

## PARIS21

### Secretariat response to the Mid-term Evaluation 2023

*Draft, 1 December 2023*

*This document outlines the response of the PARIS21 Secretariat to the Mid-term Evaluation of the PARIS21's Strategy and Results Framework 2021-2025. The evaluation was conducted by Stephen Perry, Independent Consultant, from May to August 2023 to (i) assess the progress and relevance of PARIS21 vis-à-vis its 2021-2025 Strategy and Results Framework, with a focus on activities, implementation modalities, partnerships, and processes, and (ii) develop a series of recommendations to accelerate success during the remaining years of the strategy. The draft evaluation report was presented and discussed at the PARIS21 Executive Committee Meeting on 7 September and at the PARIS21 Fall Meetings on 15-16 November 2023.*

#### **1. General response**

We appreciate the usefulness of the external Mid-term Evaluation, and we are encouraged by its overall very positive findings. Using the established OECD's DAC evaluation criteria and following an inclusive approach by reaching out to a large variety of PARIS21's stakeholders ensures robust findings as well as the buy in from the Board. The findings and recommendations will help us to accelerate success and harness opportunities towards the objectives of our 2021-2025 Strategy and Results Framework. Further, we think they will lay the ground for the preparation of the PARIS21 2026-2030 Strategy.

#### **2. Response to the evaluation findings and recommendations**

- 2.1. We concur with the overall findings on the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of PARIS21's work and interventions towards the implementation of the 2021-2025 Strategy and Results Framework.
- 2.2. We appreciate the positive findings from the evaluation, which highlighted that PARIS21 is on track with its 2021-2025 Strategy and is considered a relevant organisation that is aligned with other stakeholders and sits "in a niche within a niche". The evaluation found that PARIS21 is noted for its agility and ability to deliver ambitious agendas on a small budget and has contributed to transformative changes and impacts through its NSDS and skills development models and financing agenda. We also agree that progress in certain areas of the Results Framework has been inconsistent, for instance in the digitalisation area, where financing has been scarce so far.
- 2.3. We welcome the five recommendations:
  - i. Strategy refresh
  - ii. Funding model to support development statistics
  - iii. Adaptive learning strategy
  - iv. Communication and knowledge management
  - v. Co-create a fully revised NDS 4.0

2.3 We have started to address the recommendations. Key actions include:

### 2.3.1 Strategy refresh:

- **2021-2025 Strategy:** Consultations at the PARIS21 Fall Meetings 2023 found that the refreshing of the current strategy should lead to some light touch up-dates in the Results Framework and its associated annual targets to acknowledge the changes in the overall environment PARIS21 is working. We are updating the Results Framework accordingly and continue to focus our efforts on making progress towards all five outcome areas. As one example, we have started to accelerate and initiate new activities in our workstream on modernisation and digitalisation. The chosen topic of the 2024 Spring Meetings on AI and development data is a way to set foot in this increasingly important area.
- **2026-2030 Strategy:** We are devising a plan for the preparation of the next strategy, which will be developed in close consultation with the PARIS21 Board. Consultations will take the form of bilateral meetings starting from Q2 2024 and a fully-fledged Task Team starting from Q3 2024. The strategy will include a costed action plan for donors to be able to fund either portions of or the whole strategy.

2.3.2 Funding model: We welcome the opportunity to explore different funding modalities and mechanisms in preparation for the 2026-2030 Strategy, including the “general vs designated” dichotomy. We are proud to have successfully managed to diversify sources of funding, and to have established an independent PARIS21 Foundation which has already shown its relevance and utility. While general support allows more flexibility to allocate resources across all outcome areas within the remit of our Strategy and Results Framework and in accordance with the overall governance of our annual programmes of work, several key partners have specific intervention strategies or sector approaches which limit their abilities to provide general support. Designated funding has thus become a default option for certain donors and is welcome and useful. Regardless of the type, all funding enables the delivery of the strategy and is therefore appreciated by the Secretariat in these times of acute financial constraints.

### 2.3.3 Adaptive learning strategy:

- **Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and impact measures:** We have started to integrate M&E and impact measures more systematically into our activities and programmes. This includes the development of a methodology to assess the impact of NSDS implementation. We are also aware of the additional costs of M&E. Lastly, we note that some of the limitations in M&E are not specific to PARIS21 but also shared by the development data community in general. In this regard, PARIS21 is launching a Task Team with key partners in 2024 to collectively advance the impact measurement of remote engagement on statistical technical assistance, in the context of the UN Committee for Coordination of Statistical Activities.
- **Collective and sustainable learning:** We are currently developing a plan to foster knowledge sharing and peer learning and to engage and influence other stakeholders - particularly partnership members - through Task Teams, Communities of Practice, and regional pre-Fall Meetings events, in addition to our annual Spring and Fall Meetings.

2.3.4 Communications: We launched a completely overhauled [paris21.org](https://paris21.org) website in November 2023, building on feedback from users and partners. The new website features PARIS21’s work areas, impact, news, and events more prominently and allows better access to PARIS21’s publications and tools. We are also in the process of proposing some adjustments to the Communications Strategy 2021-2025.

2.3.5 NSDS 4.0: We welcome the prominence of strategic planning in the evaluation recommendations and welcome the suggestions to make it even more relevant in the changing financing landscape and the evolving development data landscape. We will accelerate change through our NSDS Expert Reference Group, as well as through specific consultations and expert group meetings to engage relevant stakeholders.

2.4 Moving forward, we will continue to implement the recommendations as follows:

	Strategy	Funding	Learning	Communications	NSDS
<b>Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep the strategy as it is</li> <li>Adjust the Theory of Change and Results Framework targets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue stakeholder consultations to align funding with core activities</li> <li>Continue to explore other financing mechanisms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reprogramme regional learning events in connection with the Fall Meetings</li> <li>Connect country pilots through communities of practice</li> <li>Foster impact stories and analyses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New website launched</li> <li>Update communications strategy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convene expert group on the NSDS guidelines</li> <li>Convene expert meetings on NSDS 4.0</li> <li>Bring outreach to scale with partners</li> </ul>
<b>Timeline</b>	February 2024	November 2023 - December 2024	Ongoing	November 2023 - January 2024	Ongoing

### 3. Next steps

3.1. We will continue to implement the evaluation recommendations during the remaining years of the current strategy and will engage with key stakeholders as needed. Progress will be reported at the Executive Committee meetings and to the Board.

3.2. We will continue to build on the evaluation recommendations for the preparation of the 2026-2030 Strategy. Key actions will include:

- Devising a plan for the strategy preparation, which will include consultations with key stakeholders bilaterally and through a Task Team.
- Exploring different funding modalities and mechanisms, including a costed action plan to accompany the 2026-2030 Strategy.
- Incorporating M&E and impact measures as well as additional opportunities to foster knowledge sharing and peer learning.

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- Continuing to conceptualise, document and communicate our impact, as well as that of partners.
- Continuing in developing guidance on strategic planning for development data and further articulating the role and commitments of partners for more impact.