

M-GA Joint Programme Proposal Template, Thematic Call for Proposals on Fragility and Conflict, Climate Change, and Informality Round 2, May 2025

MPTFO Project Reference Number (For PUNOs only)	<i>(Leave blank, for automatic population in Quantum)</i>
Country	Sri Lanka
Region (select as appropriate)	UN: Asia Pacific WB: SAR
Joint programme title:	Towards a more impactful and scalable Government-led Empowerment Program in Sri Lanka
Duration (NB activities must be completed within 24 months of approved funding):	24 months
Anticipated start and end dates:	10/2025 to 10/2027
Joint Programme members:	
Resident Coordinator	Mr. Marc-André Franche, UN Resident Coordinator, franche@un.org
Joint Program RCO focal point	Ms. Wagisha Perera, SDG Fund Resilience Window Coordinator, wagisha.perera@undp.org
Lead PUNO JP Focal point	Ms Joni Simpson, ILO Country Director, simpson@ilo.org
PUNO 2 JP Focal point	Ms Azusa Kubota, Resident Representative, UNDP Sri Lanka. azusa.kubota@undp.org
World Bank Country Director/Manager	Gevorg Sargsyan, World Bank Country Manager Sri Lanka gsargsyan@worldbank.org
World Bank Practice Manager	Aparnaa Somanathan
World Bank TTL (ADM responsible) ¹	Francesca Lamanna

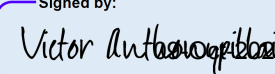
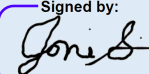
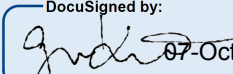
¹ TTL of the P code to which the grant is linked is automatically the TTL of the grant. TTL must be ADM responsible and must ensure that ASA processing adheres to the for country, regional and global activities (see [Accountability and Decision Making \(ADM\) framework](#)).



Total budget:	\$840,000
Source of funds:	
UN Joint SDG Fund	\$310,000
PUNO 1 co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
PUNO 2 co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
SPR Umbrella Trust Fund	\$530,000
World Bank co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
Government co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
International donor co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
Other sources co-funding, <i>if applicable</i>	-
Legal context (for PUNOs only)	The legal basis for the joint programme is detailed in the Legal Annex for the signed United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023-2027). It refers to the cooperation or assistance agreements or other agreements that are the existing legal basis for the relationship between the Government of Sri Lanka and each Participating UN Organization, including the UNDP Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (1990) and the ILO Agreement with the Government (1988).

DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT AND SIGNATURES OF JOINT PROGRAMME

By signing this Joint Programme document, all signatories commit to work together in a spirit of partnership to achieve the results identified in the results framework, work plan and budget.

Joint Programme Lead	
GOVERNMENT COUNTERPART	Name of Representative: Sampath Manthrinayake Date and Signature: Name of Ministry or Department: Secretary of the Ministry of Rural Development Social Security and Community Empowerment
RESIDENT COORDINATOR	Name, Title: Marc-André Franche Signed by:  09-Oct-2025 E55A2F724A2540C...
WB COUNTRY DIRECTOR/MANAGER	Name, Title: Gevorg Sargsyan Signed by:  09-Oct-2025 D88640E7E4B47C...
Participating UN Entities	
PUNO 1 (ILO)	Name, Title: Joni Simpson, Country Director, International Labour Organization Signed by:  07-Oct-2025 CC9361500D7F43D...
PUNO 2 (UNDP)	Name, Title: Azusa Kubota, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme DocuSigned by:  07-Oct-2025 169FE630BB0640B...

JOINT PROGRAMME SUMMARY

Problem to be addressed, and activities to be undertaken (max 200 words)	In 2025, the newly elected Government of Sri Lanka launched the Empowerment Program, co-financed by the World Bank Social Protection Project. The Program aims to improve the livelihoods and welfare of vulnerable households currently receiving social assistance and working informally, through holistic interventions that include upskilling, psychosocial support, business grants, and continuous coaching. The Program faces two key challenges: a) how to increase and sustain the impact on beneficiaries in the medium-term; b) how to facilitate its scale up to the government target of 1.2 million beneficiaries in the coming five years. This JP supports the government in tackling these challenges by assessing and testing three solutions that could catalyze impact and scale: 1. Assessing and testing explicit market linkages between Empowerment Program beneficiaries and larger buyers in selected areas to sustainably increase incomes. 2. Assessing and piloting more accessible formal financing – through Samurdhi Banks - that would allow Program beneficiaries to grow and face shocks. 3. Assessing viable business models to encourage the care economy by activating and collaborating with community-based organizations (CBOs) in rural areas. The JP will leverage technical and operational engagements of the World Bank, the ILO and the UNDP, testing solutions through the Empowerment Program.
SDG Targets directly addressed by the Joint Programme	<i>List min 2 and max 6 SDG targets that the JP will address</i> ● 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection system and measures for all, including floors and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable ● 1.4: By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control

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	over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance ● 5.4: Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate ● 8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value ● 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status ● Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships
Proposed Objective/Project Development Objective (PDO) and expected key results (up to 3)	PDO: To increase the impact and potential of scaling up the Government of Sri Lanka's Empowerment Program PDO Result 1: ● New market linkages created in promising sectors between some Empowerment Program beneficiaries and medium/large buyers. ● Tailored financial product developed with selected Samurdhi Banks to support Empowerment Program micro-entrepreneurs. ● Identified viable business models for community-based after school care

JOINT PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

I. Narrative description (max ~1800 words)

1. Context. Please describe the situation in the country, the constraints to expanded social protection coverage and access to productive and decent employment. What are the key problem(s) this work is intended to address or gap it's going to fill? For the UN, preferably referred to the Common Country Assessment. For the thematic track, with a particular focus on (a) fragile, conflict-affected and forced displacement contexts, (b) the transition to green, sustainable economies and societies, including helping people and communities adapt to climate change, or (c) supporting decent and productive jobs and access to social protection for informal workers. (150 words)	Despite a decade of progress in Sri Lanka, economic and structural issues since 2019 have sharply increased poverty and vulnerability. In 2024, one in four people were estimated to live below \$3.65/day per person (2017 PPP), compared to one in nine people in 2019. The Northern and Eastern provinces have also remained disproportionately vulnerable since the end of the civil war. Recognizing all of this, the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) launched a revamped cash transfer program, Aswesuma, which is currently supporting about 1.8 million households. While many of the poor work, their earnings are precarious, informal (estimated at 70% of workers), with limited access to skilling and financial capital, and inconsistent government support. Programs that promote productive inclusion are nascent and hindered by budgetary limitation and institutional fragmentation. In the Northern Province, a lack of access to credit and land, and excessive red tape hinder productive and decent jobs.²
2. Proposed Solutions. Please list the main entry/leverage points or solutions proposed by the JP that have the greatest potential for	In 2024, the GoSL, through the Department of Samurdhi Development (DSD), set an ambitious target to “empower 1.2 million households” who are currently receiving Aswesuma transfers and gradually transition them out of social assistance within five years.

² [Assessment of the Key Bottlenecks for Private Sector Investments in the Northern Province | International Labour Organization](#)

impact within the given timeframe and budget. Do you expect the proposed grant activity to be associated substantially and sustainably with a policy change or investment operation? (300 words) (for the thematic track, please refer to the indicative list of eligible activities)	Supported by the World Bank Social Protection Project (P178973), the DSD launched its first Empowerment Program pilot in 2025, with the aim of providing 10,000 current Aswesuma cash transfer beneficiaries with holistic productive inclusion interventions - based on the graduation approach - that include skilling, business grants to start self-employment activities, continuous coaching and mentoring, as well as strengthening family and community ties through family development plans and saving groups. It targets mostly women and has started implementation in 7 out of the target 12 districts. However, the Program faces two core challenges: a) How to sustain medium-term impact on beneficiaries. b) How to facilitate scaling up to the target of 1.2 million households. This JP aims to alleviate these challenges by: 1. Assessing and testing the creation of explicit market linkages between Empowerment Program beneficiaries and larger buyers in selected areas to sustainably increase incomes, building on the ILO's experience. This will include creating two concrete linkages between a group of agriculture producers within the Program and a medium to large buyer. 2. Assessing barriers to accessing formal finance in government-supported "Samurdhi Banks", which operate as a mix of cooperatives and rural development banks, and co-designing/tailoring products to help Program beneficiaries borrow, save and face shocks, building on the World Bank's and UNDP's ongoing engagements. This will include one or more Samurdhi Banks testing a modified or tailored product for vulnerable entrepreneurs within the program to further grow their business activities. Assessing a viable business model to encourage the care economy, especially for working women, by activating and collaborating with community-based organizations (CBOs) in rural areas, using pertinent global and regional experiences. As this is a particularly novel area of engagement for the Empowerment Program, and requires close collaboration with the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, this activity will build consensus and knowledge around these models and design a potential approach with the CBOs, with the aim of testing it in the future as the Program scales up further. The JP's activities will mix both analytics and on-the-ground piloting of two of these activities through the Empowerment Program and convey the results back to key stakeholders and policy makers to inform the future scale-up phases.
3. Rationale. How do you know these are the right solutions to the	The GoSL's Empowerment Program is designed after the well-tested "graduation" approach for the vulnerable.

problems? Is there evidence from this country, or previous experience elsewhere to justify this activity here? (150 words)	The UNDP and ILO’s experiences in Sri Lanka highlighted the importance of access to markets for these groups. In 2023/24, the UNDP’s Cash+ program explicitly linked farmers to multiple market models including mobile and roadside markets and increased their sales and revenue. The ILO’s LEED program in 2018-2025 also showed increases in incomes, trust and private investments when producer groups linked to medium/large buyers.³ Ultimately, it linked mostly informal farmers with value chains that offered pathways to semi-formal or formal employment. This incremental approach reduces vulnerability while gradually integrating workers into more secure forms of work. At the same time, while global evidence shows that well-tailored financial products can help micro-entrepreneurs grow and weather shocks (e.g., in Bangladesh),⁴ Sri Lanka’s financial toolkit is still limited, with restrictive eligibility and repayment criteria even among the most present Samurdhi Banks. Lastly, community-based low-cost solutions to care that have proven to be successful in, e.g., Africa,⁵ Brazil and Bangladesh, are practically nonexistent in Sri Lanka,⁶ despite having care be the most cited reason for women not working. This is a particularly new agenda for Sri Lanka. The knowledge and consensus-building through the JP activities will define, collaboratively with the government, how a financially viable model for such community-based after-school care services could be delivered in Sri Lanka and present the social and business case for it to wider audiences.
4. Contribution and/or alignment to the UN Cooperation Framework and World Bank Country Partnership Framework. Please describe the relevance of the three themes (climate, fragility, informality) to country priorities, how the expected results contribute and/or align with CF/CPF objectives, national	The proposal contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027) Strategic Priorities on inclusive human development and gender equality. UNDP’s and ILO’ support through integrated advice, institutional strengthening, and capacity building advances the Empowerment Program’s productive inclusion measures and gender equality that are needed to reduce vulnerability. The project will be implemented through the ‘Resilience Window’ of the country-level Sri Lanka SDG Fund, which already hosts a successful initiative under the digital transformation track of the Joint SDG Fund. The proposal is also aligned with two of the five higher-level objectives of the World Bank-Sri Lanka CPF (2024-2027), namely: 1) improving economic inclusion towards sustainable and decent employment - which the Empowerment Program explicitly feeds into - while also improving financial services to support small businesses;

³ [LEED Women’s empowerment](#)

⁴ Khalily, M.A. Baqui; Khandker, Shahidur R.; Samad, Hussain A.. 2016. [Beyond Ending Poverty: The Dynamics of Microfinance in Bangladesh](#). Directions in Development--Poverty; World Bank.

⁵ Cassidy, Rachel; Zighed, Roxane; Gokalp, Cansu Birce. 2023. [Designing and Implementing Low-Cost Childcare Solutions: Lessons from the Africa Gender Innovation Lab](#). World Bank

⁶ ILO. 2023. [The care economy and decent work in Sri Lanka: Opportunities, challenges and future trends](#). Geneva: ILO.

development strategies and priorities, and related SDG targets (150 words)	2) sustain and strengthen social protection systems on which this Empowerment Program is built, consequently enhancing resilience and human capital.
5. Beneficiaries. Who are the intended beneficiaries of this activity (direct and indirect)? Are they regional or throughout the country? How many are members of neglected, disadvantaged, or otherwise vulnerable groups (example, children, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, indigenous peoples, refugees and asylum seekers, forcibly displaced people, people vulnerable to climate change, informal workers, other)? How many women and girls? (150 words)	The JP's activities target Empowerment Program beneficiaries in selected districts, who are current Aswesuma program recipients in the poor or severely poor categories - based on the government's multi-dimensional score. The GoSL has already registered 4,400 beneficiaries, 55% of whom are women (target is 60%), 23% are women-headed households and 10% are self-identified persons with disabilities. Most of the beneficiaries are either themselves engaged or have another household member engaged in precarious work. Moreover, a share of these beneficiaries is in the estate sector, which faces additional vulnerabilities related to <u>lack of land ownership, restrictive engagement with estate companies and various psycho-social challenges</u>. Lastly, a share of the beneficiaries who will benefit from the JP's activities, for example in Vavuniya, will also be those who had suffered from the ramifications of the civil war that affected the North and Eastern provinces - including displacement - which ended in 2009.
6. Gender. How does the proposed activity address gender-specific gaps or barriers ? (for PUNOS, please also fill in the Gender Marker) What outcomes are gender-responsive or gender-transformative? (150 words)	The proposed activities tackle the intersecting barriers that restrict women's access to decent work and social protection in Sri Lanka. Self-employed women suffer from limited access to markets and networks - driven by fewer years of experience, home-based businesses, social norms and others – which is no different in Sri Lanka.⁷ They also suffer from limited access to capital, due to eligibility criteria, as well as discrimination and lack of awareness.⁸ The JP's activities will assess these limitations and test ways to alleviate them by: 1) formally linking women producers to large buyers; 2) co-designing/modifying a financial product in Samurdhi Banks to better respond to women's needs. Lastly, given the importance of care activities in women's work decisions, the JP will assess viable community-based care models in selected areas. Specific JP outputs and outcomes will be sex-disaggregated to ensure that women continue to be a focus in the activities. The JP applies a gender marker of 2 – gender responsive – as it integrates gender considerations across its design to generate tangible results for women.

⁷ Handaragama, S., & Kusakabe, K. (2021). [Participation of women in business associations: A case of small-scale tourism enterprises in Sri Lanka](#). *Heliyon*, 7(11).

⁸ Eliana Carranza, Chandra Dhakal and Inessa Love. 2018. ["Female Entrepreneurs: How and Why are they Different?"](#) World Bank, Washington, DC.

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7. Lessons. How will the team engage with and communicate results and lessons learned to key stakeholders, including national counterparts, development partners, and donors? Please indicate key communication and visibility actions (details to be provided in annex) (150 words)	As the activities are anchored in the GoSL Empowerment Program that is partially financed by the World Bank, they will be frequently reviewed in progress meetings and Steering Committee meetings – which includes DSD staff and various government ministries. The World Bank’s periodic implementation support missions will also help communicate the work at both the central and local levels. The diagnostics-related work will involve key informant interviews that are based on active outreach to solicit views and experiences of government and non-government stakeholders, and beneficiary households. The findings will be shared through human-interest stories on both struggles and successes, infographics and easily digestible content. A synthesis roundtable will be conducted towards the end of the grant with policy makers, NGOs and donors to disseminate key learnings and how they could benefit the Program’s scale up and broader government interventions, with informative press communication and social media posts.
8. Does this proposed activity build on past government activities, SPR- or SDG-Fund-supported activities, in particular M-GA or GA activities, IDA/IBRD-financed projects, projects from UN agencies or others? If so, please describe? (150 words)	The proposed activities build on 1.5 years of preparatory design and implementation work under the IDA-financed Social Protection Project that is funding the initial phase of the Empowerment Program. The activities also complement and build on the UNDP’s <i>Funding Windows: Cash+ Livelihoods Model</i>, which supported 1,000 beneficiaries in five districts—80% of whom were women-headed households – to develop their livelihoods, creating district-level Farmers’ Markets that eliminated intermediaries, empowered local producers, and aligned with the broader ‘Rural Women’s Green Business Forum’ strategy for provincial and national scale-up. The activities also link directly to the ILO’s Generating Resilient Opportunities for Work (GROW) project, which operates in the northern province and builds on experiences such as LEED and LEED+ explained above.
9. Is complementarity with other relevant initiatives in particular previous GA and/or MGA. How are the proposed activities linked to any other ongoing or future government-led, IDA/IBRD-financed, or project from planned relevant initiatives implemented by governments, development partners (including WB/ UN agency or), other IFIs/DFIs and other stakeholders? If so, please describe. (100 words)	The JP will inform two upcoming World Bank projects on economic inclusion for vulnerable populations – one through a Japan-financed trust fund, and another through an IDA project. It also complements UNDP’s work on livelihoods, food security, and financial inclusion, namely: 1) the Japan Supplementary Budget Assistance project, 2) the GCF Climate Resilient Integrated Water Management Project, and 3) the Citi Foundation project. Lastly, the activities link with ILO’s ongoing Jobs for Peace and Resilience (JPR) Program, which focuses on livelihoods for marginalized communities in the Northern Province and works with producer groups. Moreover, the JP supports the government’s National Social Protection Strategy, recently drafted and submitted to the Cabinet, which not only places significant attention on improving the livelihoods of the poor and vulnerable, but also explicitly highlights the need to link to markets, especially formal ones, improving Samurdhi Banks to better support the poor and vulnerable and creating the type of care economy that would both create jobs and boost women’s labor force participation.

10. Justification for financing from the M-GA. Please describe why the proposed activity benefits from collaboration of World Bank and UN agencies. How will this activity make best use of the comparative advantage of each participating agency? (150 words)	All three agencies have experience and expertise in promoting productive employment for vulnerable Sri Lankans. They served a common goal but followed different pathways in different areas and with varying levels of vulnerability. The M-GA offers a unique opportunity to leverage these experiences now by honing onto specific activities that could unleash more productive inclusion and decent jobs for the vulnerable and transform their reality. Working together on these activities, some of which are new, would allow the World Bank to build on a government program under implementation and bring more analytical rigor to its scale up, and would allow the UN agencies to bring more agile implementation and testing of solutions. The three agencies would approach the government with one voice, garner larger convening power and agree on solutions that could funnel in more future financing from the agencies and the government.
11. Coordinating and implementing arrangements Please outline the roles and responsibilities of the Resident Coordinator/Resident Coordinator Office, Participating UN Organizations (PUNOs), the World Bank, national counterparts and other relevant stakeholders (150 words)	Most activities will have two collaborating international agencies, based on expertise and budget. All activities will be done in close collaboration with the DSD and the broader Ministry of Rural Development, Social Security and Community Empowerment, which implements the Empowerment Program and will facilitate the agreed-upon activities. The Empowerment Program has strong national ownership, and some of the activities are already being scaled up in other areas outside of the pilot locations. For each of the JP activities, there will be at least one government team member working closely with the agencies to ensure that the process and findings then enjoy further government ownership and has direct implications on the future of the Empowerment Program. The JP will start with a kick-off meeting that aligns international and government agencies together from the beginning. There will be three key avenues of coordination and collaboration with the government: 1) The Empowerment Program project steering committee will ensure that the implementation of the Empowerment Program and the JP activities face limited hurdles, and resolve issues as they arise. The steering committee includes the participation of the Ministry of Women and Child Affairs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Finance. 2) Periodic workshops, field visits and discussions with local government and non-government agencies to gather information, share findings, and build consensus. This will be especially important for district and municipal-level agencies and staff as relevant for each stream of JP activities. 3) All analytical exercises will include discussions and meetings with relevant stakeholders, for example NGOs, private sector companies, some commercial banks offering services to vulnerable entrepreneurs and others working on the ground. An inclusive stakeholder mapping process is planned as part of JP inception, which will identify in more detail central and local government entities, social partners, private sector actors and civil society organizations relevant for the JP activities.

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	The UN Resident Coordinator will ensure high-level leadership and reduce bottlenecks on political, advocacy and partnerships aspects, while also providing additional technical and coordination support with the Secretariat of the Sri Lanka of SDG Fund, including a dedicated focal point for its Resilience Window. Lastly, every six months, the three agencies, the RCO, CMU and DSD will have a progress meeting to review updates and unlock challenges for the activities. Between these meetings, the three agencies with the DSD will have a progress meeting once every two months. Serious issues and key findings will also be raised during the Steering Committee meetings of the Empowerment Program. The JP Steering Committee will rely on existing tri-partite governance structures at the country level, including that of the GA where it exists, which will organize dedicated M-GA meetings to review M-GA related documents and decisions.
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II. Work Plan: Proposed activities, project components, and outputs.**II.1. Outputs and SDG Target and Gender Marker (to be completed by PUNOs).**

Output	SDG Target	Gender Marker
Output 1: Selected Empowerment Program beneficiaries sustainably linked to market systems with medium/large buyers in selected districts	8.5	Level 2
Output 2: Improved financial inclusion of some Empowerment Program beneficiaries through design and testing of a more accessible saving/borrowing Samurdhi Bank product	1.3 and 1.4	Level 2
Output 3: Gender-responsive and community-led after school care options designed for vulnerable women in rural settings	5.4 and 5.5	Level 3
Output 4: Evidence-based recommendations from JP identified and adopted for scale up in government programming	1.3 and 8.3	Level 2

II.2. Activities, project components, and provisional budget allocations

Activity / Component	Brief (<=20 word) description	Responsible partners (please indicate lead partner in bold)	Allocated Budget (US\$)⁹
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⁹ For PUNOs, please also fill in the detailed budget in Annex 1

Output 1 statement: Establish and pilot market linkages between Empowerment Program producers and large buyers for more sustainable impact			
Activity / Component 1.1	Identify promising sectors/products in Vavuniya and Monaragala districts based on quantitative and qualitative information	ILO, World Bank	\$100,000
Activity / Component 1.2	Establish linkages between Empowerment Program beneficiaries (as producers) with larger buyers in the identified sectors/products	ILO, World Bank	\$200,000
Output 2 statement: Assess people's perception about Samurdhi Banks' saving and borrowing schemes, and the banks' potential to help scale up the Empowerment Program			
Activity / Component 2.1	Qualitatively assess the relevance and effectiveness of Samurdhi Banks' financial products in supporting entrepreneurs to save and borrow	World Bank, UNDP	\$100,000
Activity / Component 2.2	Assess awareness, access barriers, and utilization of Samurdhi Banks' financial products among vulnerable households in selected districts	UNDP	\$100,000
Activity / Component 2.3	Design and test a tailored/enhanced financial product under Samurdhi Banks in two districts to expand access for vulnerable households	World Bank, UNDP	\$90,000
Output 3 statement: Activate community-based organizations at the village level to offer after care services for children			
Activity / Component 3.1	Identify and disseminate relevant global models of low-cost community-based childcare and after school care practices in rural settings	World Bank	\$80,000

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Activity / Component 3.2	Identify potential business models between selected community-based organizations (CBOs) and Empowerment Program beneficiaries to offer after-school care and transportation	World Bank, ILO	\$110,000
Output 4 statement: Learning to inform impactful scale up and broader government programming			
Activity / Component 4.1	Identify and disseminate key learnings from the various activities with policy makers and non-government stakeholders and implications for government programming	World Bank, ILO, UNDP	\$60,000

Monitoring: please only indicate output level indicators¹⁰

How will you know that change has happened? What indicators will you measure? What specific milestones will the program achieve and how do these contribute to the overall objective?

Joint Programme Outcomes			
Outcome statement 1: Increased access of selected producers to large buyers			
Outcome indicator 1.1: Empowerment Program producers sell their products to buyer	Baseline: 0	Target: 200 producers (60% women)	Means of verification: DSD submits confirmation email based on Samurdhi Development Officers' reports.
Outcome statement 2: Increased responsiveness of Samurdhi Banks to financial needs of vulnerable populations			
Outcome indicator 2.1: No. of additional inclusive financial products or services offered by Samurdhi Banks to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations	Baseline: 0	Target: 1 product piloted in 2 districts	Means of verification: Official communication, banks reports, Samurdhi circulars.
Outcome statement 3: Enhanced localized options to reduce unpaid care burden of women			
Outcome indicator 3.1: Main community actors have increased understanding of care options for children.	Baseline:	Target: 1	Means of verification: Workshop report, event and discussion minutes.

Joint Programme Outputs			
Output 1 statement: Establish and pilot market linkages between Empowerment Program producers and large buyers for more sustainable impact			
Output indicator 1.1: Two formal market linkages, through signed offtake agreements with anchor buyers in a	Baseline: 0	Target: 2	Means of verification: Signed agreements, buyer confirmations.

¹⁰ Please pick an indicator out of the outcome indicators below

selected value chain			
Output indicator 1.2: Extension services (e.g. quality standards) delivered to identified beneficiaries of the Empowerment Program	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Training logs from buyer companies, DSD and beneficiary confirmation.
Output 2 statement: Assess people's perception about Samurdhi and other relevant banks' saving and borrowing schemes, and the banks' potential to help scale up the Empowerment Program			
Output indicator 2.1: Report on identified key institutional and awareness barriers to accessing finance through Samurdhi Banks—such as product fit, trust, or procedural complexity—are identified and validated through interviews with stakeholders	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: DSD confirms the receipt of the report by email.
Output indicator 2.2: Report on awareness and access assessment among selected beneficiaries, with challenges disaggregated by sex to the extent possible.	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: DSD confirms the receipt of the report by email.
Output indicator 2.3: A financial product is co-designed/tailored with Samurdhi Banks and piloted in two districts.	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Selected Samurdhi Banks issue a circular on the establishment of the product.
Output 3 statement: Activate community-based organizations at the village level to offer care and transportation services for children of working women			
Output indicator 3.1: Workshop on relevant global experiences in low-cost community-based childcare and after school care models from vulnerable settings	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Workshop summary sent to DSD
Output indicator 3.1: Report on	Baseline: 0	Target: 1	Means of verification: Report sent on



viable business models of after school care and transportation services identified in collaboration with selected CBOs			behalf of the agencies and CBO to the DSD
Output 4 statement: Learning to inform impactful scale up and broader government programming			
Output 4.2: Learning briefs/technical notes and workshop to promote policy dialog delivered	Baseline: 0	Target: 3 briefs and 1 national dialog synthesis	Means of verification: Publications, press releases, event minutes, briefs sent to DSD.

III. List of key outcome indicators for the M-GA (please select all that apply)

	Final Outcome Indicators
Accelerated creation of decent and productive jobs	✓ Change in number of people in work – of which wage work and self-employment ✓ Change in number of people engaged in more productive work of which – women, youth, disadvantaged people/regions, disability,... (measured by changes in wages or firm profits) ☐ Change in number of people in decent jobs (disaggregated by age, sex) ○ Change in informal employment, by sector and sex (SDG 8.3.1) and, where possible, by age and disability status ○ contributing to social security by employment status ○ working within the range of 'normal working hours' (35-48h/week) ○ earning less than the defined benchmarks (for example, XX per cent of the median wage or median labour income), by status in employment ○ affiliated to a union, a professional organization, a workers' association or a member-based organization of workers, by status in employment. ○ covered by Fundamentals Principles and Rights at Work ☐ Alignment of wage growth with productivity growth ☐ Change in the number of learners benefiting from lifelong learning opportunities, by sex

Accelerated achievement of universal, comprehensive, adequate and sustainable social protection	☐ Number of persons and percentage increase in effective population coverage by social protection systems (disaggregated by sex and branch of SS), including children, people with disabilities, migrants ☐ Number of persons and percentage of population with increased level of benefits ☐ Number of persons and percentage increase in legal coverage for social protection ☐ Number of persons and percentage of population covered by a new branch of social security / social protection programs ☐ Total amount of social security contributions collected from workers (with a trend over years) / [and possibly: as a percentage of total social protection expenditures]
	Intermediate outcome Indicators
	☐ Resources allocated to social protection programs (disaggregated into domestic resources, donor programs and IFI lending, and private contributions) ☐ Resources allocated to jobs, skills, and employability programs (disaggregated into domestic resources, donor programs and IFI lending, and private contributions) ☒ Use of evidence in program design
	Other relevant outcome indicators (please fill in as many as necessary)
	☐

Appendix – answers to be provided by PUNOs only

Please fill in the tables below

Budget per UNSDG categories - for PUNOs only

Please fill in the detailed below and allocated budget of each involved agency based on the provided categories.

UNSDG BUDGET CATEGORIES	PUNO (ILO)		PUNO 2 (UNDP)		TOTAL	
	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)	Joint SDG Fund (USD)	PUNO Contribution (USD)
1. Staff and other personnel	28,689		17,300		45,989	0

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2. Supplies, Commodities, Materials	0		0		0	
3. Equipment, Vehicles, and Furniture (including Depreciation)	2,400		0		2,400	
4. Contractual services	70,211		107,058		177,269	
5.Travel	27,600		10,000		37,600	
6. Transfers and Grants to Counterparts	0		0		0	
7. General Operating and other Direct Costs	15,958		10,500		26,458	
Total Direct Costs	144,858		144,858		289,716	
8. Indirect Support Costs (7% of total direct costs – except for WFP and UNHCR which should apply 6.5% of total direct costs)	10,140		10,140		20,280	
TOTAL Costs	154,998	0	154,998	309,996	0	-

Gender Equality marker for PUNOs

Gender Equality Marker

Please copy the output as per in the workplan and add the Gender Equality marker score and justify the scoring. Please refer to the UNSDG guidance here:

<https://help.uninfo.org/un-info/results-framework/results-framework-structure/suboutput-level/guidance-on-applying-tags-and-markers/guidance-on-applying-the-gender-equality-human-rights-and-sustaining-peace-markers>

Joint Programme Outputs	GEM Score	Justification
Output 1 (1.1 & 1.2)	2	This output targets women micro entrepreneurs by identifying inclusive value chains and establishing structural linkages with medium and large buyers. This directly addresses gender specific barriers such as informality, limited networks and low market visibility.
Output 3 (3.2)	3	This tackles unpaid care work by activating community based organisations to deliver after school care. These solutions are designed to reduce the care burden on women, facilitating their entry to the labour market.
Output 4 (4.1)	2	This ensures that gender disaggregated data are embedded into program learning and scale up recommendations. It enables shaping future interventions and policies that are more catered to the needs of women.

Elaborating the joint programmes' contribution to gender equality

Background: The second MG-A funding round call will give preference to joint programme proposals that demonstrate a robust understanding of and a clear programmatic proposal for addressing gender-related barriers to access to decent and productive work and social protection. Given the tight word limits in the application template, this annex provides UNCTs with the opportunity to further elaborate on how the JP will contribute to gender equality at outcome, output and activity level.

Please note that each section has a limit of 150 words.

1. Context. What are the key gender inequalities, including gender-specific barriers to decent and productive work and social protection, that the joint programme will address?	Despite Sri Lanka's gender equity strides towards better education and health, female labor force participation remains low and unmoving at 31.6% (2023), compared to 70% among men. Informality is persistently high, with 70-80% of workers not contributing to social insurance. Women generally have lower quality jobs, lower entrepreneurship opportunities and still lower skills and work experience compared to men. ¹¹
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¹¹ ILO. 2016. [Factors Affecting Women's Labour Force Participation in Sri Lanka](#). Geneva: ILO.

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Please support your assessment of the problem with relevant sex-disaggregated data. (max. 150 Words)	Sri Lankan women spend on average 5 hours a day on house responsibilities and another 3 hours caring for children – more than 2 times what men spend. Childcare access, affordability and quality staffing are limited.¹² Lastly, despite improvement in financial inclusion, when women borrow (for personal or business reasons), they overwhelmingly use informal sources. However, they rely more on microfinance institutions and community banks compared to men, highlighting the role these play in access to finance.¹³
2. Solutions. Based on the above assessment what are the key entry/leverage points that the JP proposes to address gender inequalities and access barriers? What types of policy changes, programmatic interventions or investment operations in support of gender equality do you expect the JP to catalyze? (max. 150 Words)	The Empowerment Program aims to support poor beneficiaries, most of whom are women, in a holistic manner: increasing their skills, while providing them with a grant to kick-start and grow their own economic activities, consistently providing them with coaching and mentoring and increasing their community ties through savings and self-help groups. The JP's activities will augment these interventions by helping the Program go the extra mile, assess ways to increase its impact beyond these interventions, and design and test using human-centered and iterative design principles interventions that would help women micro-entrepreneurs across both economic and social aspects, from market linkages and access to finance, to finding solutions around the care economy in rural areas that have not yet been tested in Sri Lanka.
3. Outputs. Please describe how each of the JP's outputs contributes to the advancement of gender equality; highlight any outputs that pursue the advancement of gender equality in access to decent jobs and social protection as the principal objective. (max. 150 Words)	Identifying and piloting market linkages with buyers tackles one of the key barriers to women micro entrepreneurs, especially those from lower income households. The ILO and UNDP's experience shows that a more deliberate and intentional process of linking with buyers, and creating market spaces, helps increase sales and incomes and break the geographical and social barrier to their growth. Identifying, co-designing and piloting more robust and citizen-centric financial products, through rural Samurdhi Banks who are already present and active in Sri Lanka's villages, would not only increase access to saving and borrowing options for women, but would also re-orient the institutional structures and processes of these banks to be more gender-sensitive and women-oriented.

¹² ILO. 2023. [The care economy and decent work in Sri Lanka: Opportunities, challenges and future trends](#). Geneva: ILO

¹³ IFC. 2020. [Women Matter! Findings from Sri Lanka's National Financial Inclusion Survey 2018/19](#). Washington D.C.: IFC.

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	Lastly, finding a viable community-based model for child- and broader care activities could both free up time for working women, and create new work opportunities for Empowerment Program beneficiaries, while augmenting the role of CBOs in the villages.
4. Activities. Please list the specific activities that the JP will implement to promote gender equality and explain how each contributes to the outputs above. (max. 150 Words)	Each one of the JP's activities will have a gender angle to better understand and tailor the experiences of women in the Empowerment Program. Activity 1.1: Identifying promising products and value chains in both Vavuniya and Monaragala will take into account the products that women could generate, and encourage women to take up promising value chains. Activity 2.1: The qualitative assessment of Samurdhi Bank products, criteria and processes will take into account women's journeys and barriers. Activity 2.2: Assessing people's awareness, usage and usage of Samurdhi Banks will include interviews and focus group sessions with women. Activities 3.1 and 3.2 are specifically tailored to women's care context, needs and the viable solutions would take these into account.