UN GLOBAL PULSE

Innovating for a
Future-Ready United Nations

2024

Annual Report

CONTENTS

In a world marked by rapid change, unprecedented challenges and renewed uncertainty, innovation is, more than ever, a necessity for our times. These trials test every aspect of our work, making the UN's mission more vital than ever. As Secretary-General António Guterres affirmed, "**We cannot solve 21st century challenges with 20th century tools. We need a UN 2.0**".

In 2024, the United Nations doubled down on its skills and culture transformation journey called "UN 2.0", transforming into a more modern, data-driven, forward-thinking organization. This effort was strengthened by Member States through the historic adoption of the Pact for the Future, including its Global Digital Compact and a Declaration on Future Generations, and by an ask to the UN system to increase its data, digital, innovation, foresight and behavioural science capabilities.[1]

UN Global Pulse serves the UN system as a centre of excellence for innovation, supporting this UN 2.0 journey. Over the past year, we have helped equip UN entities with the tools, knowledge and leadership required to navigate this unprecedented era.

From cutting-edge applications of AI in disaster response to integrating anticipatory thinking into UN planning processes and supporting community-driven solutions to climate change, scaling solutions has become central to our approach. Our projects go beyond pilots - they are blueprints for change, shaping how the UN can work smarter, faster and more effectively.

For example, we advanced the use of AI in humanitarian response, supporting organizations to identify where to deliver food, shelter and medical care up to six times faster through our DISHA initiative. These efforts improve how UN teams and humanitarian organizations respond to crises, shifting to proactive, data-informed decision-making.

Through the UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme, we helped close critical gaps for scaling innovations across the UN system. By providing tailored support and funding to UN teams, we facilitated the transition of multiple pilots to high-impact solutions. Additionally, we supported the development of coalitions focused on data-driven approaches to regionally shared challenges, such as sea level rise in the Asia Pacific.

1   United Nations. (2024, September 22). The Pact for the Future. United Nations General Assembly. (Document A/79/L.2), Action 45 [Page 29].

These were just some areas where Global Pulse co-created with partners to scale impact across the UN family, ultimately for the benefit of people and planet.

Our 2024 report highlights our milestones in supporting the UN 2.0 agenda. It showcases key projects, system impact and insights from our work that support the UN's transformation. As we mark the 80th anniversary of the United Nations in 2025, the urgency for change has never been greater.

UN Global Pulse remains steadfast in our commitment to building a UN that is fit for the challenges of today and unwavering in its mission to create a better tomorrow.

INTRODUCTION

Photo: United Nations, Dibakar Roy (unsplash)

2024 IN NUMBERS

Projects

15
projects

57
countries
reached

79
project
partners

Events

66
events

Photo: UN Global Pulse

A GLOBAL INNOVATION PORTFOLIO SUPPORTING A UN 2.0

UN Global Pulse supports responsible and inclusive innovation across the UN system. We collaborate with partners on new solutions and support the whole UN family in its transformation towards a UN 2.0.

Global Pulse's innovation portfolio spans a spectrum of innovations across three pillars: our Regional Hubs embed us into country-specific and region-specific challenges like adoption to sea level rise in the Asia-Pacific region; our Global Catalyst provides a space for scale-up of solutions that are cross-entity and global in nature, like building a technical AI platform that can scale high-quality use cases; and a Global Capability Hub that brings together expertise to support innovation teams system-wide. Through this setup, we provide holistic support to UN teams, helping scale the most effective solutions in partnership with them.

Central to the vision of a UN 2.0 and Global Pulse's portfolio is the "Quintet of Change," five modern skill sets – data, strategic foresight, digital, behavioural science and innovation. We embed these capabilities throughout our work to create new solutions using data, artificial intelligence and digital tools. But we also go a step further – using foresight and behavioural insights to identify timely priorities and design approaches fit for real-world adoption. By combining these disciplines, we ensure innovations are not only ground breaking but also inclusive, responsible and sustainable.

Our teams work across four continents, with bases in Jakarta, Kampala, Helsinki and New York. We have specialists in AI, data and social sciences, strategic foresight, digital transformation, social systems, innovation scaling and more. Behind the scenes, others do valuable work in critical areas such as partnerships, monitoring, evaluation and learning, operations and creative communications and design.

As the UN 2.0 Policy Brief states, the Quintet of Change pathways for transformation:

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Behavioural Science can raise social protection uptake by helping Member States simplify procedures and improve outreach to those in need.

DATA

Data can change lives and livelihoods by combining satellite imagery with data on weather and soil conditions to help farmers in the Global South increase crop yields.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Strategic Foresight can chart paths to climate resilience by modelling different climate scenarios and identifying areas prone to extreme weather events.

UN Quintet of Change

Innovation can transform healthcare for millions in remote areas with advances such as medical delivery drones and virtual consultations.

INNOVATION

DIGITAL

Digital Capacity can transform education by bringing connectivity to more than 244 million youngsters – primarily girls – who are out of school worldwide.

Photo: Casey Horner (unsplash)

INNOVATION

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

UN
Quintet
of Change

DATA

Collecting data from more
diverse sources and improving
how we govern, handle and
use it for better insights
and action.

DIGITAL
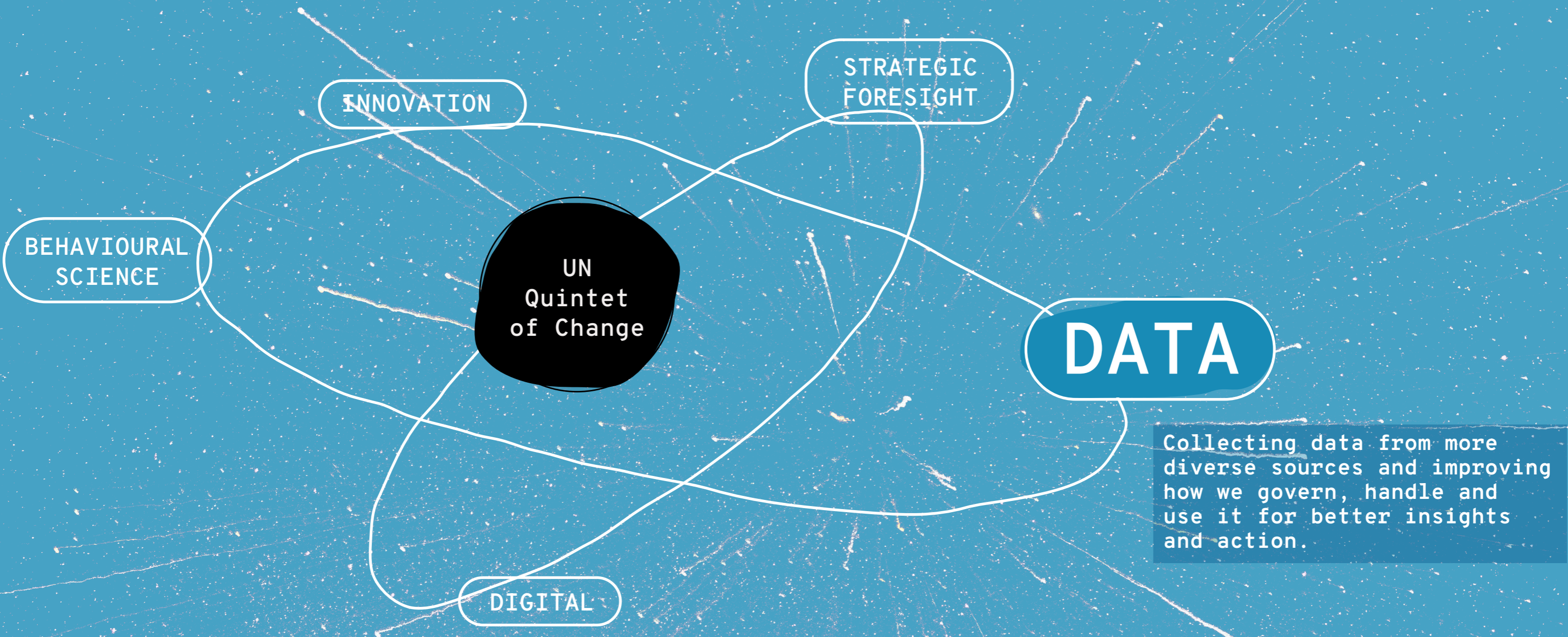
6x
reduction

in time needed to produce
a post-disaster building
damage assessment

7x
increase

in feasible assessment area

RESPONSIBLE AI IN ACTION:
THE DISHA INITIATIVE

#DATA

In a world where urgency and long-term thinking must coexist, the Data Insights for Humanitarian Action (DISHA) initiative embodies how responsible innovation can safeguard lives by striving for long-term sustainability. Led by United Nations Global Pulse, DISHA is a coalition of partners including Google.org, the Jain Family Institute, McKinsey & Company, the Patrick J. McGovern Foundation, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The initiative has demonstrated throughout 2024 how ethical data and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions can enhance humanitarian efforts by deepening our understanding of what is happening on the ground, why it occurred and what might happen next. Centred on building and maintaining AI-enabled products, each

DISHA solution is co-developed with humanitarian users and partners and continually validated against local sources and field observations to stay accurate, grounded and responsive to real-world needs.

DISHA was created to help humanitarian actors make faster and more informed decisions by expanding responsible access to data and AI tools to unlock social impact at scale. By working closely with field teams and partners, DISHA builds practical AI solutions, brokers ongoing data-sharing agreements and upholds strong standards for privacy and ethics. Every product is tested with real-world feedback to ensure it responds to the complexity of humanitarian work in ways that reflect both urgency and care, helping protect lives and use resources where needed most.

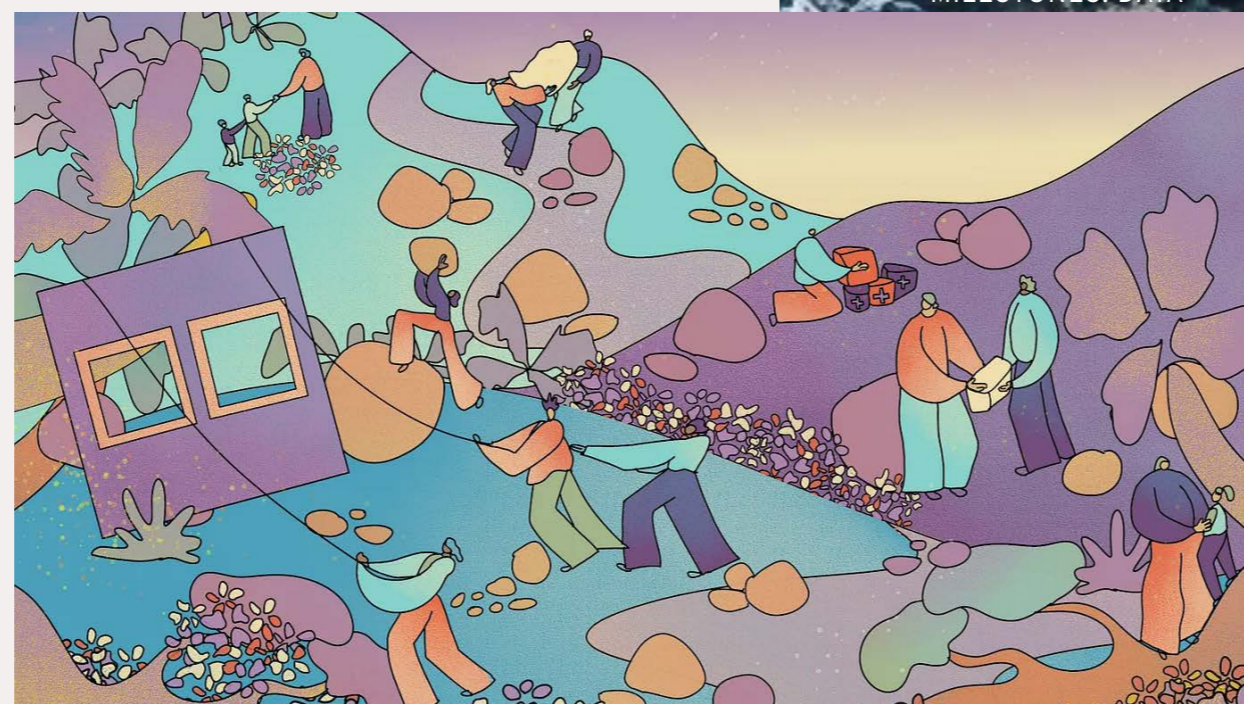**DISHA now delivers actionable insights through two core applications:**

Damage Assessment Solution
When disasters strike, a fast and accurate infrastructure assessment is vital to capture a full and clear picture of the impact on the ground and guide effective response. In 2024, DISHA's AI-assisted Damage Assessment Solution, developed in partnership with Google Research and United Nations Satellite Center (UNOSAT), has proven this in practice. Tested across nine disaster events, the solution reduced assessment times by a factor of six and enabled coverage of seven times more area than traditional methods. Thanks to the dedicated multi-organization team behind the development and deployment of a building detection model by December, the solution became fully operational for UNOSAT's disaster response operations.

Socio-economic Mapping (SEM) Solution
Early warning systems are crucial for anticipating disasters by analysing historical data, weather forecasts and risk models. However, given the fast pace of global events, some shocks occur with little or no warning. DISHA's Socio-economic Mapping solution, developed by DISHA's impact partner QuantumBlack, AI by McKinsey, addresses situations where traditional statistics may not be available, detecting multiple varying needs that can emerge during ongoing crises. It detects unusual population movements and shares insights in a privacy-preserving manner with multiple UN/NGO partners, allowing first responders to allocate aid more effectively.

In 2024, we are also celebrating a landmark agreement with Globe Telecom, Inc., a leading mobile network operator in the Philippines, one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. This collaboration represents a significant step forward in emergency response efforts by allowing all humanitarian agencies in the country to apply for access to DISHA's dynamic insights on population mobility and poverty. Throughout the year, real-world tests conducted during floods, typhoons and volcanic eruptions have demonstrated the value of the Socio-economic Mapping solution, with insights gained from these events shared among partners to improve the coordination of local responses.

DISHA increasingly demonstrates how emerging technologies can support (not replace) human decision-making in humanitarian contexts. Ongoing testing, field validation and shared learning played a central role in building trust and usability across partners. With a future-oriented mindset, we will continue advancing new frontiers in predictive analytics and humanitarian intelligence.

Rooted in cross-sector collaboration and committed to ethical innovation, every new solution deepens the UN's capacity to harness data as a strategic asset, shaping a culture of anticipatory, insight-driven decision-making across the system. As a living example of the UN 2.0 DATA capability in action, DISHA helps ensure that innovation is not only cutting-edge but also inclusive, trusted and grounded in the realities of those we serve.

Photos page 12–15:
NASA (unsplash), Shanice
Da Costa (illustration),
UN Global Pulse, Jules
Bassoliel (unsplash)

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

Partners deepened their knowledge and skills in data- and AI-driven disaster response. The Philippines Socio-economic Mapping solution enabled agencies to better understand the power and limitations of telecom data. At the same time, international forums, such as the AI for Good Summit and the Summit of the Future, introduced humanitarian leaders and policymakers to the potential of AI to transform emergency planning and resource allocation.

Structural

Key structural shifts emerged through formal partnerships and operational changes. The agreement with Globe Telecom institutionalised access to mobile phone use data in the Philippines, offering a scalable model for future data collaborations. Meanwhile, UNOSAT began integrating the Damage Assessment solution into its workflows, marking a significant evolution in how AI-enhanced satellite analysis supports field operations.

Behavioural

Behaviours across institutions began to shift. Humanitarian actors like Catholic Relief Services (CRS) started embedding DISHA's insights into their emergency planning processes. This signals a growing level of trust in data-driven approaches—not as replacements for lived experience and local knowledge, but as vital complements to them in moments of crisis.

STRENGTHENING CLIMATE RESILIENCE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC AGAINST RISING SEA LEVELS

#DATA   **#ASIA PACIFIC**

In 2024, sea levels rose at an unexpectedly fast pace, reaching unprecedented rates. This escalation threatens livelihoods and infrastructure, disrupts economic activities and puts added pressure on public services, especially in vulnerable coastal regions. For millions across Indonesia and the Pacific, this is already a lived reality, with communities experiencing frequent flooding, erosion and the lingering threat of displacement. In response, UN Global Pulse launched the initiative "Addressing Sea Level Rise in Asia and the Pacific" in partnership with the Indonesian Government (Ministry of National Development Planning and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and key regional actors.

By combining climate projections, scenario planning, participatory consultations and diverse datasets into a unified platform, the project advances a more holistic approach to climate resilience, preparing national and provincial institutions to plan, adapt and respond with data-informed and locally grounded adaptation strategies.

The project aims to move beyond fragmented and reactive responses toward more coordinated, forward-looking climate governance. Turning complex data into actionable strategies supports government institutions at national and local levels in identifying the most vulnerable areas and prioritising timely, informed interventions. The approach ensures that responses reflect both technical insights and the lived experiences of those most affected.

During 2024, the project brought together a wide range of stakeholders to align efforts and perspectives on sea-level rise. Through technical workshops, community consultations and global advocacy events such as the World Water Forum and the Summit of the Future Action Days, the team raised awareness about the multi-sectoral nature of sea-level rise and its far-reaching consequences, the value of data-informed planning, elevated Indigenous perspectives and contributed to national discussions on policy development.

Nevertheless, a key achievement to celebrate was the co-creation of a data-informed decision-support tool, developed with the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas). The platform integrates climate data, satellite imagery and socio-economic indicators to identify high-risk zones and guide intervention planning. Piloted in high-risk coastal provinces and installed on government servers for ongoing use and future scaling, the platform offers a scalable model for national and subnational planning.

Early engagement with the platform led to a shift in awareness within government agencies. Demonstrations of the tool were described as "eye-opening," particularly for visualising the cross-sector impacts of sea-level rise on areas such as education, infrastructure and agriculture. Stakeholders expressed interest in expanding its use to additional sectors and recognised its value in improving planning and coordination across ministries to strengthen government responses to climate impacts.

As the project evolves, the next phase will focus on deepening adoption and expanding reach to more provinces, integrating new types of climate data and embedding sea-level rise considerations into national and local development plans. By combining scientific modelling, local knowledge and multi-sector collaboration, the project reflects the UN 2.0 vision of data as a system-wide enabler, transforming climate action from narrow reactive responses to inclusive anticipatory strategies that support resilience for generations to come.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The project deepened understanding of how sea-level rise affects multiple sectors and demonstrated the practical role of data in resilience planning. Partners gained clearer insights into how integrated data tools can help identify at-risk communities, shape priorities and align interventions with on-the-ground realities.

Structural

Although institutional restructuring in early 2024 temporarily slowed national policy discussions, the project helped lay the groundwork for formalising climate adaptation strategies and future policy integration. Its shift to provincial-level piloting reflects a move toward integrating risk data into local governance and planning systems to better address contextual needs across multiple regions.

Behavioural

Government counterparts began showing greater openness to using data as part of regular decision-making on climate resilience. For example, the Water Resources Directorate has incorporated the tool to assess risk areas and facilitate cross-sectoral dialogue. While adoption is still at an early stage, this offers a glimpse of promising shifts in how climate risk can be approached institutionally.

Photos page 16–19:
Maxwell Ridgeway, Rina Filatova, Sutirta Budiman (unsplash), Shanice Da Costa (illustration)

60–75 million

people potentially protected
from rising sea levels across
Indonesia's coastlines

7 ministries

engaged in cross-sectoral
collaboration and capacity building
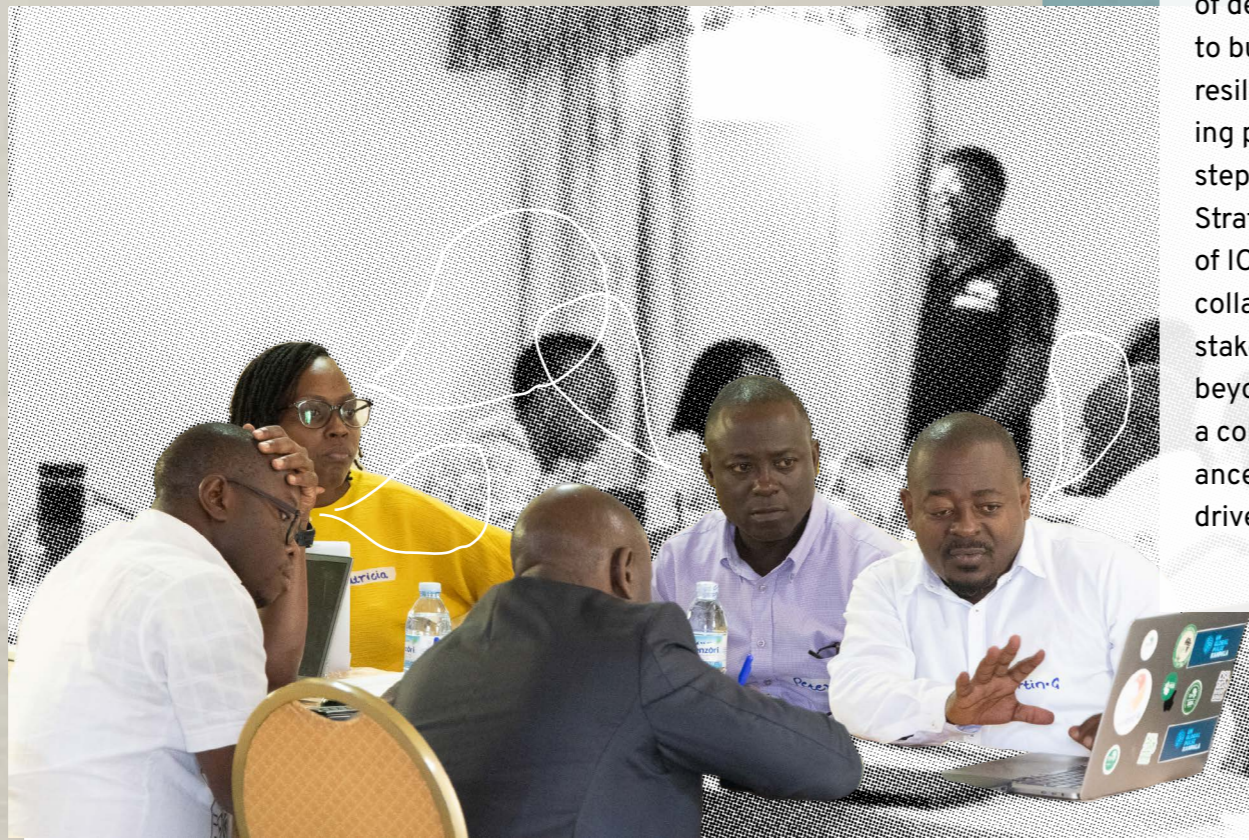
196

unique organizations engaged

699

participants engaged

18

countries through webinars

12

UN entities engaged

UGANDA'S BOLD STEP TOWARD NATIONAL DATA GOVERNANCE

#DATA   #UGANDA

As data intelligence becomes an essential driver of development, countries are navigating how to build national data systems that are inclusive, resilient and suitable to support decision-making power. In Uganda, this journey took a major step forward with the creation of a National Data Strategy (NDS), a process led by the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and developed in collaboration with UN Global Pulse and national stakeholders. The strategy aims to move beyond scattered data initiatives by offering a coherent framework to strengthen governance, unlock innovation and foster a data-driven culture across government.

Building on foundational work in 2023, the second phase of the project in 2024 focused on refining and validating the strategy through extensive stakeholder engagement, while laying the groundwork for implementation. The National Data Strategy outlines an ambitious vision for a coordinated and vibrant data ecosystem that aligns with Uganda's development goals. Its core pillars include Data Governance, Data Infrastructure and Data Utilisation, all supported by two enablers: people and culture, which focus on skilling and fostering a data-driven mindset, research, innovation and entrepreneurship, which drive the development and application of new ideas and solutions.
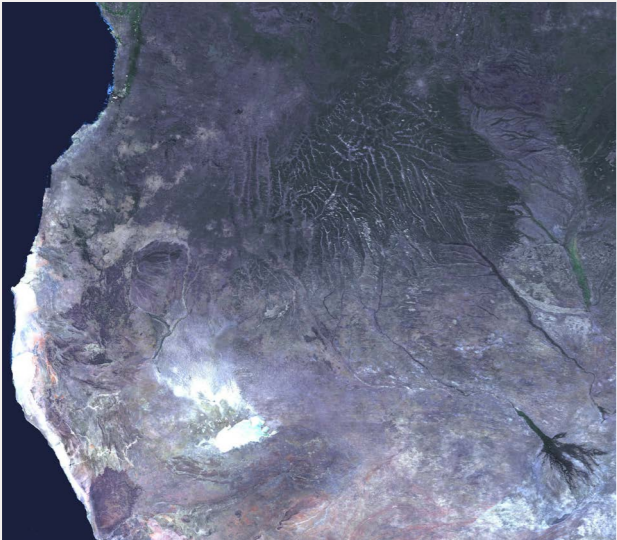
The strategy is designed to ensure that data is not just collected but also used to inform meaningful decisions. By aligning national priorities with clear implementation mechanisms, the National Data Strategy enables policymakers, ministries and local actors to adopt a more systemic, coordinated approach to data-driven governance, helping Uganda unlock the full potential of its digital transformation.

In 2024, the strategy's structure was finalised through a series of thematic workshops and extensive stakeholder consultations. A national validation exercise brought together 189 participants from across government, civil society and the private sector, helping to consolidate nine thematic areas into the project's core pillars and enablers. This process ensured that the strategy was technically sound and grounded in practical realities.

A detailed framework was developed to support implementation, outlining governance structures, budget considerations and key performance indicators linked to ten outcome areas. A use-case approach was also introduced to test the strategy in one of Uganda's key national growth sectors, providing a pathway to generate practical insights for broader application. Meanwhile, communication and outreach efforts gained momentum through creative and accessible formats, including animations and comics,

used to increase awareness and engagement. Uganda's participation in the 2024 World Data Forum further amplified its leadership role in shaping data-driven governance in the region.

The strategy's development process led to a deeper understanding among stakeholders of the systemic enablers required to operationalise data governance. It also increased awareness around the need to embed data capabilities across sectors and institutions, emphasising technical infrastructure, collaboration, trust and long-term capacity development.

As Uganda prepares to enter the operational phase of its National Data Strategy, the momentum built in 2024 sets the stage for a sustainable shift. From strengthened governance to applied innovation, the NDS signals a bold commitment to creating a future where data is managed and mobilised strategically across sectors and systems to drive impact. Anchored in Uganda's development planning and driven by national ownership, this effort exemplifies how the UN 2.0 vision for data as a system-wide enabler can be translated into long-lasting change.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

Stakeholders gained greater clarity on how foundational elements, like governance models, innovation support and data culture, can help move from aspiration to implementation. The recognition of gaps, such as the absence of a national data policy, signalled a readiness to move beyond fragmented initiatives toward more systemic reforms.

Structural

While full implementation is still ahead, structural advances are taking shape. Pilot efforts, like the DataCities initiative, demonstrate how National Data Strategy principles can be applied locally. The design of institutional frameworks, such as a proposed National Data Office, represents a blueprint for formalising governance structures that can coordinate and scale data use nationally.

Behavioural

Although behavioural shifts are emerging, the inclusive development process has solidified a foundation for longer-term cultural change. As the National Data Strategy moves closer to formal implementation, it is expected to influence how data is perceived and used across ministries, with greater emphasis on collaboration, evidence-based planning and innovation.

DATA TAKES ROOT IN INDONESIA'S ANTICIPATORY APPROACH TO DIPLOMACY

#DATA **#ASIA PACIFIC**

How can data support diplomacy? In collaboration with Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific set out to explore this question by co-creating a data analytics platform designed to support economic diplomacy. Built in just four months, the platform offers a first step toward using data to better understand trade opportunities, inform foreign policy and strengthen collaborations between Indonesia and its diplomatic counterparts.

The initiative aims to support MOFA's ability to detect trends, shape narratives and engage proactively with international partners by strategically embedding data-informed thinking as a core skill of diplomatic practice. It supports a shift towards anticipatory diplomacy, rooted in a more agile, evidence-driven system, in line with the UN 2.0 vision of using data for good, through projects that assist member states in building data ecosystems for multidimensional impact.

Key milestones in 2024 included a comprehensive mapping of Indonesia's economic data ecosystem, which identified gaps in availability, quality and consistency. These insights informed both the structure of the platform and a set of practical recommendations on how MOFA could develop long-term strategies for data collection and usage to support effective decision-making and operational processes.

The platform was developed using sample data reflecting real-world trends, which was employed to test its functionalities. It also featured visualisations designed to assist teams in interpreting trade patterns and identifying new collaboration opportunities. The use of simulated data combined with training sessions and collaborative discussions allowed the teams involved to expand their knowledge of data concepts and explore how the platform could function with real inputs in the future – ensuring that data analytics align with policy priorities.

Hands-on development and testing helped shed light on the role that data strategies can play in diplomacy. Participants gained practical skills in data visualisation and analysis and a clearer understanding of what kinds of information are needed to support stronger international engagement. Using realistic sample data also made visible the types of datasets that could add the most value, supporting more targeted decisions about future investments in data systems.

As MOFA looks to expand the platform's capabilities and integrate real datasets, this initiative signals a meaningful shift toward more agile, informed and anticipatory diplomacy. Continuous support to embed analytics into policy processes and foster stronger partnerships across ministries and sectors will strengthen national capacity to navigate complex global dynamics with greater preparedness. This pilot sets the stage for longer-term institutional transformation, demonstrating how UN 2.0's vision of data as a strategic asset can build lasting capabilities for evidence-based cooperation, grounded in diverse realities, principled and future-ready.

Photos page 26–29:
Jason Cooper and Fikri
Rasyid (unsplash),
UN Global Pulse, MoFa

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?
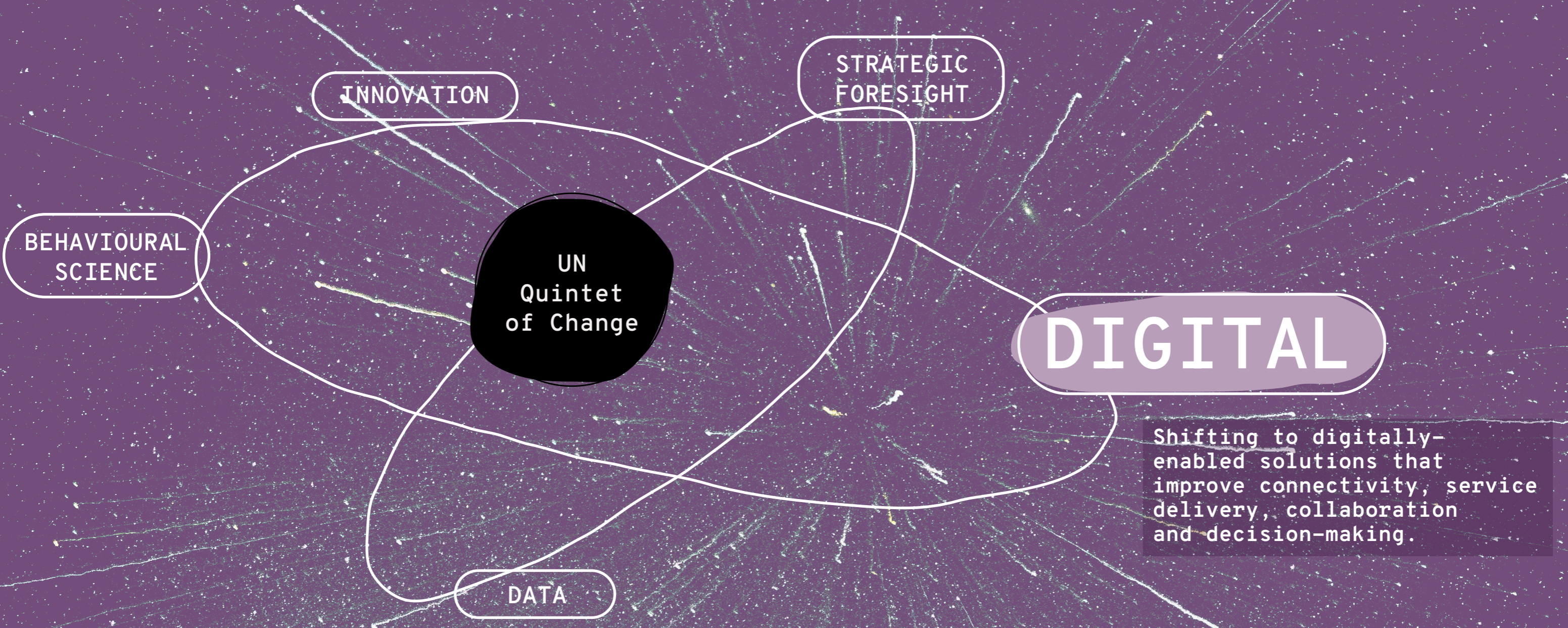
Conceptual/ Knowledge

The collaboration supported MOFA teams in applying evidence-based narratives to international engagement, highlighting how data can inform strategic diplomacy. During the platform's handover, the team expressed strong interest in expanding this work, recognising the platform's potential value in offering actionable ways to address complex challenges.

Structural

While the platform is still in its pilot phase, it has laid a technical and strategic foundation for more formal integration, especially considering it was co-developed to fit MOFA's context, increasing the likelihood of future adoption. As real datasets are gradually incorporated, the platform has the potential to become part of a broader shift toward institutionalising data usage in diplomatic workflows and decision-making cycles.

Behavioural

This early engagement phase points to emerging shifts in perception around the value of expanding data acquisition and integration to generate more diverse and meaningful insights. There is growing recognition of the important role data can play in supporting effective diplomacy. This evolving mindset reflects an openness to broadening the types and sources of data to complement traditional practices, enriching existing information and offering fresh perspectives on how strategic insights are developed, shared and applied.

INNOVATION

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

UN
Quintet
of Change

DIGITAL

Shifting to digitally-
enabled solutions that
improve connectivity, service
delivery, collaboration
and decision-making.

DATA

3

data use cases developed

2

cities supported

3

government agencies engaged

3

UN entities engaged

LOCAL INNOVATION DRIVES NATIONAL DATA VISION IN UGANDA'S GROWING CITIES

#DIGITAL   #UGANDA

As cities grow organically and face increasingly complex planning challenges, the ability to harness and use data effectively has become essential to resilient urban governance. In Uganda, the DataCities Initiative offers a concrete step toward this vision by translating the country's National Data Strategy (NDS) into practical, city-level action. Through a collaboration between UN Global Pulse, ToroDev, Sunbird AI and local authorities, the initiative places local ownership, trust-building and innovation at its core.

Now in its second year, DataCities supports the cities of Fort Portal and Jinja in improving governance across three priority areas: revenue collection, waste management and tourism development. By embedding data into everyday decision-making and building tailored digital solutions, the initiative nurtures a virtuous ecosystem where local needs, national priorities and global goals converge into renewed possibilities for planning more resilient and responsive urban futures.

The initiative aims to uplift political and city leaders to move from fragmented, paper-based processes to evidence-informed governance. By strengthening local capacities and co-creating fit-for-purpose digital tools, DataCities supports the integration of data into planning and service delivery, reducing bureaucratic hurdles while making urban systems more efficient, inclusive and future-ready.

In 2024, the initiative deepened its seed work in Fort Portal and Jinja by strengthening coordination, sharpening technical focus and building capacity among local actors. Data Steering Committees were formally established in both cities, bringing together technical experts and political leaders to guide interventions and foster a shared vision for data governance.

UN Global Pulse led readiness assessments and spatial data workshops, identifying key gaps in city-level data systems while equipping officials with tools and knowledge to apply geospatial data to local priorities. Tailored prototypes, such as digitised crater lake maps in Fort Portal, offered hands-on examples of how data could unlock tourism opportunities and inform infrastructure planning. The initiative's visibility also

grew at Data Science Africa 2024, where its localised approach was showcased as a model for other emerging cities.

Workshops, assessments and early data pilots helped local leaders move beyond theory into applied learning. For many participants, this marked a turning point in understanding how digital data, especially spatial data, can shape strategy and resource allocation, reshaping how cities are planned and managed. The initiative also helped strengthen alignment between city-level actions and Uganda's broader National Data Strategy, underscoring how national frameworks can gain traction through localised implementation.

With strong foundations in place, the DataCities initiative is well-positioned for deeper impact in the year ahead. As tools become more refined and institutional partnerships solidify, the focus will shift toward scaling up infrastructure, embedding data use in formal governance and expanding the model to other cities across Uganda. In doing so, the initiative reflects the spirit of UN 2.0, transforming digital ambition into practical outcomes.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The initiative helped demystify the role of digital tools among city stakeholders, translating abstract spatial data formats and strategies into actionable knowledge. Officials developed clearer insights into how spatial and real-time data could support revenue tracking, environmental monitoring and local economic development.

Structural

The constitution of Data Steering Committees formalized new governance structures for data use, enabling more coordinated planning. Additionally, new public-private collaborations, especially in the tourism sector, have laid the foundation for improved data-sharing practices and systems integration to drive industry-specific improvements.

Behavioural

Notable shifts are beginning to emerge as city leaders incorporate data insights into everyday decision-making. For example, spatial data is now being used in Fort Portal to guide tourism development strategies. These early signals indicate a broader cultural shift toward data-informed urban governance oriented to strategic economic growth.

Photos page 32–35:
Itote Rubombora
and Random Institute
(unsplash), UN Global
Pulse Uganda

83

million children targeted for improved nutrition and wellbeing

USD 13 billion

per year estimated programme budget from Indonesian Government and this project aims to influence how that budget is used by supporting better decision-making

NEW DIGITAL SYSTEM HELPS TARGET NUTRITION WHERE IT'S NEEDED MOST

#DIGITAL   #ASIA PACIFIC

In 2024, Indonesia took vital steps to combat child malnutrition and reduce inequality by laying the groundwork for the Free Nutritious Meals Programme. Set for rollout in 2025, this large-scale initiative aims to deliver free meals and milk to approximately 82.9 million school-aged children nationwide.

Recognising the transformative potential of this effort to improve health, education and a cascade of social well-being indicators, Indonesia's Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) formally invited technical support from UN Global Pulse to help shape the programme's success. At the heart of this collaboration is the co-creation of a digital Decision Support System (DSS) – a tool designed to ensure that implementation is data-informed, inclusive and effectively targeted to reach those who need it most.

The initiative seeks to modernise how large-scale social programmes are planned and executed, providing the necessary means to achieve precision targeting and adaptive delivery. By combining digital innovation and data intelligence, the Decision Support System equips policymakers with timely and location-based insights to guide resource allocation and improve outcomes for children and their communities.

In July 2024, UN Global Pulse launched the first version of the Decision Support System. Over the following months, it was iteratively refined in close collaboration with Bappenas and the newly established National Nutrition Agency (BGN). New key features, such as spatial analysis, were added to enhance the tool's ability to identify high-need areas and align with early pilot initiatives. As the system evolved, Bappenas developed an implementation scenario using the enhanced Decision Support System, which was submitted to National Nutrition Agency in late September 2024 as the baseline for programme implementation. By December 2024, the finalised Decision Support System was formally migrated into Bappenas' digital infrastructure.

The tool has already demonstrated substantial value in shaping budget allocations and operational strategies, having been used to inform multi-ministry coordination meetings and planning exercises. It is now being integrated into Bappenas' digital infrastructure, supported by ongoing capacity-building efforts and designed with the flexibility to incorporate future data needs, ensuring improved relevance and sustainability over time. Going forward, the

Decision Support System will be adopted as the baseline for the Bappenas Minister's dedicated monitoring system, enabling real-time tracking and adaptive management of the programme starting in 2025.

As Indonesia prepares to roll out the Free Nutritious Meals Programme in 2025, Decision Support System's flexible design is set to incorporate multiple datasets, maintaining responsiveness to various needs and conditions, such as matching target demand with local producers and tailoring provisions to meet nutritional standards. This project demonstrates how integrating multiple components of the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change can enhance government efficiency and resilience, enabling them to address people's most pressing needs despite evolving circumstances and outcomes.

Photos page 36–39:
Robin Canfield (unsplash),
Aditya Aji (AFP), Adi Weda
(EPA), Willy Kurniawan
(Reuters)

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The project helped partners adopt new planning mindsets, based on the fusion of traditional policy expertise with data science and spatial analysis. This shift deepened their proficiency in thinking across systems and tailoring responses more effectively. The introduction of the Decision Support System has also expanded partners' understanding of how multidisciplinary approaches can improve planning and policy design, broadening the initiative's scope to locate unmet needs and anticipate supply chain dynamics.

Structural

Integrating the Decision Support System into Bappenas' operational systems marked a foundational structural change in how the programme is coordinated and monitored. The process has fostered greater alignment across ministries, introducing a shared digital framework for collaboration between health, education and other sectors critical to the programme's success.

Behavioural

The Decision Support System's continuous adoption encourages gradual shifts in Indonesia's policy-making culture. Decision-makers are showing increased interest in using data-driven insights to steer resource allocation, identify community-specific needs and drive responsive solutions.

SEEDING LOCAL SOLUTIONS FOR GLOBAL GOALS IN THE FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA

#DIGITAL   **#ASIA PACIFIC**

While the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a universal roadmap for progress, their real impact depends on how well they are adapted to local realities. The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), a nation of more than 600 islands, faces complex inter-sections that make bridging the gap between global aspirations and local priorities a critical priority. Challenges such as decentralised governance, limited technical capacity and environmental vulnerability concerns highlight the urgency of a more grounded approach.

Recognising these realities, UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific, together with UNESCAP, UNOPS and regional partners, launched a year-long initiative in October 2024 to support the locali-sation of the SDGs in FSM. Instead of a one-size-fits-all strategy, the project puts local needs, voices and contexts at the forefront through innovative data solutions. Central to this effort is the future creation of a data or digital solution designed to track progress more accurately, strengthen evidence-based policy-making and create a dynamic environment for advancing sustainable outcomes.

The project aims to strengthen the ability of local governments to monitor SDGs progress, identify gaps and design development strategies aligned with community priorities and needs. By promoting multilevel governance and enhancing digital and analytical skills, it paves a more inclusive, actionable and sustainable path toward achieving Agenda 2030.

In 2024, the project laid critical groundwork through foundational activities to support FSM's development journey, such as securing the Joint SDG Fund, preparations and planning for intensive fieldwork and solution co-creation were finalised and expected to continue through 2025.

A comprehensive desk review and remote interviews mapped FSM's data ecosystem, revealing gaps in technology infrastructure, the data and digital ecosystem and the capacities of stakeholders. The insights helped shape an initial understanding of the challenge in implementing and monitoring the SDGs in FSM and informed the preparation for the planned fieldwork.

The early phase of the project has already deepened stakeholders' understanding of FSM's existing challenges and opportunities. Initial findings highlighted significant constraints within local institutions regarding technical capacity and resources, helping partners better frame discussions and strategies to advance further. Awareness is growing and momentum is building. The coming year will be critical to watch as local solutions begin to shape a new chapter for sustainable development in the Pacific.

With strong foundations now laid, 2025 offers an exciting opportunity to translate early momentum into tangible results. The co-creation of a tailored data or digital solution stands as a promising next step, equipping FSM's local and national actors with tools that aim to be both accessible and impactful. As fieldwork and solution development advance, weaving together innovation and evidence-based planning, this initiative embodies the spirit of UN 2.0, inviting stakeholders to reimagine what it means to build resilient, inclusive futures that transform diverse local needs and aspirations into shared global achievements.

Photos page 40–43:
Alex Azabache & Nathaniel
Krum (unsplash), UNRCO Fiji,
UN Photo/Mark Garten

DIGITAL

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

UN
Quintet
of Change

INNOVATION

Generating, testing and
scaling up novel ideas that
bring sustainable benefits
for people and planet.

DATA
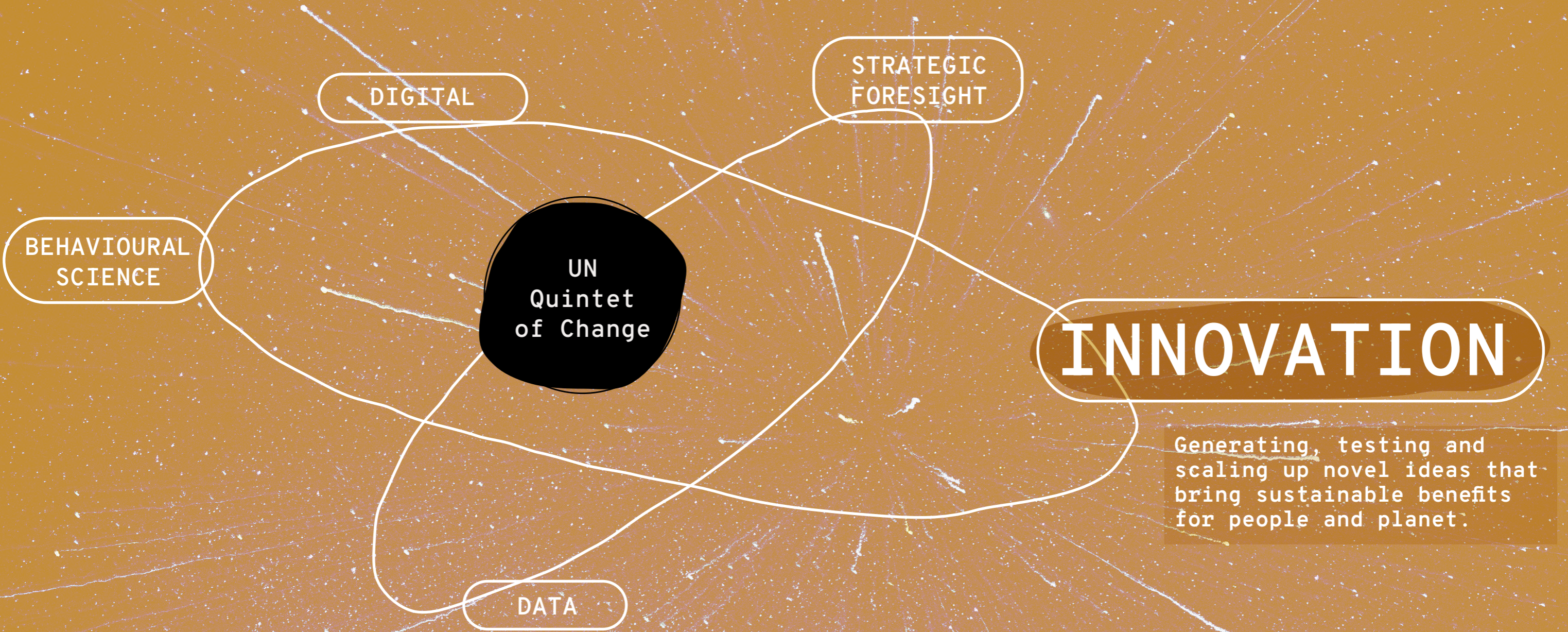
COHORT 1 (April 2024)

91 applications

07 teams selected from

05 UN organizations: FAO, UNFPA, IOM, WFP, WHO

COHORT 2 (November 2024)

104 applications

07 teams selected from

06 UN organizations: FAO, IOM, ITC, UNODC, RCO–Colombia, WFP

2024 SCALE CATALYST GRANT RECIPIENTS

FAO
UNFPA
WFP
WFP
WHO

BioDaf Project

DrugDash

Farm2Go

SheCan

Tobacco Free Farm

THE ACCELERATOR PROGRAMME SPARKS NEW ERA FOR SCALING INNOVATION ACROSS THE UN

#INNOVATION   **#FINLAND**

In 2024, UN Global Pulse accelerated its mission to help sister organizations tackle one of the UN's most persistent challenges: scaling successful innovations. Drawing on insights from the 2023 Innovation Scaling Team's deep dive into cultural and structural barriers, the team transformed research into action. UN Global Pulse's Scaling the Summit report became a roadmap, guiding the creation of a structured, high-impact programme, designed to position scaling not as a destination, but as an evolving journey, rooted in systems change and SDGs acceleration. The result: the UN Global Pulse Accelerator Programme. Launched and presented in two dynamic editions: Cohort 1 online in April 2024 and Cohort 2 in-person in November 2024.

The Accelerator Programme was built to facilitate the transition of effective piloted innovations into deliberate, sustainable action and real-world impact at scale. Through a multidisciplinary curriculum, evidence-based methods and dedicated resources, the programme aims to support UN-led teams in developing a 21st-century innovation culture, oriented toward stronger results grounded in scalable, responsible technology, sustainable financing models, innovative partnerships and cutting-edge skills.

The Accelerator combines practical tools with unique cross-agency collaboration to tackle persistent barriers on the long scaling journey, like fragmented support systems, limited incentives and siloed learning. Its curriculum was structured to assess the readiness of each innovative solution, the team and the organization working on it and the ecosystem of partners surrounding the innovation. It included applied foresight, stakeholder mapping, storytelling for influence and organizational diagnostics.

However, scaling is not a linear process: it requires systems thinking, flexible expert support and long-term commitment, and the programme has confirmed that. The 2024 cohorts served as immersive learning environments, where 14 selected teams developed strategies, engaged with peers and received expert guidance. Five teams went a step further, receiving Scale Catalyst Grants to implement their visions. This financial boost, paired with tailored mentoring and technical assistance from UN Global Pulse, provided teams with the clarity and confidence needed to navigate the continuously changing landscape of sustainable development challenges and convert plans into actionable strategies designed to meet their specific scaling needs.

In its first year, the programme has exemplified the transformative effect of meaningful scaling ecosystems. A good idea doesn't scale by chance; it scales towards impact through tangible structure, collaboration, long-term support and targeted resources. Participants emphasised the importance of learning from peers and having the space to strategise their next steps into tangible action. The programme also underscored the need to frame innovation success not just by expanding reach, but by depth of multidimensional impact and sustainability.

With each cohort, UN Global Pulse further builds the foundations of a sustainable culture of scale equipped to adapt and endure the unprecedented global challenges of our time, such as dwindling resources, shifting geopolitical landscapes and declining official development assistance. As the programme evolves, the focus will be on sustaining momentum and expanding systems-level impact into the fabric of institutional processes. By investing in exceptional UN-led innovations and the capacities behind them, the Accelerator Programme contributes to a more future-fit UN – one that transforms innovation from isolated success stories into everyday practice, fully in tune with the UN 2.0 vision.
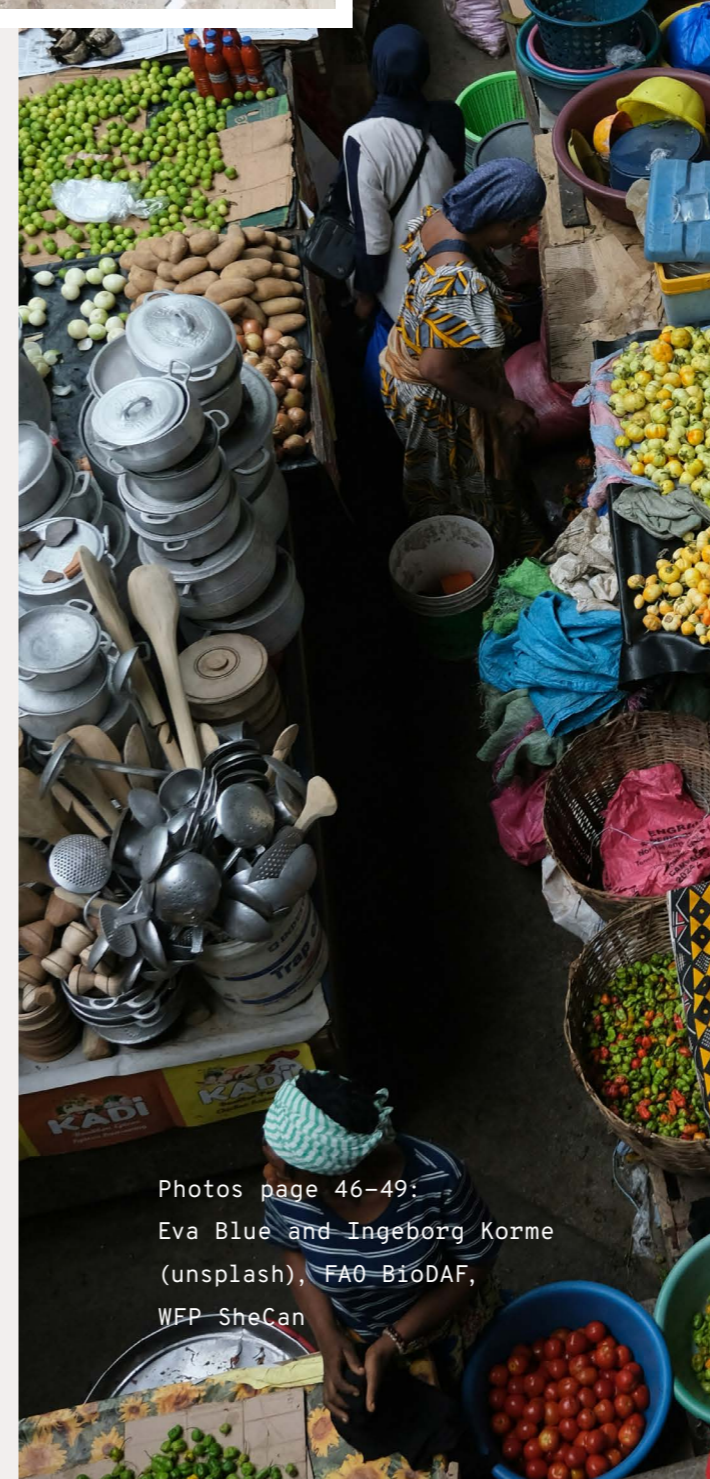
Photos page 46–49:
Eva Blue and Ingeborg Korme
(unsplash), FAO BioDAF,
WFP SheCan

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The programme drove a marked shift in teams' knowledge and confidence. Participants reported greater confidence and clarity, with 100% of respondents in the first cohort saying they had acquired new skills and 89% feeling ready to apply them. The second cohort echoed similar feedback, with 84.2% rating the workshops highly effective and 89.5% reporting a significant boost in their knowledge.

Structural

The selected teams formalised scaling strategies, ensuring their innovations were not only documented but also strengthened with immediate and long-term action plans. These structured roadmaps served as a critical step to catalyse stronger connections between innovation teams and leadership within agencies, helping embed scaling strategies into institutional processes rather than keeping them as side projects.

Behavioural

Meaningful shifts in mindset began to take root. Teams described a growing sense of agency in navigating internal systems and a stronger inclination to collaborate across departments and agencies. While structural constraints still exist, participants noted that the programme gave them practical ways to reframe challenges and keep momentum to continue shaping how the UN scales innovation in the years to come.

482

members total

56

UN entities represented

83

countries represented

43.5%

increase in 2024 members

BREAKING SILOES AND FOSTERING COMMUNITY TO SCALE INNOVATION

#INNOVATION #FINLAND

In a system where innovation often stalls after successful pilots, the Innovation Scaling Group emerged as a space to reimagine what scaling could look like across the UN. Launched in 2023 by UN Global Pulse and the UN Innovation Network (UNIN), the group was founded on a simple but powerful premise: scaling innovations is a collaborative practice that thrives when embraced by a supportive ecosystem.

Rooted in the Secretary-General's call to strengthen innovation capabilities across the UN system, the group has grown into a vibrant community of practice where UN colleagues from diverse contexts connect to share lessons learned, exchange practical tools and build a more intentional scaling culture.

At its core, the Innovation Scaling Group seeks to reposition scaling within the UN from a conceptual challenge to a core organizational practice. By identifying persistent barriers, capturing lived experiences through interviews and research and curating targeted learning opportunities, the group fosters a shared understanding of what it truly takes to sustain and expand innovation across the system. This work builds pathways for transformation, equipping teams with knowledge, peer support and reflective space to shift scaling from sporadic success stories to a more consistent, system-wide approach aligned with the SDGs.

Over the course of the year, the group designed and delivered a series of high-engagement activities that brought together practitioners from across the UN system and beyond. Four webinars, such as "Scaling the Summit: How the UN Can Expand Promising Ideas to Change the World", helped unpack real-world barriers to scale and introduced practical frameworks for overcoming them. Complementing these sessions, three interactive workshops explored topics focused on engaging UN partners, measuring innovation impact and refining UNICEF's 5D model.

The team also launched Scaling the Summit, an eight-episode podcast series spotlighting candid conversations with innovation leaders across sectors. These stories, amplified through blogs, social media and a new online resource hub, helped broaden reach and foster a sense of shared identity. Overall, 674 individuals engaged with the group's activities, over half of them UN staff, demonstrating a growing desire for deeper learning and connection around scaling.

In 2024, the group fostered high levels of conceptual engagement. Participants shared frameworks, unpacked barriers, crowdsourced ideas and reflected on their own scaling journeys. These peer exchanges helped demystify

scaling processes, build trust and create shared language around common challenges.

The Innovation Scaling Group encourages a new way of thinking about how the UN develops and expands good ideas. By creating opportunities for collective reflection, learning and experimentation, the group fosters the mindset and skills necessary to integrate scaling into the core values of the UN, inviting its members to think differently about how the UN grows good ideas. By holding space for collective reflection, it nurtures the mindset and capabilities needed to embed scaling within the DNA of the UN.

As it enters its next phase, the group will focus on strengthening connections between community insights and institutional change, amplifying local-to-global experiences and deepening ties across the UN Innovation ecosystem. In doing so, it hopes to contribute directly to the UN 2.0 Innovation vision of a future-ready UN that turns bold ideas into long-term solutions.

SCALING THE SUMMIT

UN GLOBAL PULSE

UN INNOVATION NETWORK

Photos page 50–53:
Narayan Gopalan, Gwenn
Klabbers and Alihan Caglar
(unsplash), Ina Fiebig
(illustration)

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The group sparked meaningful dialogue around structured scaling approaches, cross-sector partnerships and M&E frameworks. Members showed a strong interest in deepening their understanding of how to embed scaling into strategic planning.
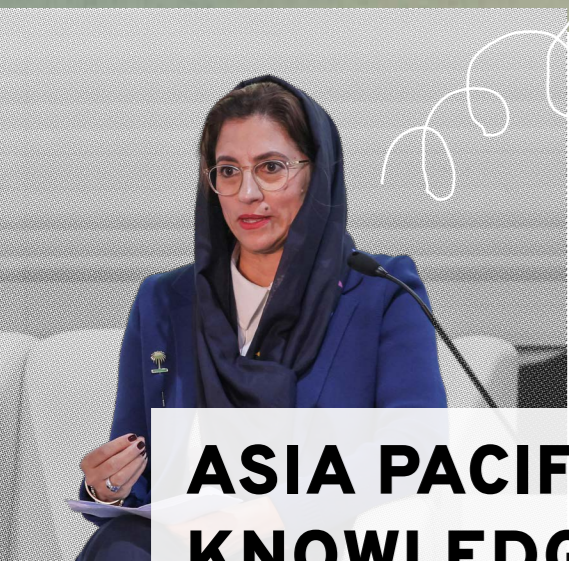
Structural

While engagement has been high, more time is needed for the group's lessons and tools to be formally integrated into institutional frameworks or operational guidance. Strengthening participation from across the UN system and documenting practical applications will be key to enabling this level of change in the coming year.

Behavioural

The Innovation Scaling Group is laying the groundwork for behavioural shifts, but greater consistency in participation and follow-up support will be required to translate interest into practice. Moving forward, A key priority will be to strengthen mechanisms to better understand how members use insights in their work and what support they may need to foster longer-term change.

15

ASIA PACIFIC HUB STRENGTHENS KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND PARTNERSHIPS TO DRIVE INNOVATION

#INNOVATION   **#ASIA PACIFIC**

Launched in 2024, the UN Global Pulse Asia Pacific Hub (AP Hub) has established itself as a regional epicentre for innovation, knowledge sharing and collaboration. Since its inception, the Asia Pacific Hub has fostered a dynamic environment where data science, behavioural insights and strategic foresight come together to address pressing challenges and create new opportunities.

It places a strong emphasis on advocacy and knowledge sharing to put the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change into action by showcasing practical examples of how data and digital tools can yield more agile, diverse and responsive insights to support transformative regional shifts. Its goal is to connect various partners, including UN agencies, governments, the private sector, academia and civil society, to leverage system-wide expertise and collaboration to innovate and deliver meaningful impact.

The Asia Pacific Hub aims to move beyond experimentation to enable systemic adoption of responsible data, innovation, AI and foresight across the wider UN system and its ecosystem of Member States and private sector partners. By fostering collaboration and disseminating practical tools and methods, it seeks to make innovation more accessible and scalable, turning ideas into solutions that advance the Sustainable Development Goals at regional and local levels.

Throughout 2024, the Asia Pacific Hub deepened partnerships, co-hosted knowledge-sharing events, supported multi-country capacity-building sessions and contributed to strategic forums like the World Urban Forum, Behavioural Science Week and the Summit of the Future Action Days.

It also served as a key knowledge partner for country offices in Micronesia, Indonesia, Thailand, Samoa and Papua New Guinea, supporting activities from climate resilience planning to digital capacity-building. Collaborative projects, such as support for the UN Big Data Hub with ESCAP and advancing humanitarian data innovation with regional universities, showcased the Hub's ability to catalyse collective action across sectors.

In its inaugural year, the Asia Pacific Hub has positioned itself as a valued source of knowledge on applying data, innovation, AI and foresight across the Asia-Pacific region. Continuous contributions to high-profile events, growing demand from partners and positive feedback collected from seminars and workshops indicate a growing recognition of the Hub's role in strengthening innovation capabilities across the UN system and its partners.

As the Asia Pacific Hub moves into 2025, it will focus on strengthening its monitoring and evaluation frameworks to gain a deeper understanding of the ripple effects of its advocacy and knowledge-sharing efforts and scale successful practices. It will also be a priority to deepen regional partnerships and expand its support to new sectors. By continuously weaving innovation, digital tools and data science into everyday operations, the Asia Pacific Hub exemplifies the spirit of the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change: building a UN system that is more agile, future-ready and better equipped to serve communities across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.
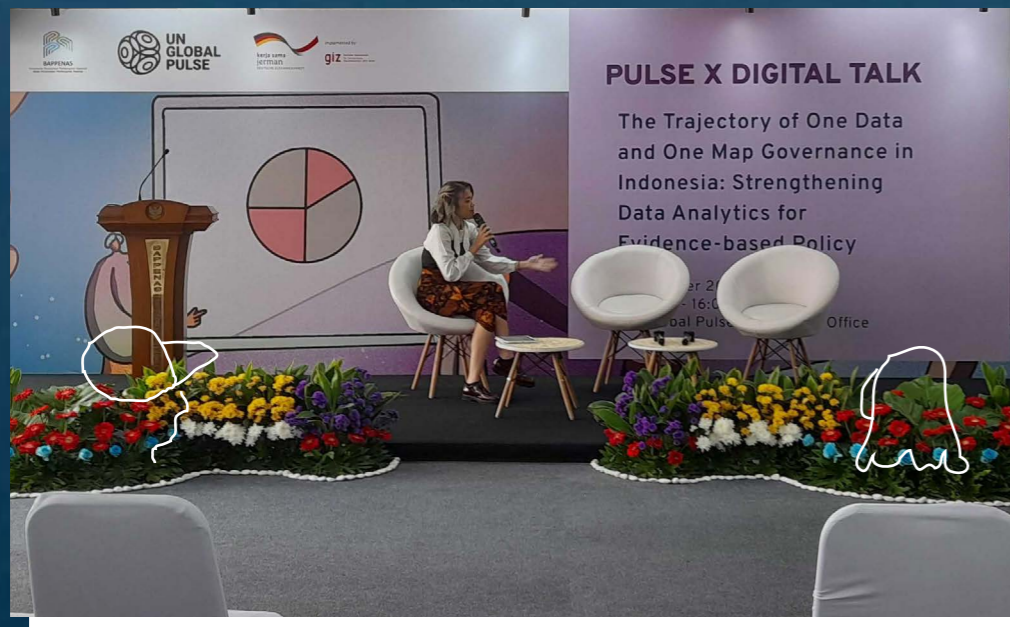
Photos page 54–55:
Hugo Matilla (unsplash),
Anastasia Rodopoulou,
UN Global Pulse

2
advocacy sessions

160
in-person attendees

PULSE TALK SERIES DRIVES INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE AND COLLABORATION FOR UN 2.0 TRANSFORMATION

#INNOVATION **#ASIA PACIFIC**

Anchored in the spirit of the UN's Pact for the Future and the UN 2.0 vision of renewing multilateralism to become more agile, forward-looking and equitable amid a fast-changing world, UN Global Pulse and Indonesia's Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) launched the Pulse Talk Series in 2024. In its first year, the series carved a space to be recognised as a platform to encourage dialogue, collaboration and collective learning.

Through carefully curated conversations, the Pulse Talk Series promoted the spirit of UN 2.0 – demonstrating how future-ready governance and collaborative innovation can make policy-making more inclusive and grounded in evidence. It created new opportunities for multistakeholder engagement, allowing participants to reflect on important national priorities, share practical experiences and generate actionable insights that could inspire innovative responses to sustainable development's most complex challenges.

The Pulse Talk series seeks to shift traditional policy dialogues toward more inclusive, data-informed and innovation-driven approaches. By connecting diverse perspectives and fostering collective intelligence, the series aims to strengthen policymaking processes and encourage ethical and locally grounded technological adoption at local and regional levels.

In 2024, the Pulse Talk series featured two flagship sessions that brought diverse stakeholders together for timely, forward-looking dialogue:

Pulse Talk 1 was launched in close collaboration with GIZ Indonesia and ASEAN, marking a significant partnership to initiate the series. The Pulse x Digital Talk edition focused on Indonesia's One Data and One Map governance initiatives. This event brought together representatives from the One Data Indonesia Secretariat and the Geospatial Information Agency (BIG). The discussions highlighted the achievements made so far and identified the improvements needed to strengthen geospatial data integration and official data governance, all aimed at accelerating national development under the new administration.

Read more about our Pulse Talk series

Pulse Talk 2 featured speakers from the Coordinating Ministry of Economic Affairs, BRIN (National Research and Innovation Agency), the ASEAN Foundation and Google Cloud. The session explored how Indonesia can chart its own Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) path by developing models reflecting its linguistic diversity and cultural context. Key takeaways included investing in Indonesian language models, fostering inclusive public–private partnerships and establishing ethical guardrails and responsible use frameworks.

Speakers also emphasised that building public trust and ensuring equitable access are essential for GenAI to contribute meaningfully to Indonesia's development goals.

Designed as interactive exchanges, both sessions combined panel discussions and open Q&A to facilitate deeper learning, foster cross-sectoral connections and inspire collaborative action around shared challenges. Participants gained new knowledge and perspectives around the evolving landscape of data governance and localised AI innovation. Feedback emphasised how discussions helped participants link policy ambitions with operational realities and strengthened appreciation for cross-sector collaboration as a critical success factor.

Building on the momentum of its first year, the Pulse Talk series will continue expanding its thematic reach, deepening partnerships and amplifying diverse voices in 2025. As part of the UN 2.0 transformation journey, this platform exemplifies how inclusive dialogue, strategic use of data and shared learning can empower policymaking processes that are more anticipatory, agile and connected to the needs of people and planet.

Photos page 56–59:
Vickholius Nugroho
(unsplash), UN Global Pulse

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?
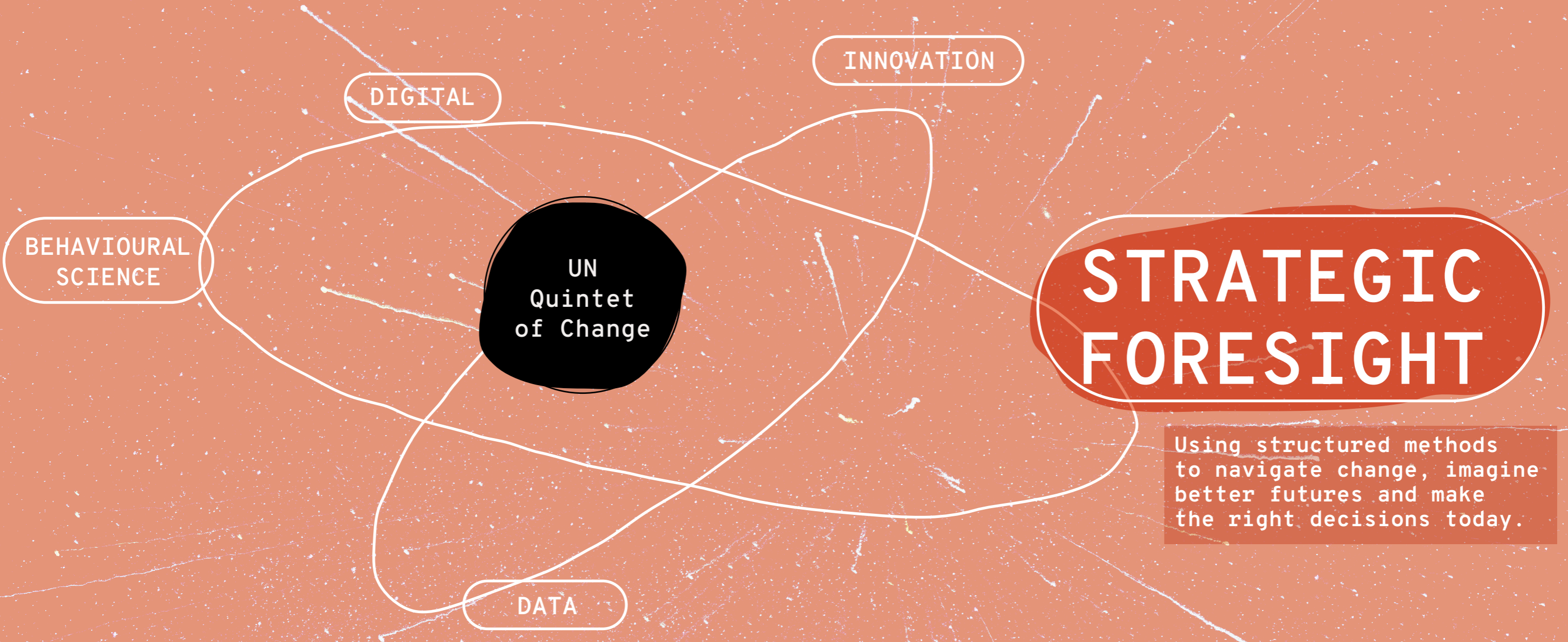
Conceptual/ Knowledge

The series expanded participants' understanding of how smart governance grounded in strong ethical frameworks can drive national development. Reflections shared during the sessions pointed to new insights around policy design, the risks of algorithmic bias and the importance of data sovereignty and inclusivity, encouraging participants to appreciate the complexities of AI implementation for sustainable development.

Structural

The Pulse Talk series has established a precedent for structured yet flexible and dynamic dialogues across multiple sectors that typically do not have the opportunity to engage in a formalised open-learning environment. Participants have expressed enthusiasm for the significance of increased collaboration across these sectors, as noted by one of them, "I love how Global Pulse brings together multi-stakeholders from various backgrounds, as the discussion of generative AI requires cross-sectoral collaboration."

Behavioural

While it is too early to assess ongoing behavioural shifts, early signals such as strong engagement levels, willingness to explore cross-sectoral solutions and participants' calls for sustained collaboration suggest that the series is beginning to nurture further habits of collective, forward-thinking engagement.

INNOVATION

DIGITAL

BEHAVIOURAL
SCIENCE

UN
Quintet
of Change

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

Using structured methods
to navigate change, imagine
better futures and make
the right decisions today.

DATA

33

resident coordinator offices took part

8

countries received individualised support

281

UN colleagues

83

non-UN participants

CULTIVATING FORESIGHT CAPABILITIES FOR A MORE ANTICIPATORY, AGILE AND RESPONSIVE UN

#STRATEGIC FORESIGHT   **#FINLAND**

In a world marked by challenges and rapid change, effective governance demands more than reactive strategies. It calls for the ability to anticipate, adapt and become more resilient to respond effectively. In 2024, the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub, in partnership with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) and UN Global Pulse, launched a pilot project to foster a culture of longer-term thinking, learning and experimentation within the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) System.

In the frame of the project managed and implemented by the UN Futures Lab/Global Hub, UN Global Pulse played a critical role in jointly delivering the training and supporting individual countries on their learning journey. UN Global Pulse also led the project's monitoring, learning and evaluation efforts. The core objectives of the project were to strengthen capabilities within the RCO system to integrate strategic foresight and cultivate a culture of long-term thinking, continuous learning and experimentation, thereby supporting the six transitions required to achieve the SDGs.

Through a comprehensive support approach, Resident Coordinator Offices (RCOs) across 33 countries in Africa, Arab States, Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean engaged in a practical foresight training, learning to identify concrete entry points for embedding a future-oriented outlook into the design and implementation of planning cycles. The pilot focused on the integration of strategic foresight into the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (CF), the UN's most important instrument for country-level development action, supporting teams to approach planning with greater adaptability to anticipate, imagine and adapt.

This pilot aims to catalyse a shift aligned with the UN 2.0 vision: toward a stronger United Nations system that results in better programmatic and operational support. It moves away from planning based solely on past lessons and present conditions and toward approaches that explore multiple unfolding futures. By offering tailored foresight tools and support, the project encourages RCOs to not only react to challenges but rather anticipate disruptions to carve opportunities for impactful change, reducing risks and shaping development pathways that are resilient, adaptive and future-ready.

To support this transformation, the pilot was structured in two formats: Foundational Training and Individualised Support. A total of 33 RCOs participated in the Foundational Training Modules, with eight receiving further tailored support during the Individualised Support Programme. Across both modalities, 33 countries, 281 UN colleagues and 83 non-UN participants engaged with the training, boosting foresight capacity.

The training equipped participants with methods and tools to think in an anticipatory manner by identifying early signals of change, stress-testing strategies against different future scenarios and exploring long-term implications of today's decisions. These exercises were designed to help teams reflect critically on uncertainties and uncover new possibilities that may not surface in traditional planning processes.

Through those exchanges, participants reported increased confidence and clarity in applying foresight tools within the reality of their work. Many described the experience as a valuable opportunity to expand their thinking and adopt a more possibility-driven mindset: shifting from "what is" to "what could be." Feedback underscored the training's ability to foster strategic imagination and reframe the CF planning process as an opportunity for shaping long-term trajectories.

As we look to the future, the insights gained from this pilot are guiding the development of DCO's new Cooperation Framework Design guidelines. By cultivating foresight as a core capacity, this pilot supports the UN 2.0 ambition of becoming more anticipatory, agile, responsive for a more impactful UN. It strengthens the system's ability to embrace complexity, proactively imagine better futures and chart new paths forward already today.

Photos page 62–65:
Celso Hashimoto, Ishan Seefromthesky and Mohamed Fsili (unsplash), Shanice Da Costa (illustration)

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?
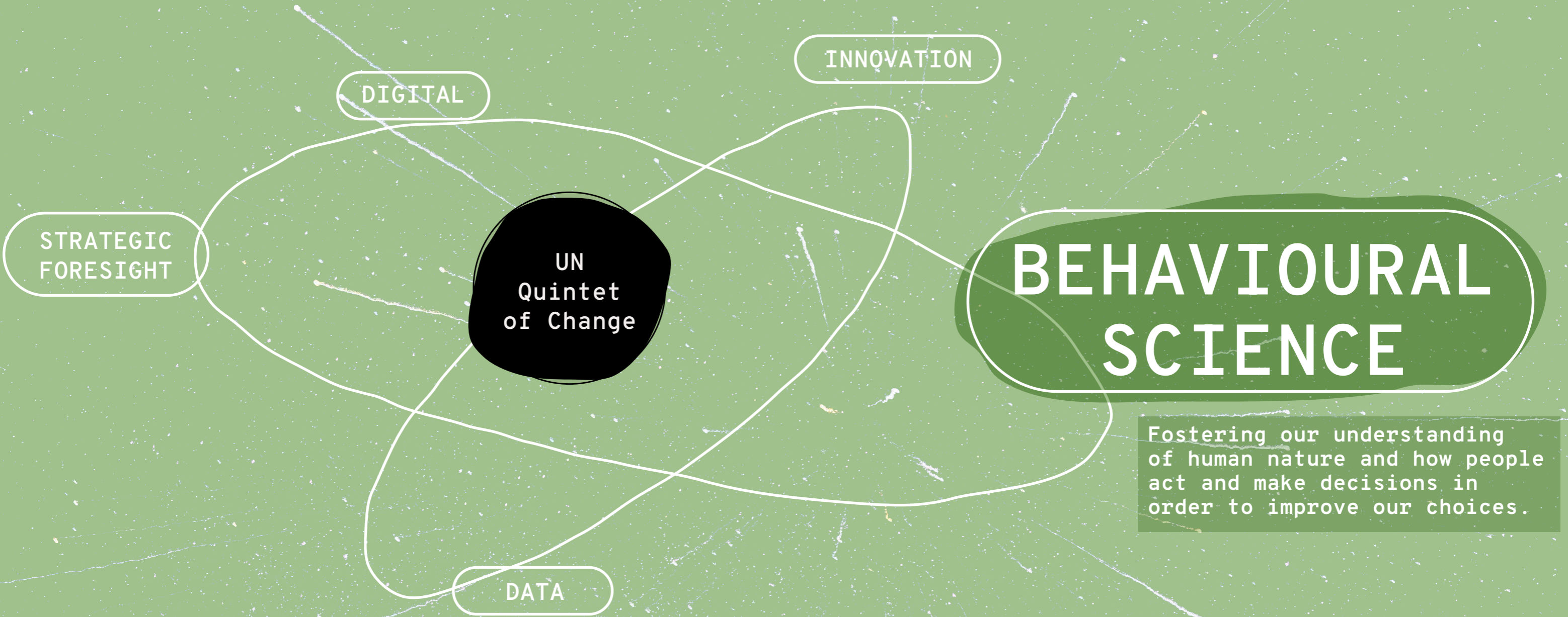
Conceptual/ Knowledge

Participants reported an enhanced understanding of foresight approaches, with tools like horizon scanning, future wheels and wind tunnel testing helping to deepen country analysis, challenge assumptions and identify new possibilities.

Structural

In countries such as Argentina and South Africa foresight exercises have been incorporated into the Common Country Analysis (CCA), a collective assessment of a country's sustainable development context conducted by the UN system. These enriched discussions introduced long-term perspectives and facilitated strategic prioritisation. In other countries, such as Mexico, strategic foresight was included in the development of the Theory of Change to support the identification of the key pathways needed to achieve the goals for the next Cooperation Framework. Additionally, it was evident that these sessions provided a crucial platform for engagement with UN Country Team, promoting a stronger sense of joint ownership of the CCA and CF.

Behavioural

Early indicators suggest behavioural shift trends. For instance, in Argentina and Côte d'Ivoire, teams began incorporating foresight tools into their routine planning. These emerging changes indicate a growing openness to future-oriented thinking and collaboration. Feedback shows that foresight helped conducting a more exhaustive analysis allowing for more anticipatory responses. Post-training surveys revealed that 70% of respondents found the foresight exercises valuable for the CCA and CF processes and increased confidence in using foresight for the UNSDCF moving forward.

INNOVATION

DIGITAL

STRATEGIC
FORESIGHT

UN
Quintet
of Change

BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

Fostering our understanding
of human nature and how people
act and make decisions in
order to improve our choices.

DATA

2
workshops São Paulo, Brazil & Tijuana, Mexico

32
participants (16 per country)

13
civil society organizations

4
UN entities represented

The Most Creative Look To The Future

747 downloads

Most downloaded resource on
UN Global Pulse website in 2024

Have a look:
The Most Creative
Look to the Future

SHIFTING POWER AND FACILITATING PARTICIPATORY INNOVATION IN BRAZIL AND MEXICO

#BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE   **#FINLAND**

At UN Global Pulse, we believe imagination is a driving force for innovation and transformation. In December 2023, we published "The Most Creative Look to the Future," a research paper exploring how creative and speculative practices – ways of imagining possibilities beyond current experience, including thinking about alternative pasts or potential futures – can help the UN reimagine solutions for global challenges.

Building on these insights, in 2024, UN Global Pulse partnered with CoFUTURES at the University of Oslo through the Participatory Innovation and Speculative Storytelling for Change project to explore new ways of engaging communities, UN actors and civil society in envisioning sustainable alternatives and orienting collective imagination for systems change.

In a time when systems are being tested and reconsidered, fostering inclusive approaches to change becomes increasingly essential. This project seeks to open new pathways for UN teams to engage with uncertainty and complexity through participatory methods. The integration of creative tools and narrative-based approaches into strategic work aims to make planning processes more inclusive, imaginative and grounded in diverse lived experiences to deliver on our bold vision for people and planet.

During 2024, the project marked an intentional immersion in creativity, participation and co-creation, encouraging experimentation and contextual understanding. Through residencies, workshops and creative tools, the project brought together multiple voices to speculate on new possibilities, challenge dominant narratives and surface insights into the many ways different actors can, together, reimagine multilateral collaboration. The project grounded its creative approach in local relevance and internal alignment. Workshops, designed with participatory story-telling tools such as thematic card games and mythological frameworks, enabled participants to articulate alternative visions of the future rooted in context.

Alongside partners such as IOM, UNHCR and UN-Habitat, the creative residencies in Brazil and Mexico underscored dialogue, trust and the value of imagination as a strategic capability. Across activities, the project emphasised accessibility, adapting materials and language to ensure that tools were usable and relevant for diverse audiences across cultures, geographies and backgrounds.

As the project moves into 2025, the focus will shift toward supporting deeper application and institutional integration. Partnerships with UN agencies will provide opportunities to test the tools in real-world settings, gather further evidence and build practical guidance across contexts. By holding space for imagination, reflection and shared authorship of sustainable development efforts, the project expands how the UN engages with complexity, placing participation and creativity at the heart of systems change.

Photos page 68–71:
UN Global Pulse

A heartfelt thank you to all the dreamers who have chosen to share their time and knowledge with us in São Paulo and Tijuana: Alejandro Santander, Anapuaka Muniz Tupinambá Hãhãhãe, Camila Barrero Breitenvieser, Denise Luna Acevedo, Emanuely Potyguara, Erika Pires Ramos, Esmeralda Córdova, Juan José Rojo Solis, Julia Caminha, Karai Marcio Verá Mirim, Katalina Silva Reyes, Laura Estela Huerta Ponce, Luciana Tuszel, Maximino Matus Ruiz, Miroslava Wilson Montoya, Nelly Cantú Mendívil, Néstor de Jesús Robles Gutiérrez, Priscilla Alexa Macias Mojica, Rodrigo Carancho, Ronaldo Matos, Samantha Moya Tamayo, Tatiane Brasil, Thais Siqueira, Viviana Patricia González Gómez, and Zenaida Lauda-Rodriguez.

How has this helped the UN at a systems level?

Conceptual/ Knowledge

The combination of playfulness and serious exploration was acknowledged as an effective method for breaking traditional boundaries in creative thinking, encouraging participants to tackle systemic challenges from a fresh perspective. Feedback surveys revealed that participants identified clear opportunities to transform speculative storytelling into actionable insights, ranging from community-based innovation to practical contributions in policy-making.

Structural

At this stage, no formal structural changes have been observed in terms of policies or institutional frameworks. However, the groundwork laid during this phase has informed the development of pilot initiatives with at least two UN agencies and partners. These future engagements are expected to explore how participatory storytelling methods could be truly integrated into existing planning systems and scaled across programmatic work on the ground.

Behavioural

Early signs of behavioural change have emerged across participants' practices, with many expressing strong motivation and readiness to apply the tools in diverse contexts. Most UN agencies involved in the residences have also shown significant interest in enhancing the application of methods and tools in field operations, especially in areas such as Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) or Building Community Integration and Agency.

SUMMIT OF THE FUTURE
A Turning Point for Multilateralism and Innovation

In September 2024, world leaders gathered at UN Headquarters for the Summit of the Future: a once-in-a-generation opportunity to demonstrate global solidarity and set a better course for our world. With the adoption of the Pact for the Future, Member States endorsed a new vision for inclusive, effective and networked multilateralism. Among its key provisions, Action 45 supports the UN's transformation vision, UN 2.0, as critical to building a more agile and responsive UN system - one better equipped to deliver in a rapidly changing world.

UN Global Pulse was honoured to be actively engaged in the Action Days leading to this landmark moment. The atmosphere at UN Headquarters was unique - vibrant, youthful, inclusive and deeply collaborative. Thousands of participants from civil society and the public and private sectors came together to share ideas and build solutions to today's and tomorrow's most pressing challenges and opportunities.

UN Global Pulse presented two of our flagship initiatives during the Summit of the Future Action Days. Our side event on sea level rise, hosted in collaboration with the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) and the University of New South Wales, brought attention to a critical challenge, particularly for the Asia Pacific region. By connecting problem owners with solution providers, the event highlighted the power of partnerships in tackling climate change through co-creation and nature-based solutions.

Our AI initiative, Data Insights for Humanitarian Action (DISHA), convened leaders from across public, private and social sectors to explore how artificial intelligence can enhance disaster anticipation and response. A highlight of the week was announcing our new collaboration with Google Research and UNOSAT: an AI-assisted solution for rapid, satellite-based damage assessments. This cutting-edge tool is already helping humanitarian actors respond more effectively to crises by expanding coverage and accelerating analysis.

We were energised by the momentum generated at the Summit, from new partnerships on the horizon to bold ideas for transformation. With renewed commitment, we will continue to champion innovation across the UN system and beyond.
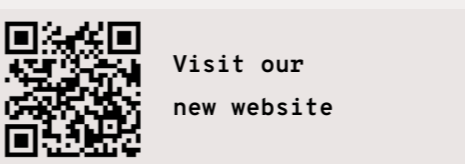

Photos page 72–73:
UN Global Pulse,
unglobalpulse.org

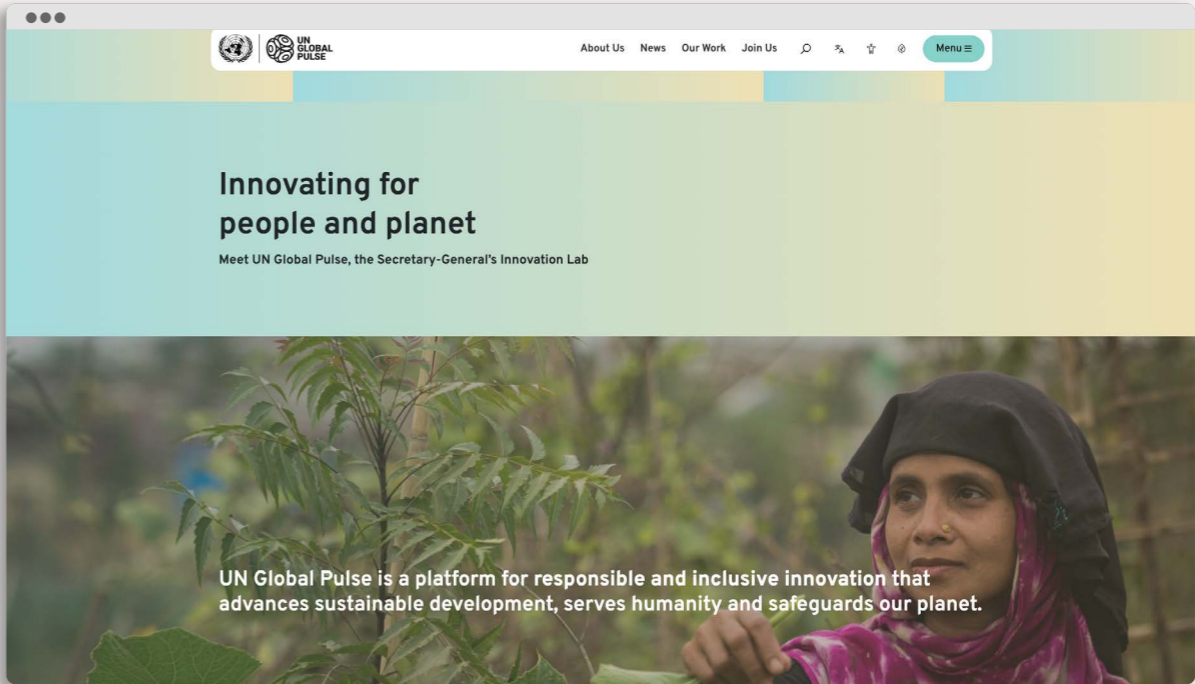# UN GLOBAL PULSE LAUNCHES ITS NEW DIGITAL HOME

In 2024, UN Global Pulse launched its newly designed digital home, the result of a collaborative design process focusing on accessibility and eco-friendly digital approaches. Our new website offers a window into our latest insights, team learnings and growing innovation portfolio. Through stories, frontier solutions and insights into transformation, we aim to inspire and connect people to a more future-oriented United Nations. Discover how we're shaping the path toward a UN 2.0 by exploring our new digital home: unglobalpulse.org

57,261
page views

21,681
unique users

2,060
downloads

Visit our
new website

UN Global Pulse is a platform for responsible and inclusive innovation that advances sustainable development, serves humanity and safeguards our planet.

LOOKING AHEAD

In 2025, the United Nations' 80th anniversary will be a pivotal moment to showcase its urgency and ambition in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. UN 2.0 presents a clear vision for transforming the United Nations system through modern capabilities and culture, as it confronts new challenges and renewed uncertainties in the years ahead.

This vision, guided by the exceptional opportunities of new innovative capabilities and technology, acknowledges that "stronger technical solutions alone will not deliver the change envisioned." To transform, our organizational culture will also have to adapt to be forward-thinking and value agility, learning and curiosity.

Global Pulse will continue to prioritize scaling proven innovations across the UN system, amplifying their effectiveness and impact through strategic partnerships. Our efforts increasingly focus on bringing breakthrough solutions to maturity, working closely with UN teams and others to ensure these solutions drive lasting change and tangible results toward a UN 2.0.

2025 has already reaffirmed the Secretary-General's call for change with the launch of the UN80 Initiative, a pathway to ensure the United Nations is more efficient, effective and accountable.

It is clear that it has never been more necessary to paint visions and pathways toward futures where the United Nations is tuned to the needs of the 21st century. At UN Global Pulse, we've witnessed firsthand the possibility and impact of weaving together innovative skills alongside the mindset required to deliver for people, planet and future generations.

From enhancing data-informed policy-making for climate adaptation to deepening coalitions for leveraging AI in humanitarian response and scaling innovations across the UN system, UN Global Pulse serves as a blueprint for what UN 2.0 looks like in practice.

In 2025, our scaling focus will become even more tangible: at our core, we will expand the Accelerator Programme to support an even more diverse cohort of highest-potential UN innovations; further scale the DISHA initiative's AI-powered damage assessment capabilities, enabling faster and more accurate humanitarian responses; operationalize Uganda's national data strategy through replicable, city-level initiatives and explore scale across the region; and sharpen our Asia Pacific Hub's efforts to address regional shared challenges, focused on sea-level rise analytics to inform proactive, data-driven decision-making.

Alongside our partners, we will drive responsible innovation forward, making inclusive, impactful and bold ways of working the norm within the United Nations and beyond.

The work continues, and it is more vital than ever.

Read the UN 2.0
Policy Brief here

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