Key terminology for results-based management
Accountability: The obligation of the United Nations Secretariat and its staff to be answerable for all decisions and actions taken by them, and to be responsible for honouring their commitments, without qualification or exception. (see General Assembly resolution 64/259)

Accountable manager: The ECA officer directly and comprehensively responsible and accountable for managing all aspects of an initiative, from start-up, through implementation and close out.

Assumption: Assumptions are the variables or factors that need to be in place for results to be achieved. Assumptions can be internal or external to the particular programme or organization. Assumptions should be stated in positive language. (United Nations, 2011).

Activity: Actions taken or work performed through which inputs, such as funds, technical assistance and other types of resources are mobilized to produce specific outputs. (OECD, 2002; UNODC, 2017).

Attribution: Ascribing a causal link between changes that have been observed (or are expected to be observed) and a specific intervention. (OECD, 2002) Attribution is a result that can be directly associated with the project or programme interventions. (UNODC, 2017) [contrast with “contribution” earlier in this list]

Baseline study: Information about the existing situation (of specific result indicators) gathered at the beginning of a project or programme. It is the reference point against which changes that occur during a project or programme are measured. (UNODC, 2017)

Beneficiaries: The individuals, groups, or organizations, whether targeted or not, that benefit either directly or indirectly from an initiative. (OECD, 2002)

Concept note: An initial document prepared during the identification and design phases of development of an initiative. It should provide enough information to enable ECA and other stakeholders to assess the strategic appropriateness of any proposal. (ILO, 2016)

Contribution: Changes in development results that can be credibly and plausibly linked to an intervention. Results that are associated with the work of ECA and other organizations, governments, and external actors working in the same domain. (ECA, 2014a; UNODC, 2017) [contrast with “attribution” earlier in this list]

Evaluability: Extent to which an initiative can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion. (OECD, 2002)

Evaluation: An evaluation is an assessment, conducted as systematically and impartially as possible, of an intervention, operational area, or institutional performance. It analyses the level (and quality) of achievement of both expected and unexpected results by examining the results chain, processes, contextual factors, and causality using appropriate criteria such as relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. (ECA, 2020)

Expected results: The outcome and impact level results approved in the programme of work under each ECA subprogramme. This is the level of measuring success for ECA. The products and services that ECA promises to deliver in the process of achieving the expected results are called the deliverables or outputs.

Goal: The specific (higher-order objective or) end result desired or expected to occur as a consequence, at least in part, of an intervention or activity to which a development intervention is intended to contribute. (United Nations, 2011)

Impact: Significant and enduring changes in people’s lives, e.g. substantive changes in health or living conditions for children, adults, families or communities. Impacts are positive or negative long-term effects on identifiable population groups that come about through the contribution of a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. (United Nations, 2011)

Implementation: The phase of a programme or project when all planned activities are put into action. Implementation starts when the initiative has been approved and the budget activated, and ends when it is financially closed.

Implementing partner: A government or non-governmental agency engaged as an entity responsible and accountable for managing and delivering a project on behalf of ECA, as provided for in a legal instrument, with ECA funding and technical oversight.
**Indicator**: A quantitative or qualitative factor or variable that provides a reliable means to measure achievement, to reflect the changes connected to an intervention, or to help assess the performance of a development actor. (OECD, 2002) Unlike a target, an indicator does not include an anticipated direction of change.

**Inputs**: The financial, human, material, technological and information resources used for development interventions. (United Nations, 2011; UNODC, 2017)

**Managing division**: This is the division where the project manager sits. The managing division is responsible for delivering the project outputs and outcomes. (UNEP, 2013)

**Means of verification**: These provide a precise reference to the sources of information to be consulted and how the data will be analysed to verify project performance and results. (ILO, 2015) They typically include monitoring information, surveys, studies, and evaluations. (UNODC, 2017)

**Milestone**: A scheduled event signifying the progression or completion of work towards a project output and ultimately the outcome. It is a key event that provides a measure of progress and a target for the project team. (UNEP, 2013)

**Monitoring**: A continuing function using systematic collection and analysis of data on specified indicators to provide management and stakeholders of an ongoing initiative with information on the extent and quality of progress and achievement of objectives and progress in the use of allocated resources. (OECD, 2002)

**Objectively verifiable indicators**: The measures, direct or indirect, that can verify the extent that objectives have been fulfilled. (UN-Habitat, 2003)

**Outcomes**: The short- and medium-term effects of an initiative’s outputs. Outcome results are generally expressed in terms of changes in attitude, capacity, behaviour, performance, procedures and delivery on the part of target groups, institutions or organizations in response to the delivered outputs. (United Nations, 2011)

**Outputs**: The products and services resulting from the completion of activities as part of a development intervention. Outputs are within the control of the organization using the resources provided within a specified time period. Outputs are the deliverables that project managers are expected to deliver and for which they are accountable. (United Nations, 2011; WIPO, 2010)

**Oversight**: Organizational processes for the review, monitoring, evaluation, supervision, reporting and audit of activities, programmes, policy implementation and results of interventions. These processes help to ensure organizational, financial, operational and ethical accountability, and the effectiveness of internal controls. (UNDP, 2008)

**Performance**: The degree to which a development intervention or a development partner: (a) operates according to a specific standard or specific criteria or guidelines; and (b) achieves results in accordance with stated plans. (UNODC, 2017)

**Performance indicator**: A qualitative or quantitative means of assessing an output or outcome to gauge the performance of a programme or investment. (UNODC, 2017)

**Performance monitoring**: This tracks performance indicators to compare how well a development intervention, partnership, or policy reform is being implemented against expected results (i.e. the achievement of outputs and progress toward outcomes). (United Nations, 2011)

**Programme**: A programme is a coherent time-bound framework of action to achieve precise results. It may include several projects having objectives linked to the achievement of higher-level common objectives and outcomes. (ILO, 2015)

**Programme management**: The centralized and coordinated management of a specific programme to achieve its strategic goals, objectives and expected results. (DPKO, 2012)

**Programme manager**: The division director, subregional office director or centre coordinator with overall responsibility for a programme and technical cooperation projects within it.

**Project**: An undertaking or intervention with a specific objective (outcome) that addresses an identified problem or gap in a specific area. A project has a start and an end date, an allocation of resources and defined roles and responsibilities for the project team and other stakeholders. (IAEA, 2012)
**Project document:** This provides sufficient information about project strategy, the results framework, implementation, monitoring and evaluation for project managers and responsible officials to implement the project, report on its progress and evaluate its outcomes. (ILO, 2015)

**Project management:** Application of processes, methods, knowledge, skills and experience to achieve the project objectives. (APM, 2017)

**Project manager:** The ECA staff member assigned by the division managing the project to have overall responsibility for implementing the project on behalf of ECA.

**Quality assurance:** The means of establishing, maintaining and recording consistency in meeting or exceeding predetermined standards in the products and processes of an organization. (ECA, 2020)

**Relevance:** The extent to which objectives of an initiative are aligned with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities and partner and donor policies. (OECD, 2002)

**Results:** These are changes in a state or condition (at the output, outcome or impact levels) that derive from a cause-and-effect relationship. The changes can be intended or unintended, positive or negative. (United Nations, 2011)

**Results-based management:** A strategy by which all actors, working directly or indirectly toward achieving a set of results, ensure that the processes, products, and services contribute to the desired results (outputs, outcomes, and higher-level goals or impact). Results-based management uses information and evidence on actual results to inform decision-making in the design, resourcing and delivery of programmes and activities, as well as for accountability and reporting. (United Nations, 2011)

**Results chain:** The causal sequence for a development intervention necessary to achieve desired objectives, beginning with inputs, moving through activities and outputs, and culminating in outcomes, impacts, and feedback. It is based on a theory of change, including the underlying assumptions thereof. (United Nations, 2011)

**Results framework:** The program logic that explains how the development objective is to be achieved, including causal relationships and underlying assumptions. (OECD, 2002)

**Risk:** The effect of uncertainty on the achievement of objectives. An effect is the deviation from the expected, whether positive or negative. Uncertainty is the state, even partial, of deficiency of information related to, and the understanding or knowledge of, a risk event, its impact or likelihood. (United Nations, 2021a)

**Risk management:** This is the process of identifying and assessing risk, and establishing measures or controls to bring risks within a tolerable range for the organization. Risk management includes activities to realize opportunities while mitigating the negative consequences of events. (United Nations, 2021a)

**Risk register:** A central repository maintained by ECA of information on all risks, organized by risk category, sub-category, risk definition, rating results, contributing factors, and other information pertaining to the risk. (United Nations, 2021a)

**Stakeholders:** Agencies, organizations, groups and individuals who have a direct or indirect interest in a development intervention or the evaluation thereof. (OECD, 2002)

**Sustainability:** The continuation of benefits from an initiative after major development assistance has been completed. It represents the probability of continued long-term benefits. (OECD, 2002)

**Sustainable development:** Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is about taking action, changing policy and practice at all levels, from the individual to the international. (UNEP, 2009)

**Target:** Specifies a particular value that an indicator should reach by a specific date in the future. (UNICEF, 2017)