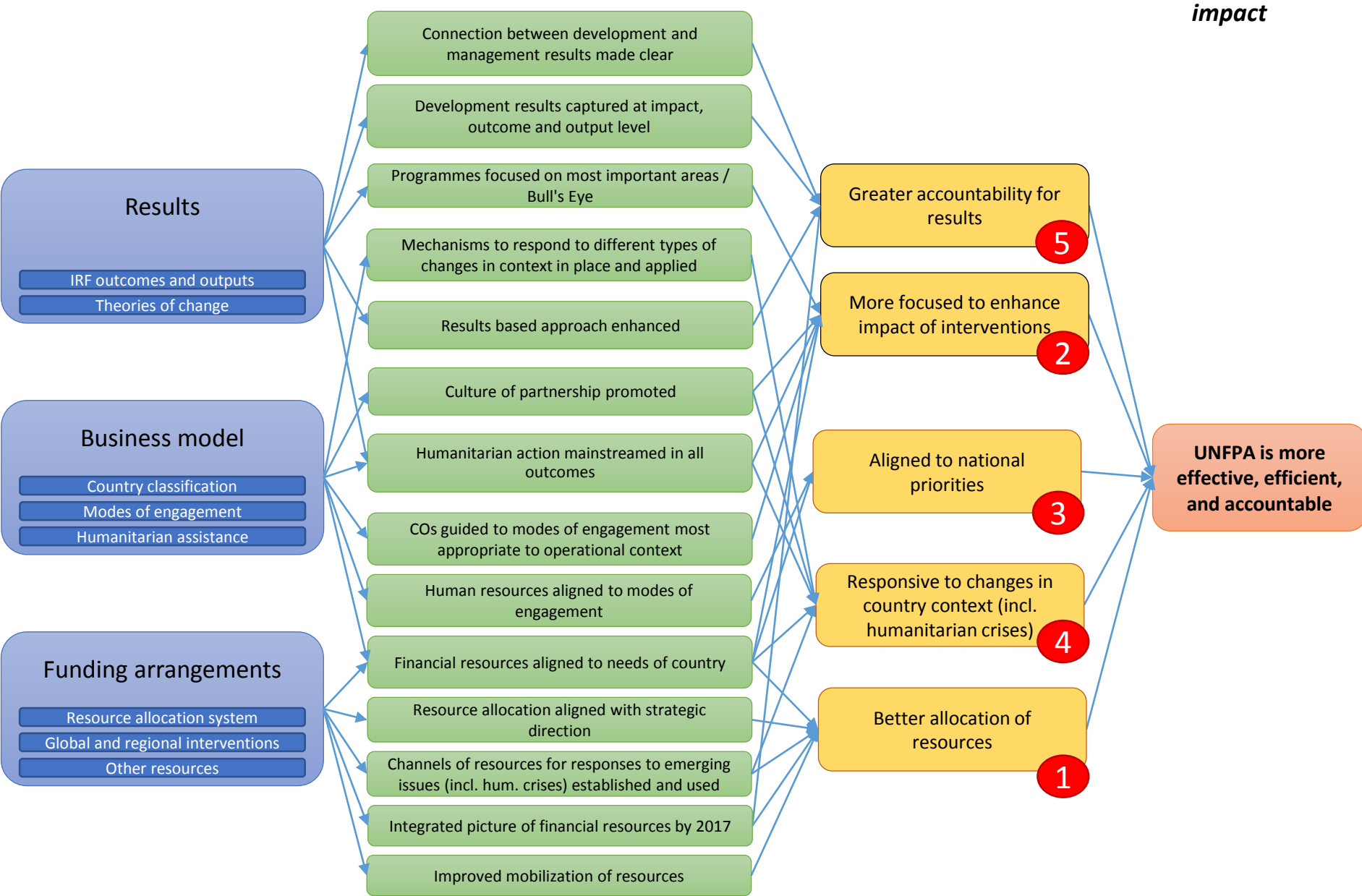- Greater accountability for results **5**
- More focused to enhance impact of interventions **2**
- Aligned to national priorities **3**
- Responsive to changes in country context (incl. humanitarian crises) **4**
- Better allocation of resources **1**

## Organizational impact

**UNFPA is more effective, efficient, and accountable**

# Evaluation questions

**EQ1**: To what extent did the architecture supporting the operationalization of the strategic plan contribute to an improved allocation of resources within UNFPA?
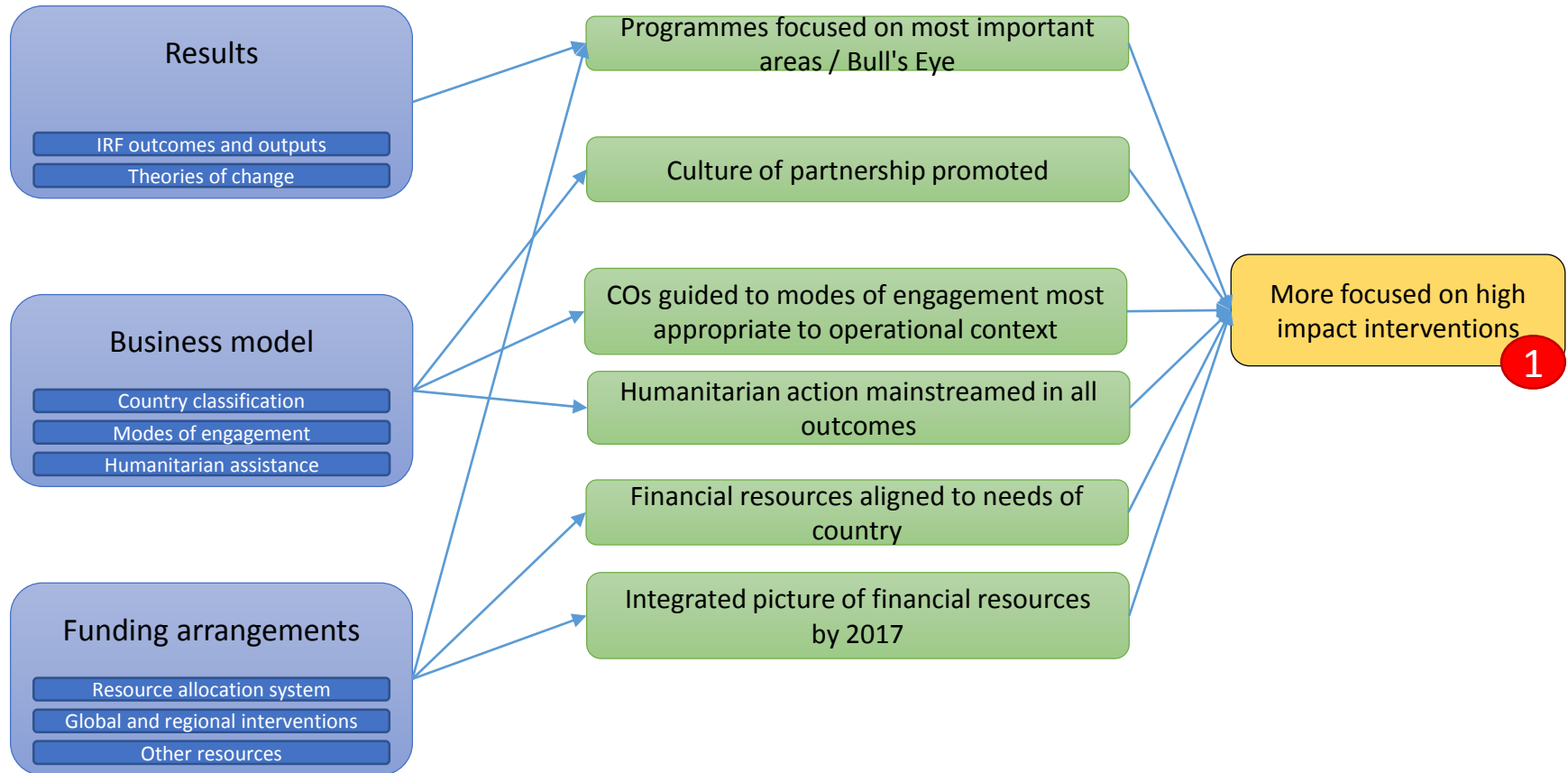
**EQ2**: To what extent did the architecture supporting the operationalization of the SP help UNFPA country programmes to become more focused to enhance the impact of its interventions?

**EQ3**: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA to tailor its country programmes to the priority needs of countries?
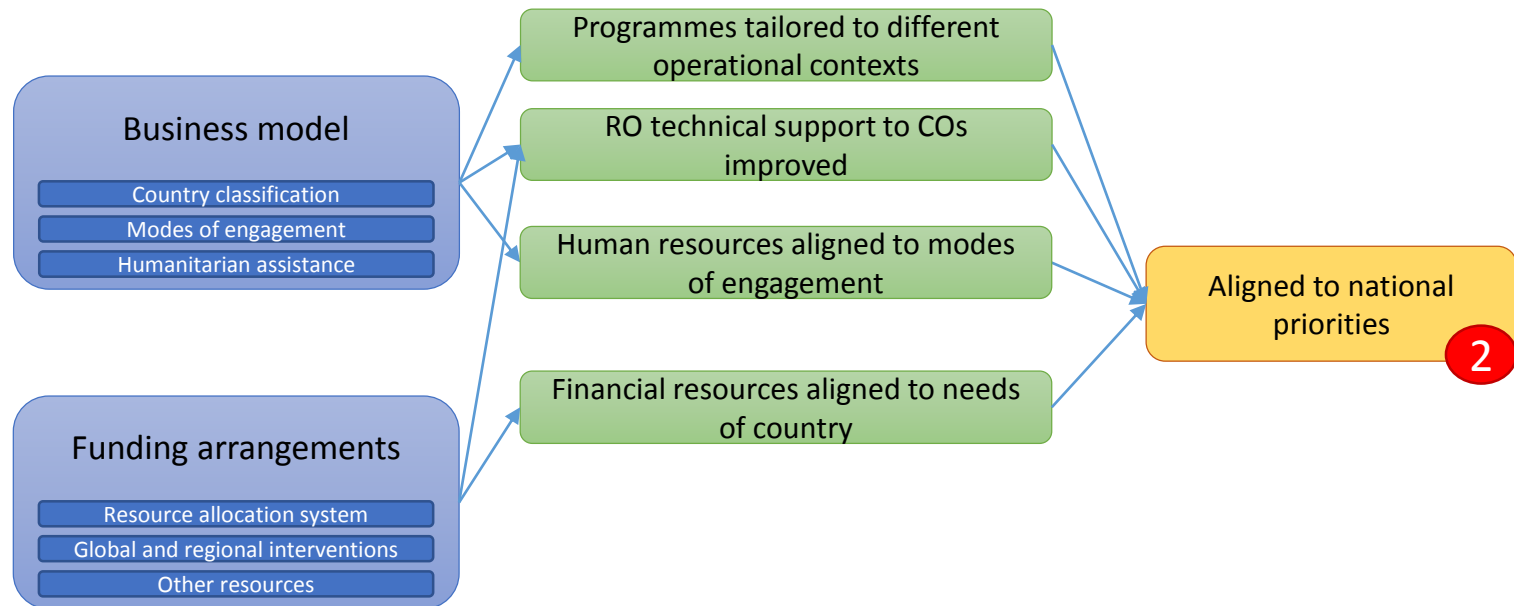
**EQ4**: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA to respond to changes in country context (including humanitarian crises)?

**EQ5**:To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA become more accountable to its stakeholders?
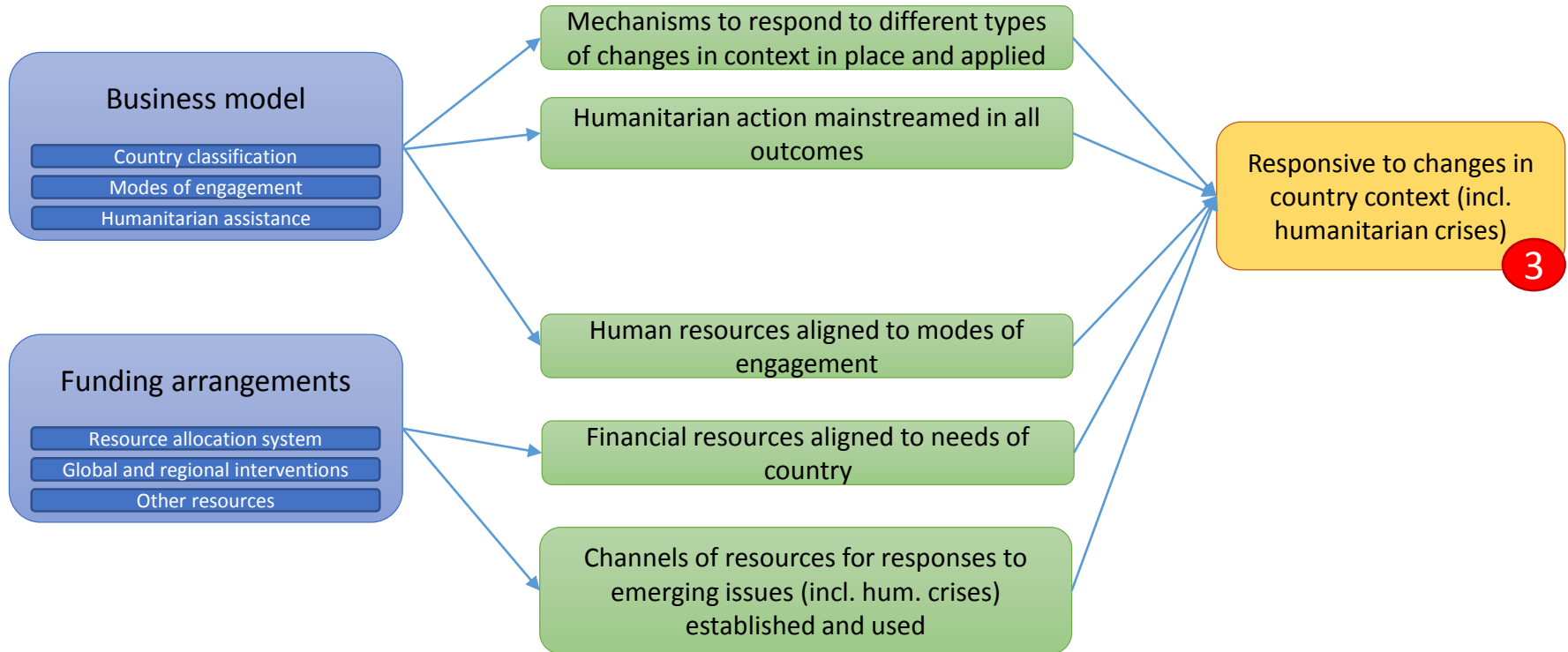
# EQ1: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA become more focused on high impact interventions?
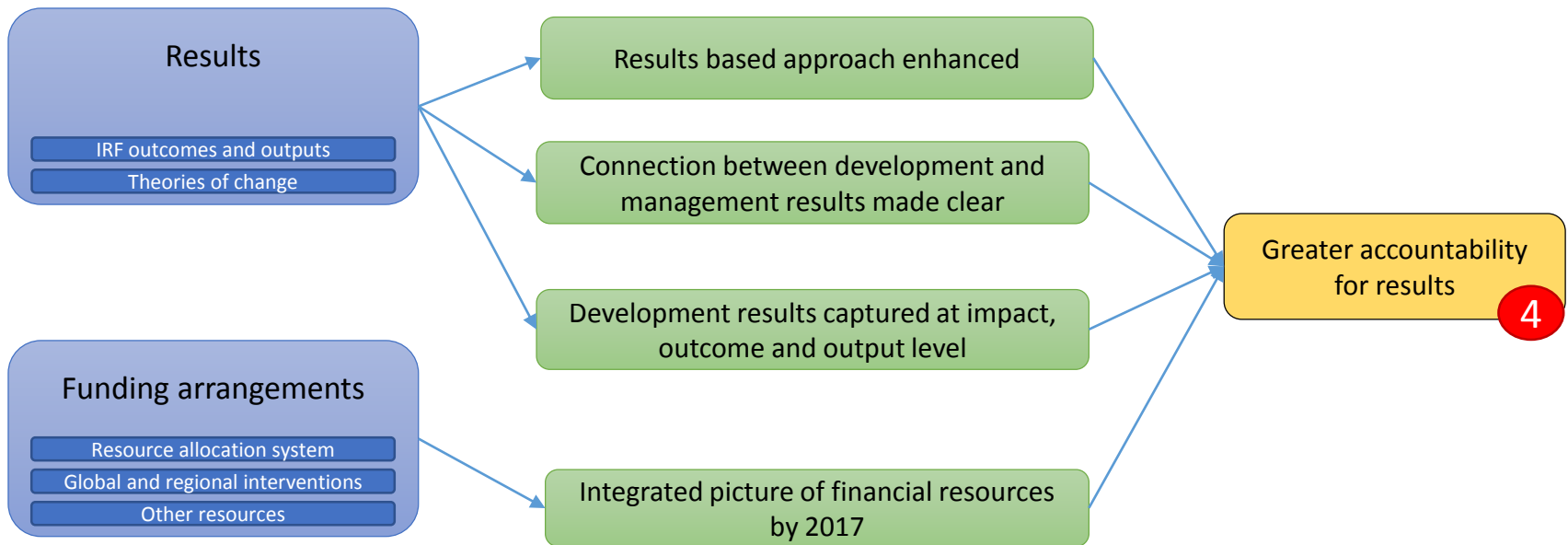
# EQ2: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA tailor its programmes to the priority needs of countries?

# EQ3: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA to respond to changes in country context (including humanitarian crises)



**Business model**
- Country classification
- Modes of engagement
- Humanitarian assistance

**Funding arrangements**
- Resource allocation system
- Global and regional interventions
- Other resources

- Mechanisms to respond to different types of changes in context in place and applied
- Humanitarian action mainstreamed in all outcomes
- Human resources aligned to modes of engagement
- Financial resources aligned to needs of country
- Channels of resources for responses to emerging issues (incl. hum. crises) established and used

Responsive to changes in country context (incl. humanitarian crises)

3

# EQ4: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan help UNFPA become more accountable to its stakeholders?
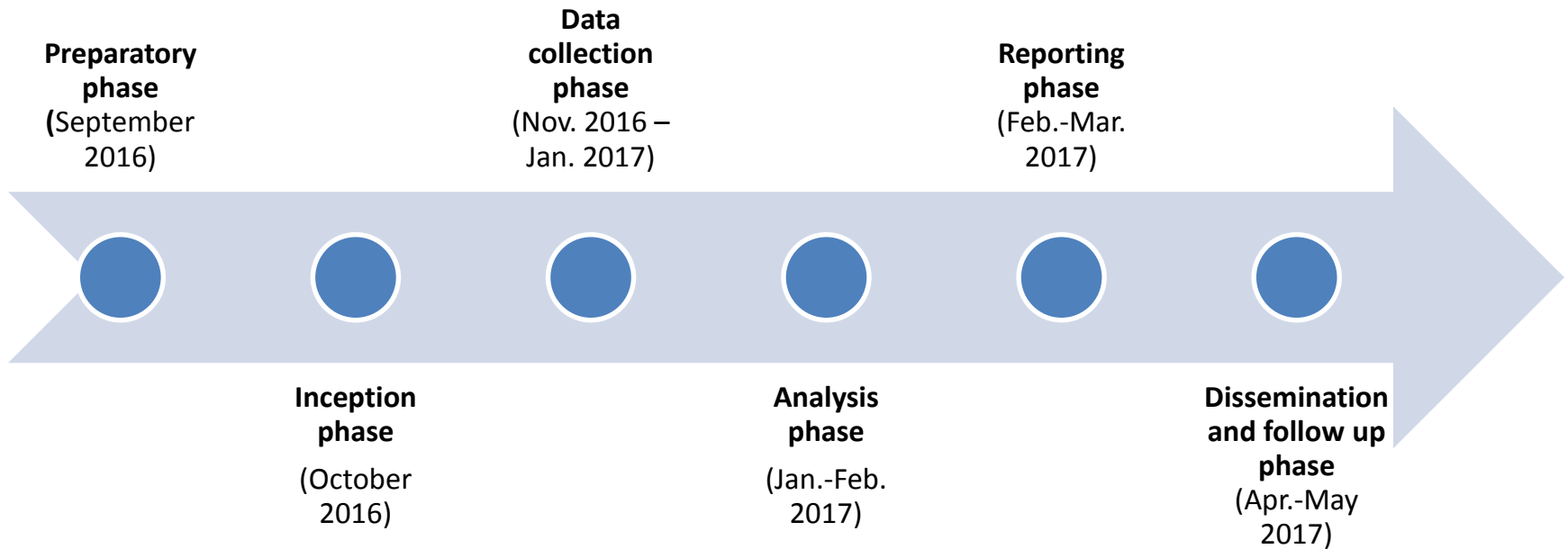
# EQ5: To what extent did the architecture supporting the strategic plan contribute to an improved allocation of resources within UNFPA?

# Data collection methods and tools

- Document review

- Interviews with key informants at headquarters

- Country visits (9)

- Remote country studies (15)

- Stakeholder electronic survey (3)

# Evaluation process



**Preparatory phase (**September 2016)

**Inception phase**

(October 2016)

**Data collection phase** (Nov. 2016 – Jan. 2017)

**Analysis phase**

(Jan.-Feb. 2017)

**Reporting phase** (Feb.-Mar. 2017)

**Dissemination and follow up phase** (Apr.-May 2017)

# Findings

1. There has been progress towards a unified funding architecture with the introduction of a policy for non-core resource management in 2016.

2. There has been an increase in the proportion of regular resources allocated to countries with the greatest need and the lowest ability to finance, in line with the expectations of the Executive Board, but existing allocation criteria may not be enough to ensure the most effective allocation of resources.

3. Maintaining the bull's eye and introducing the four outcomes of the integrated results framework have contributed to greater focus in the country programmes that were developed or realigned after the adoption of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

4. For many countries in the pink quadrant, as well as some in the yellow and orange quadrants, the alignment with the limited modes of engagement, as envisaged in the business model, has not been realised.

5. The guidance on alignment lacked clarity. This led to different perceptions in countries on the degree of flexibility allowed in aligning to the model of differentiated modes of engagement.

6. The lack of conceptual clarity in the strategic plan itself, and in the guidance subsequently provided by headquarters and regional offices, has led to an uneven understanding of the modes of engagement.

7. The model of restricting modes of engagement in some countries does not always reflect the reality of programming (and the policy cycle) on the ground.

8. Alignment of human resource capacity at country level to the needs of the strategic plan has been slow and there is no evidence that processes are fully in place to ensure appropriate capacity to meet the requirements of the strategic plan.

9. Humanitarian mainstreaming has improved particularly through a focus on preparedness, but not all elements of the architecture aimed at supporting the UNFPA response to a humanitarian crisis have been implemented.

10. UNFPA has successfully mobilised resources to support humanitarian crises but key mechanisms, such as the emergency fund and humanitarian response reserve, have faced resource constraints.

11. While the results monitoring and reporting system has been strengthened since the start of the SP, the system still faces challenges related to adaptation to the upstream orientation of the business model.

12. Monitoring of alignment to the strategic plan has been limited and has not continued over the life of the plan.

# Conclusions

# Conclusion 1

- Classification of countries based on country needs and ability to finance has been useful for resource allocation and contributed to the focus of resources to countries with the greatest needs.

- However, perception of restricted modes of engagement in pink, yellow and orange countries, means that programming strategies have not always been flexible enough to promote national ownership and programme responsiveness.

- These restrictions are part of a centralisation of decision-making in the organisation and a move away from the country focus, as promoted in the transition business plan for 2012-2013. This is also reflected in the performance monitoring and reporting system which is focused on corporate needs and less on learning and accountability at the country level.

# Conclusion 2

- The substantial efforts made to support alignment to the strategic plan were impeded by lack of corporate preparedness and, given this unpreparedness, an unrealistic timeframe to address alignment in all its dimensions. Moreover, the introduction of the strategic plan was not accompanied by a comprehensive change management process across the whole organisation.

- Such a process should have led to better integration of alignment guidance with existing processes, policies and strategies. Organisational plans and strategies were not explicit on how they would deal with changing levels of resource.  In addition, the implementation of specific elements of the architecture of the strategic plan as envisaged in the strategic plan document should have been better defined and a plan for their implementation clearly articulated and then monitored.

- Going forward, the challenge will be to implement these changes in the context of a more coordinated and coherent approach to strategic planning in the United Nations development system, where reaching agreement among agencies may cause delays and where a single entity cannot be held accountable for change.

# Conclusion 3

- Although there has been progress in strengthening the architecture for operationalising the strategic plan, it is not yet aligned to the needs of the requirement of the new environment within which UNFPA operates. Specifically, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development calls for an approach to programming building on the interrelated efforts to deliver on the interdependent Sustainable Development Goals.

- Achieving these goals will require an enhanced approach to capacity and also requires greater integration through stronger and more strategic partnerships. The business model, which reflects the "how" of UNFPA work, is not comprehensive enough to address these emerging demands.

# Recommendations

# Area 1: developing a stronger business model and increasing country focus

1. Disconnect the existing modes of engagement from country classification, apart from service delivery which will only be undertaken in red countries and in humanitarian contexts.

2. In the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, re-conceptualise the modes of engagement and clarify their relationship to capacity development.

3. Enhance accountability for results, as well as learning at country level, through strengthening the country level capacity for monitoring and evaluation and promoting national capacity to undertake country level evaluations.

# Area 2: preparing for operationalisation of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021 and subsequent strategic plans

4.  Develop and implement a comprehensive change management process to enable the organisation at all levels to implement the upcoming and subsequent strategic plans to deliver on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals

5.  Make the architecture supporting the operationalisation of the strategic plan an effective communication tool

6.  Develop an integrated package of guidance for operationalising the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 before the start of the plan, by updating existing guidance and preparing new guidance as necessary

7.  Utilise the country programme document process to ensure alignment of new country programmes to the strategic plan, and support country offices that have already started a country programme document cycle to align incrementally according to their context