

Update on the new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) development

Additional documents for this item:

Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

- *Recall* Decision Points 5.1, 6.6, 9.5, 9.7 from the 47th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board;
- *Take note* of the progress update and proposed approach for the development of the new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results, Accountability Framework (UBRAF); and
- *Requests* the Executive Director to submit for consideration a zero draft of the overall framework of the 2022-2026 UBRAF at the 48th PCB meeting in June 2021, and to submit the full 2022–2026 UBRAF and biennial workplan and budget for 2022–2023 for approval at a Special Session of the PCB in September 2021

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: none

TABLE OF CONTENTS

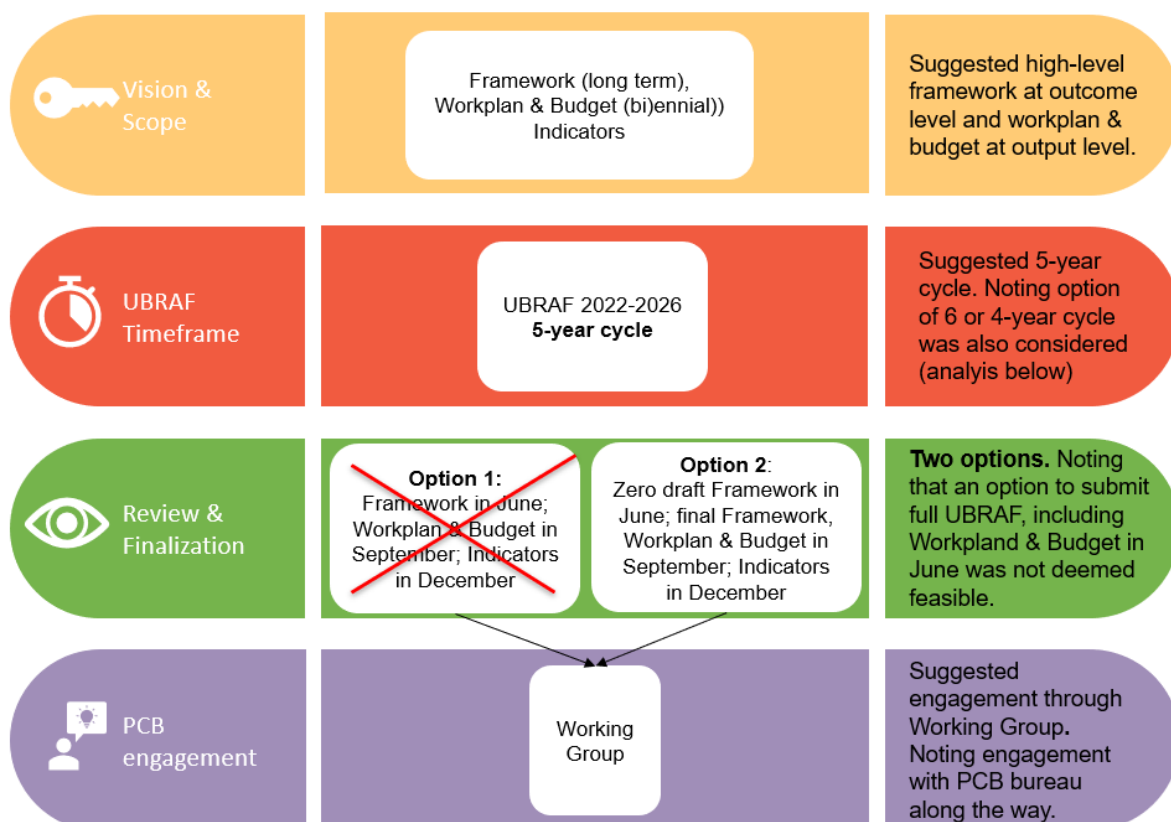
Executive summary	4
Introduction	5
What the UBRAF does	6
Linkage of the UBRAF with other global processes	8
What will be new / different?	9
Strategic programmatic shifts	10
Strategic organizational shifts	11
Overall framing of the new UBRAF	13
UBRAF scope and timeframe	13
Outline of the process for UBRAF development	18
Proposed timeline for PCB approval	19
PCB and broader engagement modalities	21
Conclusion	22
Proposed Decision Points	23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This paper updates on the development of a new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Workplan and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), which is aligned to the new Global AIDS Strategy which the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) is invited to consider and adopt at its Special Session in March 2021. The UBRAF sets out actions for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to support countries and communities in the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy.
2. A version of the paper was shared with the PCB on 2 March, in advance of the pre-PCB meeting held on 11 March 2021. Taking into account PCB members' feedback and suggestions, and aiming to further optimize alignment between the UBRAF, the Global AIDS Strategy and UN General Assembly's Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS for this new and the subsequent planning cycles, some changes were proposed and discussed at the Dialogue with PCB members held on 18 March 2021. As requested by PCB members and in agreement with the PCB Bureau, this revised version reflects these changes and updates, which are to be considered during the PCB Special Session on 24-25 March 2021.
3. The coming years are crucial for the HIV response. The Global AIDS Strategy outlines the multisectoral approaches that are required to address the challenges ahead. As the Joint Programme celebrates its 25th anniversary, the new UBRAF provides an opportunity to draw on lessons learned and further enhance the Joint Programme's unique role and critical contribution to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
4. The Joint Programme will work to catalyze the rapid implementation of the priority actions outlined in the Strategy. UNAIDS will align its footprint, capacity, ways of working and resource mobilization efforts with the new strategic priorities and result areas. UNAIDS will measure its performance, contributions and results against progress in country, regional and global HIV responses, with a specific focus on its contribution to support countries and communities to reduce inequalities that drive the AIDS epidemic and get the response on-track to ending AIDS by 2030.
5. This paper presents an overview of the Joint Programme's conceptualization and development of the new UBRAF and it describes key features of the UBRAF, including innovations in scope, approach and timeframe. It describes how the new UBRAF will seek to create linkages with related processes and it outlines key steps for the development and finalization of the UBRAF, including a summary of preparatory work undertaken to date, an outline of next steps and a proposed timeline for PCB consideration and approval.
6. It highlights innovative and transformative shifts that are proposed for the Joint Programme to strengthen its strategic focus for results. It describes how the UBRAF will be informed by a clearly articulated theory of change approach and a commitment to the optimization of human and financial resources as part of broader efforts to enhance the Joint Programme's overall effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.
7. This update reaffirms the value of PCB engagement in the UBRAF development process towards its approval. In addition, it recognizes the importance of ensuring the PCB's guidance and inputs for a UBRAF that will support resource mobilization efforts towards fully funding the Joint Programme's contribution to achieving the goals of the Global AIDS Strategy.
8. At this formative stage, guidance from the PCB is particularly welcome on:
 - the overall strategic framing of the UBRAF;

- the new UBRAF’s overall scope and timeframe; and
 - the timeline for UBRAF submission and review by the PCB, along with agreement on the modalities for optimal PCB engagement in the development process.
9. Careful analysis of options and initial PCB feedback has informed the recommendations for PCB consideration presented in this paper. Those options are summarized in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Recommended options and areas for PCB guidance for new UBRAF conceptualization



INTRODUCTION

10. UNAIDS has a central role in driving implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response for transformative action to reduce the inequalities needed to get back on on-track to end AIDS by 2030. The new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)¹ therefore will set out Joint Programme’s actions to support the Strategy’s implementation.
11. Aligned with the global HIV response targets, the new UBRAF will be underpinned by a clearly articulated theory of change approach. It will show how diverse knowledge, partnerships and experiences will be leveraged in support of nationally-owned and -led policies and strategies, as well as other country action and results, and ensure that UNAIDS delivers ever greater value for communities and countries.

¹ The exact name of the new UNAIDS Unified, Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) will be revised during its development as suggested by PCB members. It will be referred to as UBRAF in this document.

12. In line with the overall direction provided by the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) to date, and informed by innovations and lessons learned during implementation of the current UBRAF 2016–2021, the new UBRAF will demonstrate clearer prioritization and alignment between roles, accountabilities and resource levels across the Joint Programme’s work. It will respond to findings and recommendations of recent external assessments, including the management and administration review of UNAIDS by the UN Joint Inspection Unit and the Independent Evaluation of the UN System Response to AIDS 2016–2019.
13. At the 47th meeting of the PCB, following consideration of the management response to the Independent Evaluation, the PCB requested the Joint Programme to “show how it intends to support countries in implementing the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026 with greater specificity of action, contributions and accountability, through its new results and accountability framework”.
14. Other key PCB decisions will also be fully considered as the UBRAF is developed. They include the request of the 47th PCB to “ensure that prevention of new HIV infections is given high priority in the new Global AIDS Strategy and new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework with a particular focus on populations and locations with high HIV incidence, prevalence, and high risk of infection, including through combination prevention”, and the call to “ensure that the UBRAF includes coordinated support to countries to reduce new HIV infections among children, adolescents and young people and to end paediatric AIDS; and to report on progress as part of annual UBRAF reporting”.
15. The new UBRAF will reflect the Joint Programme’s commitment to integrate gender-responsive actions, indicators and resources across its work and management systems, towards ensuring UNAIDS delivers for women, girls, key populations, as well as other vulnerable populations most at risk of HIV.
16. This paper outlines the preparatory work done since December 2020 to develop the new UBRAF through inclusive processes, in tandem with further considering the management response to the Independent Evaluation of the UN System Response to AIDS 2016–2019 and considering the final stages of the Global AIDS Strategy’s development process. The paper provides an overview of proposed milestones and timelines, including options for PCB guidance, for the elaboration of the new UBRAF, with close involvement of PCB constituencies, as well as other partners and stakeholders. Initial feedback and suggestions received from PCB members during the pre-PCB held on 11 March 2021 and proposed related changes presented to the Dialogue with PCB members held on 18 March 2021 are also integrated in this revised version.

WHAT THE UBRAF DOES

17. The UBRAF articulates the Joint Programme’s added value (Unified) and commitments (Results), indicating the respective human and financial resource requirements (Budget), to guide the deployment of resources in areas of UNAIDS comparative advantage toward the achievements of the targets of the Strategy and its Accountability Framework.
18. The new UBRAF defines and operationalizes the Joint Programme’s role and contribution to the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As outlined in the related section in the Global AIDS Strategy and in applying the Strategy’s central inequality framework, UNAIDS will contribute to close the gaps in the HIV response, save lives and ensure equitable AIDS

responses. It will do so by building on its strengths, leveraging capacities and sharpening its actions, using a theory of change approach across the strategic priorities in three areas: leadership, global public goods, and countries and communities.

Figure 2. Four operational-level goals of the new UBRAF

4 operational-level goals of the new UBRAF



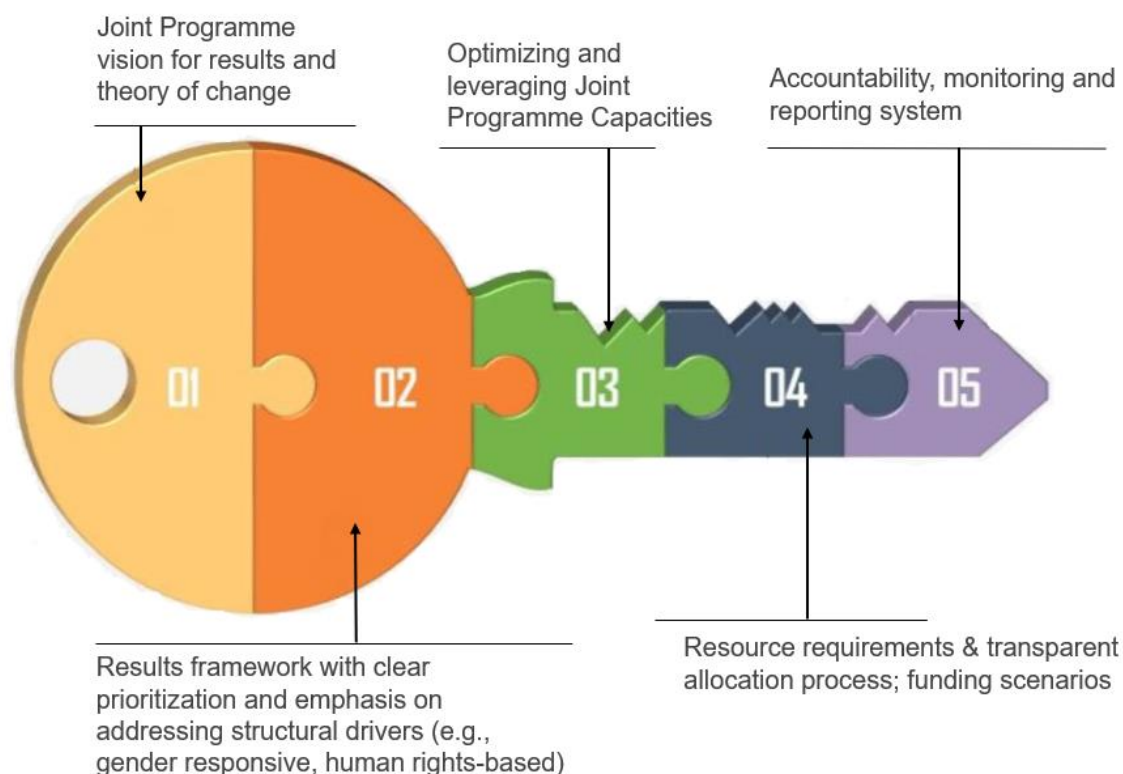
The UBRAF is the central, comprehensive instrument strategically guiding and framing the work of the Joint Programme, creating the top-line guidance, plan and priorities to accomplish four operational-level goals:

- i. set and operationalize a consistent, prioritized workplan at different levels that aligns the work of the Joint Programme with the Global AIDS Strategy and the SDGs;
- ii. provide the framework for differentiated approaches at the regional and country levels to reflect differences in the local contexts;
- iii. lay out the processes the Joint Programme will use to provide effective, strategic support to countries; and
- iv. provide the basis for performance monitoring, reporting and accountability of the Joint Programme.

19. Reflecting the unique Joint Programme structure of UNAIDS, the UBRAF leverages the diverse expertise and work of each Cosponsor and the Secretariat at all levels in a unified, effective and coherent manner. The UBRAF will continue to align with and demonstrate an advanced model of UN reform in action in line with the UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolutions (see paragraph 56 and Figure 6 below). The UBRAF demonstrates how the Joint Programme collectively optimizes its resources and uses diversity and collaboration to provide leadership for the global HIV response. The Joint Programme's capacities will be further optimized and aligned with the priorities of the Global AIDS Strategy following a Joint Programme's capacity assessment including the Secretariat's Alignment, taking stock of existing capacities, assets and needs and related recommendations.
20. The new UBRAF will build on lessons learned from previous iterations of the UBRAF, in particular the importance of the adaptability and differentiated approaches of joint work to better respond to evolving needs across regions and countries. Another prime lesson is the importance of better joint planning, action and monitoring, further alignment with Cosponsors' own relevant strategic planning, mainstreaming HIV into their broader health and development mandates and clearer reporting on the Joint Programme's contribution. This will be done through further enhanced communication and transparent reporting tools, including the UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Report package and the Joint Programme Results and Transparency Portal.
21. It is proposed that the new UBRAF comprise:
 - a. an overall long-term framework, including five key components (shown in Figure 3 and detailed further in the section on Scope and Timeframe, below), allowing space for review and adaptation to rapidly evolving contexts;
 - b. two biennial and one annual workplans and budgets which provide more detail on specific programmatic actions and budgetary allocations; and

- c. a Joint Programme performance indicator set (referred to as UBRAF indicators), that is aligned to the Global AIDS Monitoring indicators.

Figure 3. Key components of the new UBRAF long-term framework



LINKAGE OF THE UBRAF WITH OTHER GLOBAL PROCESSES

22. The new UBRAF is being developed in a crucial period, with a new Global AIDS Strategy in development and a UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting, which is expected to adopt a new Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. The UBRAF's development also occurs at a time of organizational shifts which are aimed at achieving a UNAIDS that is fit for purpose through the optimization of available resources for maximum impact. The UN reform agenda also provides new opportunities for more integrated, focused "on-the-ground" delivery through UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, which are aligned with national priorities and have clearer accountability for contributions to national needs, with capacities, skillsets and resources better aligned to the 2030 Agenda.
23. The new UBRAF is also being developed amid significant, ongoing global uncertainty related to the COVID-19 pandemic and its broader health and socioeconomic implications, including clear signals that progress made towards some of the SDGs is being halted or even reversed. However, significant experience has been gained in the past year on how to innovate and advance the global HIV response in this new reality.
24. The new UBRAF will be informed by, and aligned with, the following key processes which may hold implications for the timing of final submission of the UBRAF to the PCB:

- **finalization and adoption of the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026**, including global 2025 HIV targets, which will be considered and adopted by the PCB at its March 2021 Special Session, providing the basis for the strategic priorities and strategic result areas of the new UBRAF;
 - **2021 High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and its Political Declaration**, scheduled for 8–10 June 2021, which may have implications for the scope and programme of work of the new UBRAF;
 - **Global AIDS Monitoring (GAM) indicators** for the global AIDS response (to measure progress towards the global targets as part of the Global AIDS Strategy and the 2021 High-Level Meeting Political Declaration targets) which will be finalized between April and October 2021. The UBRAF indicators will monitor and measure the Joint Programme's performance and contribution to the implementation of the global HIV response, and will be linked to the global HIV response's indicators (see also Figure 7 below).
 - **ongoing exercises to optimize the Joint Programme's capacities** in light of the new Global AIDS Strategy and context, including the Alignment of the Secretariat and Cosponsors' capacity assessment (as a follow-up of the management response to the Independent Evaluation of the UN system Response to AIDS 2016–2019)
 - **funding dialogues** and key stakeholder events, planned along with and complementary to the process of developing the new UBRAF, will provide an opportunity to engage with key stakeholders around core components such as resource requirements and allocation, accountability mechanisms and funding scenarios; and
 - other **UN system-wide mechanisms for enhanced coherence and integration** such as Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Reviews, UN System-Wide Action Plan for gender equality and women empowerment and the SDG funding compact.
25. Looking further ahead, the following UBRAF, starting from 2027, would similarly be informed by and aligned to these crucial global processes, following the expected adoption of a new strategy in December 2025 and a possible High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and Political Declaration to be held mid-2026 (noting this is under the purview of the UN General Assembly).

WHAT WILL BE NEW / DIFFERENT?

26. **Clarifying the "top line"**. The new UBRAF will be aligned with the global HIV response targets and will be rooted in a theory of change approach which will provide the goals and operational structure for the Joint Programme under the new Global AIDS Strategy. This will inform the new results framework, as well as the resource requirements and an allocation methodology for the new cycle. A theory of change explains how interventions contribute to a chain of results that lead to the intended or observed impacts, and it renders explicit the processes through which change is achieved. Top-level clarity will be important given the need for a structure that is flexible enough to react to unexpected opportunities and challenges, and to support differentiated responses at regional and country levels.
27. **Better leveraging, prioritization and coordination**. Through a comprehensive theory of change approach, the UBRAF will articulate how the Joint Programme will strategically leverage the broader and rapidly changing landscape in which the Joint Programme operates. This requires greater focus on continuously mapping and understanding the dynamic nature of the landscape, creating sharper, smarter priorities

for the Joint Programme and developing well-focused, innovative workplans. This will require careful review—both internally within the Joint Programme and of the broader operating landscape—to help establish a clearer, deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the resources and partnerships which the Joint Programme can and should leverage.

- **Internally**, the UBRAF development will include a Joint Programme’s capacity assessment to optimize collective and individual capacities, including through innovative approaches (e.g., interagency arrangements such as cost-sharing, better leveraging of other UN, south-south and community expertise, and related capacity building). The insights will be used to inform and align the UBRAF's overall framework and prioritized workplans and budgets, as well as responsibilities and accountability under the Division of Labour, to reflect the assets and expertise and to enhance support to countries.
- **Externally**, the UBRAF development will entail assessing the broader operating context to ensure that the UBRAF workplan defines how the Joint Programme collaborates with key partners and directly contributes to optimizing their strengths and assets in support of countries. This includes attention to both global-level collaboration with partners such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), and the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) as well as other partnerships at regional and country levels.

28. **Smarter tracking and streamlined processes.** The process will ensure clear alignment between the new UBRAF indicators and the theory of change, results chain and global HIV response’s indicators. This will enable improved measuring of both progress and the Joint Programme’s contributions including efforts to better capture and monitor the priority actions and mainstreaming work in multisectoral areas (beyond HIV-specific work) that are essential for reducing HIV-related inequalities and ending the AIDS epidemic. This is also an opportunity to further enhance the quality of the Joint Programme’s annual Performance Monitoring Report and of other accountability tools, while streamlining reporting processes to rationalize the related transactional investments and, when possible, ensuring quicker feedback. The PCB's support and the participation of interested PCB members will be crucial to achieve this balance.

Strategic programmatic shifts

29. As its specific contribution to the implementation of the global AIDS Strategy and unique UN mandate and values, UNAIDS will apply an **inequalities lens** across the three strategic priority areas. The aim is to support countries and communities to identify and close inequalities, particularly gender inequality, human rights violations, injustices and exclusion that stand in the way of achieving equitable outcomes for people living with, at risk of, and affected by HIV in every country and every community, with a particular focus on low and middle-income countries.
30. This work includes promoting leadership and generating strategic information, coordinated evidence-informed guidance, action and resources, applying and leveraging expertise to better understand and address inequalities with and in support of countries and communities. It will be important to address intersectionalities between the different strategy priorities and result areas. The new UBRAF will integrate gender equality, women empowerment and human rights-related Joint Programme actions, results and resources to accelerate progress towards global targets and monitoring thereof. The UBRAF will take into account new structural targets (developed as part of the 2025 HIV targets process) and successful recent implementation experience in scaling up programmes focused on structural and social determinants.

31. **Increased strategic prioritization of UNAIDS programmatic focus and geographic footprint for results** will be informed by evidence, the theory of change and analysis of the comparative advantage of the Joint Programme, especially for addressing gaps and accelerating progress in key areas such as prevention. This will involve particular focus populations and locations with high HIV incidence or high risk of infection, and an emphasis on combination prevention, reduction of new HIV infections among key populations, children, adolescents and young people, ending paediatric AIDS, and promoting national ownership and community-led AIDS responses, as requested by the PCB. It will also be based on key principles that reflect the epidemic trends, persisting response gaps and inequalities, status of gender equality and human rights, political and socioeconomic contexts, and the capacities and needs in communities and countries, along with the Joint Programme's global leadership role.
32. **Gender-responsive actions, indicators, and resources.** The new UBRAF will address PCB Decision Point 9.7 (from the 47th PCB meeting), which requested the Joint Programme to commit to an ambitious result area that is dedicated to gender. UNAIDS was also asked to integrate gender-responsive actions, indicators and resources in the new UBRAF to deliver for women and girls and for all key and vulnerable populations, by further elaborating and operationalizing those issues, based on the Global AIDS Strategy. The UBRAF will be aligned to the 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which further emphasizes the critical importance of realizing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. It will continue to enhance gender mainstreaming through the full implementation of the System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, where UNAIDS continuously ranks among the top contributors.
33. The UBRAF will be an opportunity to further reinforce and outline how UNAIDS joint work and collaborative action at country, regional and global levels will be enhanced, fully embedded and kept in line with **UN Reform**. The aim is to ensure **greater cohesion across all levels, including continued support to strengthen the UN Resident Coordinator's system's, improved and more explicit integration of UN Joint Plans on HIV in country-level UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks**, as well as support national strategies. Within their respective mandates, Cosponsors and the Secretariat will adapt to provide coherent needs-based, demand-driven support to address specific inequalities, inequities and gaps in the HIV response.
34. In line with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review resolution **and building on progress so far achieved (see Figure 6 below)**, the UBRAF will clearly describe the Joint Programme's **support to national leadership, inclusive engagement and national coordination** of all stakeholders, including communities and **national capacity building**. It will better articulate its complementary relationships with other key partners, particularly its roles and contributions to leverage, strategically guide, support and optimize more sustainable domestic and external investments that are aligned with national strategies and plans for sustainable response and impact, especially from the GFATM and PEPFAR.

Strategic organizational shifts

35. Building on the successful systems and practices implemented under the Joint Programme's refined operating model since 2018 and recognized by the PCB, UNAIDS will update and further refine its coordination and prioritization tools across the Joint Programme to further fulfil the **three overarching objectives**:
 - deploy human and financial resources where they are needed most, including through both virtual and location-based support mechanisms;
 - reinvigorate country-level joint work and collaborative action; and

- reinforce accountability and results for people.
36. The Joint Programme will further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its strategic joint planning tools and implementation, while at the same time allowing for diversified country support modalities. The UNAIDS Division of Labour will be updated as needed to reflect the evolving contexts and demands. Fully embedded in the country-level UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks, quality-assured UN Joint Plans on HIV will be more demand-driven. They will also feature differentiated approaches to better respond to specific country contexts and needs, and will show the Joint Programme's catalytic power to leverage capacities. The joint planning, monitoring and reporting platforms and tools will be progressively updated aiming to be more effective, integrated and flexible. They will include a new version of the Joint Programme Monitoring System (see below) and build on additional opportunities, such as the planned next generation of the Global Management System and WHO's Enterprise Resource Planning.
 37. In line with the commitment in the Management Response to the Independent Evaluation of the UN System Response to AIDS 2016–2019, resource allocation processes will be updated to enhance their effectiveness, efficiency and transparency and to strengthen accountability. A new resource allocation methodology, aligned with the new Global AIDS Strategy, informed by the theory of change approach and linked to expected results, will clearly articulate the prioritization of resources to ensure effective and efficient support to reduce major gaps. The country envelope mechanism which has been in effect since 2018 as part of the Refined Operating Model approved by the PCB, and was designed to be catalytic and flexible, will also be reviewed as part of this exercise.
 38. A fully-funded, cost-effective UBRAF, with both core and non-core resources, will be essential for successful implementation of the new AIDS Strategy. The UBRAF will outline priorities for different funding levels and highlight the gaps under different funding scenarios. Mobilized resources will be allocated to deliver on the most important commitments and results.
 39. The Joint Programme's performance indicators will be linked to the global HIV response indicators and will monitor the Joint Programme's contributions towards global, regional and country-level progress towards achieving the targets and closing response gaps. This will clarify the inputs and associated investments across the Joint Programme's contribution to the Global AIDS Strategy and its specific result areas.
 40. A new generation of the Joint Programme Monitoring System (JPMS), adapted to the new UBRAF and informed by lessons, will also be developed to allow for streamlined and higher-quality monitoring and reporting. Improvements will respond to the need for more flexible, user-friendly systems that allow, for example, for partial reprogramming, as was done in 2020 in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The new generation of the JPMS will also continue to include Gender Equality and Civil Society Markers analysis and will respond to relevant Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and SDG funding compact requirements and indicators. Innovative approaches, including strong synergies with the UN Development System's planning, monitoring and reporting platform (UNINFO) will enable improved and more streamlined monitoring and reporting. The UNAIDS Results and Transparency portal, including explicit reporting on compliance with the International AIDS Transparency Initiative will be updated further.

Overall framing of the new UBRAF

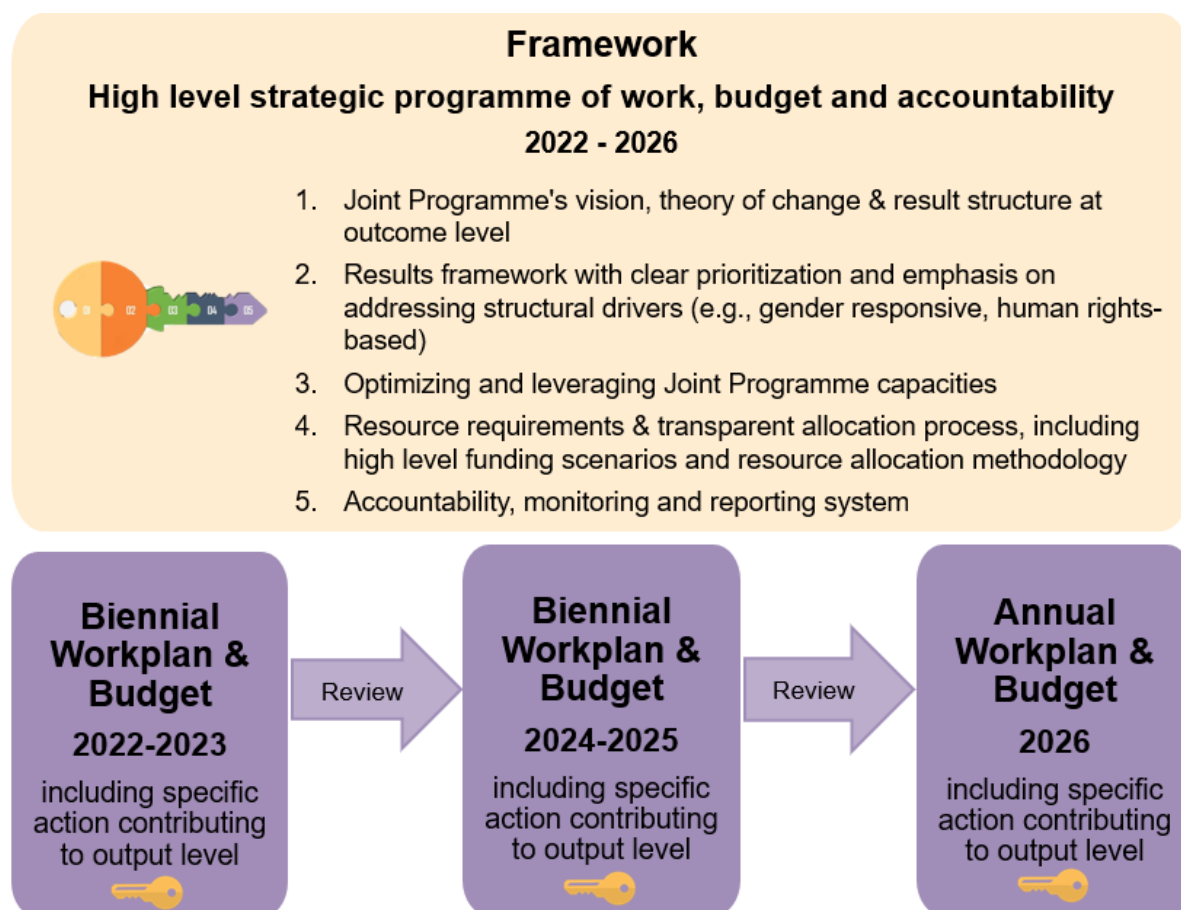
41. The UBRAF will articulate the collective roles and contributions of UNAIDS entities, including the specific contributions of Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat, for implementing and monitoring the Global AIDS Strategy at global, regional and country levels.
42. This will be done through developing and using a more fully-articulated theory of change approach, which will inform the new results framework, budget, resources allocation and accountability, including monitoring and evaluation systems. This will render explicit the impact pathways that will achieve the intended results and will clearly show the roles of the UNAIDS Secretariat and the Cosponsors in conjunction with other key players in the global HIV response. The new UBRAF will include:
 - the results chain at different levels, with stronger emphasis on social and structural drivers, including gender equality and human rights;
 - the Joint Programme's role in facilitating, supporting and enabling the development and implementation of national policies and strategies; and
 - the Joint Programme's role in supporting the mainstreaming and sustainability of HIV responses.
43. A theory of change has been included previously to support both strategic and implementation work. However, the Independent Evaluation of the UN System Response 2016–2019 called for a more fully-articulated version that is clearly aligned with the modified results framework. To reflect diverse contexts and allow for adaptation when needed, based on continuous monitoring of risks and early results, a series of linked theories of change will be developed. They will show how the Joint Programme intends to build on its previous successes, in combination with the necessary shifts outlined in the new Strategy.
44. The current UBRAF development process includes developing theories of change which can serve as tools throughout the various planning stages. That includes informing resource allocation approaches and decisions, and ensuring transparency and accountability, as well as during UBRAF implementation and evaluative assessments at global, regional and country levels. The planned series or cascade of linked theories of change is aimed at identifying gaps in relation to coherence and linkages in the Joint Programme, at highlighting and clarifying the respective roles of Cosponsors and Secretariat, and at refining the intended results chains and assessment approaches. The theory-of-change cascade will provide a basis for an adaptive, responsive and learning- based management approach that is informed by both successes and under-achievements.
45. Specifically, the theories of change will clarify how the three strategic priorities will interact to achieve the desired outcomes in the various results areas in the short, medium, and longer terms of UBRAF implementation. They will inform a common understanding of the UBRAF and its layers of accountability at different levels.

UBRAF SCOPE AND TIMEFRAME

46. It is proposed that the new UBRAF comprise its overall long-term high level strategic framework, as well as its operational workplans and budgets, thus providing more detail on specific programmatic actions and budgets.

47. The UBRAF overall long-term framework will include five key components and will cover the entire assigned timeframe (see Figure 3 above). It will present a high-level strategic programme of work and budget, including overall resources allocation and its methodology and accountability framework. This will include sections such as the Joint Programme's vision for results, a clearly articulated theory of change, and a results structure at outcome level, directly derived from the Global AIDS Strategy. It will further consider overall organizational shifts to optimize the Joint Programme's human and financial resources, informed by key findings from the Joint Programme's capacity assessment, including the Secretariat's Alignment high-level funding scenarios and accountability requirements.
48. The workplans and budgets will include more detailed operational results at output level, with clear linkages to the outcomes in the long-term framework, and greater regional details.

Figure 4. Overall scope and structure of the new UBRAF long-term framework and its workplans and budgets



49. Overall elements of performance monitoring and reporting will feature in the new UBRAF. Given the timeline for finalizing the global response's indicators (which are informed by the Global AIDS Strategy and the High-Level Meeting Political Declaration and expected to be available in October 2021, see more details in paragraph 61 below), the detailed Joint Programme's performance indicators will feature in a separate document for later submission to the PCB (see the proposed timeline, below).

50. **With regards to the timeframe, a five-year cycle for 2022–2026 is the recommended option.** This would allow a longer-term strategic vision and needed flexibility, while allowing swift adaptation to the new Strategy during the 2026 transition year.
51. Options were considered and all efforts made to find the ‘best trade off’ option balancing the wish to:
- align the UBRAF with the AIDS strategy and the High-level Meeting on HIV/AIDS and its Political Declaration to ensure better traction of the Joint Programme to deliver on the global commitments with efficient and transformative support to countries for the best impact, in line with its mandate and accountability to the PCB, and;
 - align with the QCPR recommended cycle.
52. A five-year UBRAF cycle allows for closer and swifter alignment between the next UBRAF and the next strategy. Indeed, it is expected that:
- by December 2025, next global strategy would be adopted and ready for the next High-Level Meeting (expected to be held in June 2026 should the UN General Assembly decides so);
 - in June 2025, the PCB would approve an exceptional 2026 annual Workplan & Budget based on current strategy; and
 - in June 2026, PCB would approve the next UBRAF starting from 2027 and 2027 annual Workplan and Budget, based on next strategy.
53. This five-year cycle will comprise three workplans and budgets of which two are biennial and the year 2026 exceptionally annual, which will imply some additional transaction costs and need for flexibility for the Joint Programme and the PCB in terms of developing and managing an annual 2026 planning and budget cycle as well as for the related reporting which will be based on the past results framework.

Figure 5. UBRAF timeframe and linkage to other global processes

UBRAF Timeframe															
	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Develop & adopt Strategy										★					
HLM & Political Declaration											★				
Strategy	UNAIDS Strategy 2016-2021					Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 (starting March 2021)					New Strategy (adopted Dec 2025 starting 2026)				
Targets	2020 Targets					2025 Targets					2030 Targets				
UBRAF cycle	UBRAF 2016 -2021					UBRAF 2022-2026					New UBRAF				
Biennial Workplan & Budget						2022-2023	2024-2025	2026	2027						
QCPR & strategic plans	2016 QCPR		2020 QCPR			2024 QCPR			2028 QCPR						
		Strategic plan 2018-2021			Strategic plan 2022-2025			Strategic Plan 2026-2029							

54. Both a six-year (2022 – 2027) and four-year (2022 – 2025) UBRAF options have been carefully considered but analyzed as respectively less optimal not viable options given the importance of strategic alignment to the strategy development explained above.

55. A six-year UBRAF option, while allowing longer-term strategic vision, was deemed less optimal because it would create a transition period of approx. two years between the strategy adoption (expected by December 2025), the new UBRAF approval (June 2027) and its operationalization (January 2028). In this period, the Joint Programme would report on the past strategy and targets. While a transition period of one year between the adoption of a new strategy and the implementation of a new UBRAF is a needed timeframe, a longer period would be suboptimal.
56. A four-year option has been considered and discussed in detail. This would mean finalizing the new UBRAF at the same time as the strategic direction is being reviewed, and even before the next Strategy and targets are developed and adopted. Such an approach would impact negatively on the alignment between the strategic direction and operational plan, possibly prompting further revisions along the UBRAF life-cycle.
57. It is important to note implications and recommendations from the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Resolution when considering the timeframe for the new UBRAF. A review of the Resolutions and its various progress updates showed that UNAIDS was already in high compliance and informed its further strengthening through the UNAIDS Refined Operating Model (adopted in 2018 and applied since) (see Figure 6 below). Inclusion of implications and recommendations are shown in the alignment with the SDG agenda; the integrated results and resources framework; the Division of Labour; flexible, timely, coherent and coordinated support to countries and a focus on the most vulnerable people; fostering national capacities through inclusive partnerships for results; compliance to the International Aid Transparency Initiative compliance and the updated UNAIDS Results and Transparency Portal.

Figure 6: Efforts, alignment and commitments from the Joint Programme to align to the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Resolution

Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR)

Detailed review of 2016 QCPR recommendations (Global Review Panel), found good compliance and action taken for further integration into UNAIDS Refined Operating Model (since 2018):

- ✓ alignment with SDG agenda
- ✓ integrated results & resources framework with differentiated approach for results (country envelopes)
- ✓ update Division of Labour,
- ✓ flexible, timely, coherent and coordinated support to countries and focus on most vulnerable
- ✓ Building national capacities through inclusive partnership

Alignment with 2020 QCPR recommendations focus on UN reform (annual review survey submitted, summary report to 2021 June PCB)

- ✓ Advanced model of UN reform and aligned with UN Development System resolution
- ✓ Joint Programme and Teams at all levels
- ✓ fully embedded to delivering as one within UN RC system
- ✓ Inclusive governance and strong partnership with civil society including communities
- ✓ UNAIDS Results & Transparency Portal

High level of compliance with UN SWAP 2.0 on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

SDG Funding Compact (report to be submitted to 2021 June PCB)

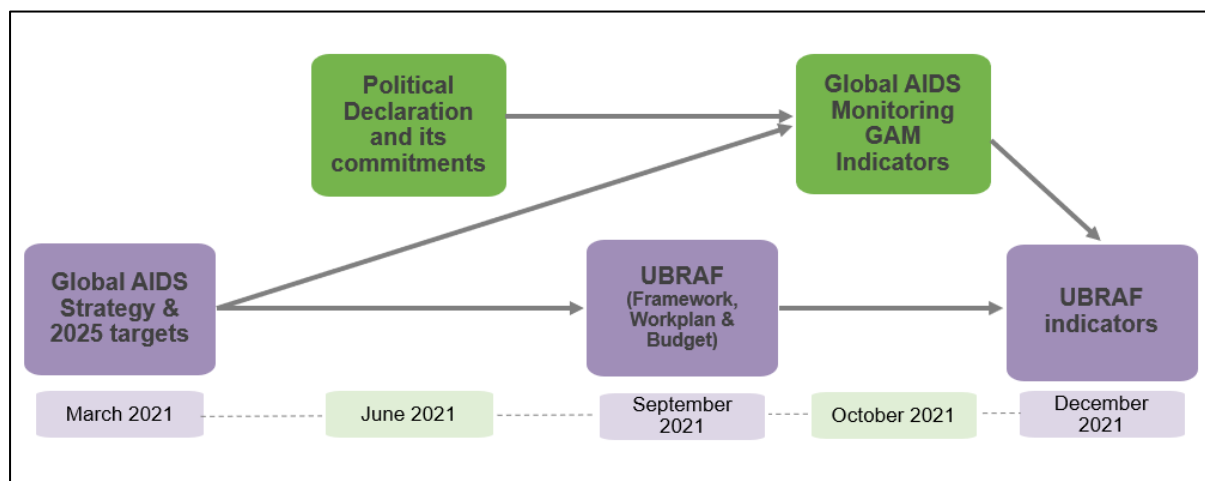
- **Commitment to further align with QCPR 2020, 2024 and strengthen key areas including through the new UBRAF:** results-based management, efficiencies, further alignment to national strategies, strengthening national ownership, integration into UNDSFC and other UN system tools, transparency, accountability and diversifying funding sources

58. Further integration of the most recent 2020 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review QCPR Resolution will be ensured in the new UBRAF framework and it will be specifically referenced, as in with the previous UBRAF. UNAIDS will also continue to submit annual reports on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review QCPR. While the above Figure 5 depicts one of the QCPR recommendations (visually - the alignment of cycles of strategic plans for funds and programmes), it is important to note that the recommendations are wide in scope and extend beyond the strategic planning cycle as highlighted in Figure 6 above. Operational timeframes can include but are not limited to a four-year cycle. In addition, it should be noted that the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review and its related resolutions and progress updates do not specify a cycle. Instead, it "reaffirms that all entities of the United Nations development system carrying out operational activities for development should continue to align their planning and activities".²
59. While six Cosponsors align to the four-year cycle for their strategic plans or programs and budgets in 2022–2025, (ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women), other Cosponsors do not do so (e.g. UNHCR, UNODC, WFP, WHO and the World Bank). In the context of a Joint Programme, it is important to recognize this complexity and diversity and allow for a more complex yet flexible approach and note that aligned operational planning is done through the joint biennial workplan and budget and related monitoring and reporting at all levels.
60. Relevant strategic plans of eight Cosponsors (UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UN Women, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO) come to an end in December 2025. 2025 will therefore be a crucial year for review and strategic planning processes. While the new strategy development of the Joint Programme will flow alongside this process creating important synergies, a planned evidence / mid-term review by December 2024 will further give additional impetus into Cosponsors' strategic planning HIV components. More detailed operational aspects of the 2020 and subsequent Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Resolution will also be progressively integrated into the workplans and budgets, beyond the planning cycle.
61. With regards to the different indicators (see Figure 7 below), it is important to note that their development are closely linked and cascaded, referring to the Strategy and its targets, the commitments of the Political Declaration, the Global AIDS Monitoring (GAM) indicators and the UBRAF indicators. The GAM indicators monitor progress against the Global AIDS Strategy (including the global targets) and the UN General Assembly's Political Declaration through which UN member states agree on a set of commitments and related reporting. The GAM indicators will also inform the development of the UBRAF indicators (as a subset of indicators) which focus on measuring progress and performance of the Joint Programme against its expected results and contribution to the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy and with clear linkages to the GAM indicators. This also aims to minimize the reporting burden at country level.
62. Community led response is an important component of the new Global AIDS Strategy and civil society's contribution to monitoring of progress for the global AIDS response is essential. UNAIDS will continue to actively engage with civil society for national reporting on AIDS guided by the GAM guidance and is strongly supporting community-

² "Reaffirms that all entities of the United Nations development system carrying out operational activities for development should continue to align their planning and activities, including through their governing bodies where applicable, to take appropriate action consistent with each entity's mandate, role and expertise for the full implementation of the present resolution", Paragraph 116, Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review 2020, A/RES/75/233. Available at <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/75/233>.

led monitoring across regions. The Joint Programme’s contribution to support that will be reflected in the new UBRAF.

Figure 7: UBRAF indicators and their linkage to Global AIDS Strategy & High-Level Meeting Political Declaration’s commitments and Global AIDS Monitoring indicators




63. Based on the above considerations and the initial PCB feedback, the recommended timeframe for the new UBRAF is a five-year cycle, 2022-2026.

OUTLINE OF THE PROCESS FOR UBRAF DEVELOPMENT

64. The process of developing the new UBRAF is co-owned and delivered by the entire Joint Programme. It engages Cosponsors and the Secretariat at all levels in a coordinated and strategic manner and it involves close consultation with the PCB. An inclusive and iterative process will underpin the development process, building on and ensuring continuity with the extensive consultative work carried out in the development of the Global AIDS Strategy.
65. The process is coordinated by a Joint Programme Steering Group, which is co-chaired by the 2021 Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) Chair (WHO) and the UNAIDS Secretariat and which began operating in January 2021. Cosponsors and the Secretariat also set up their own internal coordination mechanisms to ensure full ownership as well as further integration and alignment across the Joint Programme and their own strategies. The Joint Programme Steering Group and other coordination mechanisms mentioned, will support the process and ensure quality input from each entity in an aligned and coordinated manner at global, regional and country levels.
66. In accordance with its mandate, the CCO will also be engaged to provide strategic guidance and endorse the new UBRAF before it is submitted to the PCB.
67. External technical expertise has been engaged for specific guidance and to support to selected elements of the process, in particular for developing and using a theory of change approach throughout the UBRAF planning stages and the resources allocation methodology.

Figure 8. Steps taken thus far in the new UBRAF development process

Development process as of February 2021



- Joint Programme Steering Group operationalized
- Review of management, accountability and programmatic requirements and considerations for the new UBRAF (incl. recommendations & management response of JIU & Independent Evaluation, relevant PCB decisions and debates, external 2020 audit, stakeholders' input, UN system mechanisms (UN SWAP, QCPR, SDG Funding Compact)
- Review of lessons learnt from the current UBRAF including implementation of the refined operating model and quality reporting
- Analysis for proposed scope, timeframe, submission timeline, inclusive consultative process and of linkages with key global and Joint Programme processes
- Qualified expertise identified and contracted
- Initial orientation & dialogue on the Theory of Change held and discussion on overarching Theory of Change for 3 Strategic Priorities started
- First briefing with PCB Bureau undertaken and guidance incorporated

68. A logical "cascade" will follow from the theory of change to the resource allocation methodology and monitoring and evaluation framework, noting that some components will be developed in parallel. Next steps include:
- definition of the Joint Programme's vision;
 - development of the full theories-of-change and results framework (as described above) will be achieved in an iterative manner through multiagency working groups under the guidance of the Steering Group and with technical inputs from consultants and an inclusive quality assurance review;
 - capacity assessment of the Joint Programme, including the Secretariat's alignment, taking stock of existing capacities, assets and needs, and developing recommendations to evolve and optimize the Joint Programme's resources;
 - identification of the human and financial resource requirements for the Joint Programme to deliver on the expected results;
 - development of a transparent resource allocation methodology, including consideration for different funding scenarios; and
 - development of the accountability, monitoring and reporting systems, which will define mechanisms, processes and tools for accountability, including quality and timely monitoring and reporting.
69. A consultative approach will be used to develop those components, and a timeline of opportunities for inclusive consultation, including synergies with other planned dialogues, will be developed.

PROPOSED TIMELINE FOR PCB APPROVAL

70. After careful analysis, two different options are being considered for the timeline to submit the new UBRAF and its workplan and budget to the PCB. Initial discussions with

the PCB Bureau, during the pre-PCB and PCB dialogue suggested broad support for Option 2 which is also the Joint Programme’s recommended option.

- **Option 1:** Submission of the new UBRAF five-year framework to the 48th PCB in June 2021 and submission of the 2022–2023 workplan and budget for approval during a PCB Special Session (virtual) in September 2021. This timeline is extremely tight for such a complex UBRAF development process especially in a challenging context and only allows limited quality engagement throughout the process and products. Furthermore it may entail the submission of a slightly revised UBRAF in light of the High-Level Meeting Political Declaration and implications thereof.
- **Option 2 (recommended):** Submission for approval of the new UBRAF five-year framework and of the supporting 2022–2023 workplan and budget during a PCB Special Session (virtual) in September 2021, while allowing for a formal dialogue on the new UBRAF framework zero draft at the 48th June PCB meeting. This timeline would allow for more extensive engagement with key stakeholders and greater flexibility and quality engagement throughout the process and products. It would also ensure better alignment with the other important global processes highlighted above and therefore reduce risk of necessary revisions. The zero draft to be submitted by the June 2021 PCB that is part of this proposed option would provide a general direction of the high-level strategic programme of work, budget and accountability, providing draft/indicative elements of the 5 key components presented in Figure 3 above. As such, this zero draft will give a substantive insight into the structure and content of the final UBRAF and allow for better consultative process and PCB engagement and timely feedback and steer on the suggested direction.

71. Another option, that of submitting the new UBRAF and its 2022–2023 workplan and budget to the 48th PCB meeting in June 2021, was considered not feasible without significantly restricting the time to develop a common vision and approach for the UBRAF. A June 2021 submission would also mean that the UBRAF could not incorporate any revisions in light of the High-Level Meeting Political Declaration.
72. It is important to take into account that the Joint Programme absolutely needs a minimum of 6 months (ideally even 9 months) transition period between the adoption of a new strategy and the submission of a new UBRAF for approval.. This is to allow its quality development and adequate PCB input and review. A minimum period of 3 months is then needed from the time the workplan and budget is approved and its operationalization by the Joint Programme at all levels implying a latest approval by September for implementation from January of the next year.

Figure 9. Two different options for submitting and approving the new UBRAF (long-term framework and 2022–2023 workplan and budget)

	June 2021 48 th PCB	September 2021 Special PCB	Dec 2021 49 th PCB
Option 1	New UBRAF 	Workplan & Budget 2022-2023 	UBRAF Indicators
Option 2	Formal PCB dialogue on UBRAF zero draft	New UBRAF  Workplan & Budget 2022-2023 	UBRAF Indicators

74. The following key elements should be carefully considered in deciding on an approval timeline:
- timely adoption of the Global AIDS Strategy by the PCB by March 2021;
 - availability of results and conclusions from the Joint Programme's capacity assessments, including the Secretariat's Alignment, so they can be reflected in the UBRAF;
 - implications of the High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly (scheduled for 8–10 June 2021) and its Political Declaration for the Joint Programme;
 - meaningful engagement with the PCB, including the establishment of a Working Group, in addition to PCB engagement that is facilitated through the PCB Bureau (see below);
 - full endorsement by the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO);
 - the need for Members State to ensure their timely, continued financial contributions to UNAIDS; and
 - the need to avoid any risk of interruption to country support, which requires that a full UBRAF is approved by September 2021, at the latest (except for indicators).
75. Based on these considerations, opportunities and challenges, as well as consultations within the Joint Programme and initial consultation with the PCB Bureau, Option 2 is proposed as the most realistic and preferred option for consideration and guidance by the PCB.

PCB and broader engagement modalities

76. Inclusive consultations will be organized throughout the process, both within the Joint Programme and with partners, especially with PCB members and other key stakeholders. Given the current global context, it is expected that consultations will take place virtually.
77. Engagement and guidance from PCB members and other stakeholders are crucial and will be a high priority throughout the UBRAF development process and implementation. This includes regular engagement, as required, through the PCB Bureau, as well as other opportunities for in-depth meaningful engagement (e.g. funding dialogues) and detailed inputs from all stakeholders through a consultative process for guidance.
78. To support the UBRAF development process, the UNAIDS Executive Director will establish a UBRAF Working Group, mandated as per the Modus Operandi. It will comprise interested PCB members and other relevant technical expertise and will inform key elements of the UBRAF development process in a flexible manner. Its overall purpose will be to advise on, guide and support the development of the UBRAF, focusing on the following areas: results framework, resource allocation and accountability, including monitoring and evaluation, funding scenarios and UN reform.
79. Membership of the Working Group will be geographically- and gender-balanced, and will include technical experts from Member States, civil society and the Joint Programme. Terms of Reference will be developed and the Working Group will be set up as soon as possible after the Special Session of the PCB in March 2021.

CONCLUSION

80. The new UBRAF will define and operationalize the Joint Programme's contribution to the new Global AIDS Strategy and the SDGs. It will comprise the overall long-term framework and its workplans and budgets, and it will provide more detail on specific programmatic actions and budgetary allocations.
81. The development process will be closely linked with and informed by other global processes which affect the new UBRAF, such as the finalization of the Global AIDS Strategy, the pending High-Level Meeting on AIDS and its Political Declaration, the Global AIDS Monitoring indicators, the Joint Programme's capacity assessments, and UN Reform and Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review developments and recommendations.
82. The new UBRAF will introduce strategic programmatic and organizational shifts. It will be aligned with the global AIDS response targets and will be rooted in a theory of change approach. In this way, it will articulate how the Joint Programme will strategically prioritize its efforts and resources to optimize its impact in conjunction with other stakeholders, taking account of the rapidly changing context in which it operates and by using smarter tracking and streamlined processes.
83. It is suggested that the new UBRAF be a high-level strategic programme of work, budget and accountability framework for the duration of five years, 2022–2026. It will include five core components:
 - a. the Joint Programme's vision, theory of change and result structure at outcome level;
 - b. results framework with clear prioritization;
 - c. optimizing and leveraging the Joint Programme's capacities;
 - d. resource requirements and transparent allocation process, including high-level funding scenarios and a resource allocation methodology; and
 - e. accountability, monitoring and reporting system.
84. The new UBRAF will include three workplans and budgets (biennial 2022-2023, biennial 2024-2025, annual 2026), which will feature specific actions contributing to the output level.
85. The proposed timeline for PCB approval of the new UBRAF is that a zero draft will be submitted to and discussed by the 48th PCB in June 2021 and a final new UBRAF along with the 2022-2023 workplan and budget will be presented during a special session of the PCB in September 2021. UBRAF indicators, aligned with the global AIDS response indicators which are due to be finalized by October 2021, will then be presented at the 49th PCB meeting in December 2021.
86. A consultative approach will be applied throughout the UBRAF development process. Opportunities and synergies with other planned dialogues, such as the funding dialogue, will be used. In addition, and beyond engagement through the PCB Bureau, crucial input from the PCB will be facilitated through a proposed UBRAF Working Group, mandated, as per the Modus Operandi, by the UNAIDS Executive Director, comprising interested PCB members and other relevant technical expertise.
87. The PCB is asked to provide guidance and feedback on the issues presented in this paper and captured in the proposed Decision Points.

PROPOSED DECISION POINTS

88. The Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

- *Recall* Decision Points 5.1, 6.6, 9.5 and 9.7 from the 47th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board;
- *Take note* of the progress update and proposed approach for the development of the new UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results, Accountability Framework;
- *Requests* the Executive Director to submit for consideration a zero draft of the overall framework of the 2022-2026 UBRAF at the 48th PCB meeting in June 2021, and to submit the full 2022–2026 UBRAF and biennial workplan and budget for 2022–2023 for approval at a Special Session of the PCB in September 2021; and

Endnotes:

Virtual 47th Session of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board Geneva, Switzerland
15-18 December 2020 Decisions. Geneva: UNAIDS; 2020
(https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/Decisions_%28PCB47%29_EN.pdf)

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