



Plan International Malawi

Country Strategy

2024 - 2028



Girls and Young Women are agents of sustainable change in an inclusive, safe and just society.

About Plan International

Plan International is an independent development and humanitarian organisation that advances children's rights and equality for girls. We believe in the power and potential of every child but know this is often suppressed by poverty, violence, exclusion and discrimination. And it is girls who are most affected.

Working together with children, young people, supporters and partners, we strive for a just world, tackling the root causes of the challenges girls and vulnerable children face. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and we enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge.

For over 85 years, we have rallied other determined optimists to transform the lives of all children in more than 80 countries.

We won't stop until we are all equal.



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Abbreviations

ACRWC:	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIDS:	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CAY:	Children, Adolescents and Youth
CBCPMs:	Community-based child and family protection mechanisms
CEDAW:	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEFM:	Child, Early and Forced Marriage
CO:	Country Office
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRRF:	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
CS:	Country Strategy
CSOs:	Civil Society Organisations
HIV:	Human immunodeficiency virus
ILO:	International Labour Organisation
IPV:	Intimate partner violence
IQE:	Inclusive quality education
MSMEs:	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NGOs:	Non-Governmental Organisations
PI:	Plan International
PIM:	Plan International Malawi
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SOYEE:	Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Employment
SRH:	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SRHR:	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
TEVET:	Technical, Entrepreneurial and Vocational Education and Training
UN:	United Nations
UNAIDS:	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA:	United Nations Population Fund

Introduction

Plan International (PI) strives to advance children's rights and equality for girls worldwide. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of discrimination against girls, exclusion and vulnerability. In line with the global strategy, Plan International Malawi (PIM) continues to empower children, young people and communities to make vital changes that tackle the root causes of gender inequality. We drive change in practice and policy at local and national levels through our reach, experience and knowledge of the realities children and youth face. We work with children and communities to prepare for and respond to crises and support children's safe and successful progression from birth to adulthood.

Over the next five years, PIM will focus on three priority areas that will enable children, adolescents and young people, especially girls in all their diversity, to make informed decisions about their lives in an enabling environment. Specifically:

- PIM will work with children and adolescents, particularly girls, to complete an inclusive quality education and lead collective action to influence policy implementation.
- PIM will empower girls and young women to enjoy economic wellbeing and cope with climate change and shocks through decent work opportunities, economic opportunities and climate change justice.
- PIM will empower children, adolescents and youth in all settings to enjoy their sexuality in supportive, protective and gender-transformative communities.

Contribution to National Strategies

The three strategic objectives align with Malawi's 2063 Vision, including the 10-Year Implementation Plan, 2021-2030; Malawi's Growth and Development Strategy III; Malawi's National SRHR Policy; Malawi Education Educational Sector Investment Plan, 2020-2030; Malawi's National Strategic Plan for HIV and AIDS; Malawi's

National Gender Policy; Malawi's National Plan of Action for Vulnerable Children; and Malawi's National Youth Policy, and the Malawi Friendly Health Services Strategy.

PIM share Malawi's 2063 vision for the elimination of all gender-based discrimination and harmful practices, including gender-based violence and child marriages; for strengthened reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health; and for education that empowers the girl child to make sound decisions about her future, including on the quality and size of her future family. The strategy contributes to Enabler 1: **Mindset Change**, Enabler 2: **Effective Governance Systems and Institutions**, Enabler 5: **Human Capital Development** and Enabler 7: **Environmental sustainability**.

Contribution to the Regional and Global Instruments

PIM strategic areas contribute to regional and global Instruments the Republic of Malawi has adopted, such as the African Union acceded in 1999, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the African Union Agenda 2063, Addis Ababa Action Agenda and other regional frameworks such as the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Treaty, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Istanbul Programme of Action,

PIM priority areas further contribute to Sustainable Development 2: **End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition by 2030**; Sustainable Development Goal 3: **Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages**; Sustainable Development Goal 4, **Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education by 2030**, Sustainable Development Goal 5: **Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls** and Sustainable Development Goal 13: **Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**.

Our Country Context



Malawi Economy

Ranked

163

out of 184 countries in the 2021 HDI Report

85%

of the total population of Malawi lives in rural areas.

90%

of the population is employed in the agriculture sector

70%

of smallholders cultivate on an average of one hectare of land and the rest on less than half a hectare.

50%

of the poor rural households suffer the "hungry season" than non-poor rural households.

Demographics

21

years

is the national mean age in Malawi.

54%

of the total population is younger than 18

Youth Employment

35.8%

of youths aged 25 years and below were unemployed in 2020.

27%

of those with a job are underemployed and young women are more disadvantaged.

12%

of female youth aged 15-24 were unemployed in 2020 compared to male youth at 7.58 %

Youth SRHR

33%

of all new HIV infections are among 15–24-year-olds, **70% of which are among girls and young women**

31%

is the adolescent birth rate - the seventh highest globally and 44% among the poorest quintile.

33%

of sexually active unmarried girls aged 15–19 do not use contraception despite being aware of them

Several factors contribute to high adolescent fertility rates, including:

- Inadequate access to SRHR information.
- Limited access to and use of contraceptives, condoms, and SRHR services.
- Gender inequality and cultural practices such as child marriage and initiation ceremonies that can fuel early sexual debut.

Education

Only

9.8%

of females aged 20–24 have completed secondary school.

Long distances to schools and lack of residential facilities in schools contribute to low school completion rates among girls in Malawi.

Humanitarian Crisis

- Malawi is highly vulnerable to the impacts of extreme weather events, climate change and variability given its location along the great African Rift Valley.
- This vulnerability has been further exacerbated by environmental degradation and unsustainable urbanization.
- The most common weather-related shocks affecting Malawi include floods, drought, stormy rains and hailstorms.
- Malawi is also grappling with the influx of refugees at the Dzaleka refugee camp located in Dowa district, near Malawi's capital Lilongwe. New arrivals average 500 refugees a month.

Sources:

United Nations Development Programme (2021). Human Development Index Report

International Labour Organisation (2020). Youth unemployment in Malawi

UNFPA (2021). High adolescent birth rates contribute Adolescents.

United Nations Population Fund (2021). Malawi Adolescents and Youth Dashboard - Malawi

UNAIDS (2021). The State of HIV Prevention in Malawi



Who We Are

Our Vision

Girls and young women are agents of **sustainable change** in an inclusive, safe, and just society

PIM Country Strategy contributes to Plan International’s global vision: **“Girls and young women are agents of sustainable change in an inclusive, safe and just society”**. The vision envisages a society where girls have the power and freedom to be catalysts for change within and across generations, with a valued voice that enables them to demand and drive the changes required to achieve gender equality crucial to attaining so many SDGs.

Our mission is to ensure that **3.5 million children, adolescents and young people, especially girls in all their diversity, are able to make informed decisions about their lives in an enabling environment**.

PIM is committed to our global values. Our values arise from our understanding of power structures, norms and beliefs that support inequality and what is needed to change them:



Our Approaches



01

Influencing

In line with Global Strategy, PIM will play a critical role in influencing policies, promoting youth-led advocacy and social accountability.



02

Partnerships

In line with the Locally led, Globally Connected approach and the Grand Bargain Localisation agenda, PIM will aim at channelling a minimum of 40% of its direct programme resources to local CSOs for programme implementation.



03

Gender Transform- mativeness

PIM will ensure that its programming is informed by gender, age, and child rights and an inclusion analysis, which will inform specific gender norms to be tackled and consequently inform how PIM efforts to achieve the realisation of girls' rights.



04

Eco-Friendliness

PIM will ensure compliance with the Global Policy on the Environment by ensuring that all programmes, operations, and offices contribute to minimising negative environmental impacts.



Our Theory of Change

The Theory of Change below will guide PIM’s Programme and Influence work throughout the life of the Country Strategy. PIM will work with youth movements and girls’ rights organisations to address the structural causes of violence, the undervaluing of girls in society, their unequal access to power and resources and socially constructed norms that impede their ability to achieve their full potential. With growing attention focused on girls and young women as ‘an engine for growth’, PIM’s work will directly contribute towards building leadership and increasing agency among young people.

GOAL AND VISION

VISION 2027 Girls and Young Women are agents of sustainable change in an inclusive, safe and just society.

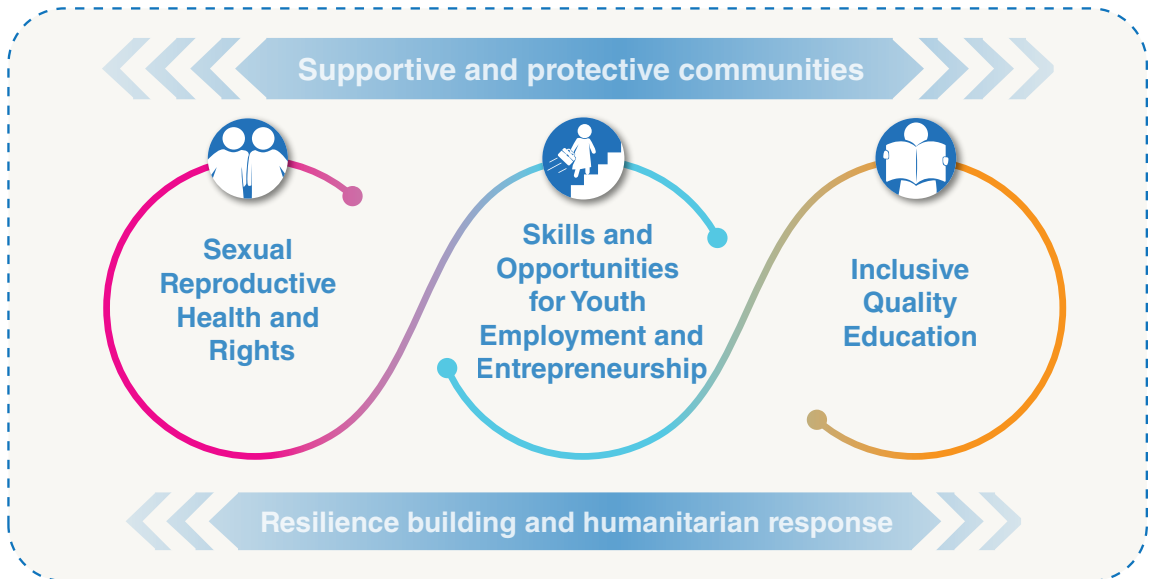
GOAL By 2027, 3.5 million children, adolescents and young People, especially girls in all their diversity are able to make informed decisions about their lives, in an enabling environment.





Ending teenage pregnancies and child marriages

DESIRED CHANGES



ACTIONS

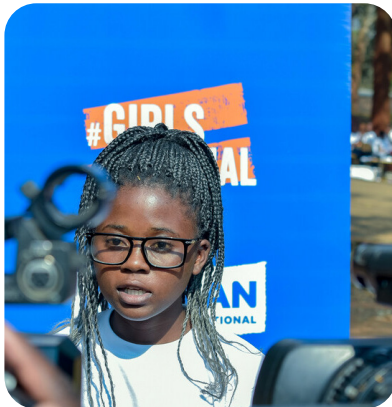
Influencing policies, promoting youth led advocacy and social accountability.	Capacity strengthening of service providers and local stakeholders.	Mutual partnership with women and youth led orgs., CSO, CBOs, private sector and research institutes	Girls Agency and male engagement.	Caregivers and local leaders promote behavioral change to challenge harmful practices.	Climate adaptation and resilience building. Humanitarian response.
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What We Will Prioritise and Why

Plan will prioritize three programmes in the new Country Strategy:

- **Inclusive Quality Education (IQE)**
- **Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SHRH)**
- **Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE)**

Humanitarian Assistance and **Resilience building** focused on climate change adaptation will cross-cutting areas. These choices have been informed by development data and PIM's capacity to deliver and achieve tangible results for children and young people, particularly girls, while building on the investments already made through sponsorship and grant funding.





Inclusive quality education

We will ensure that children, particularly girls, complete inclusive quality education focused on improved numeracy, literacy, and overall retention, leading to collective action to influence policy implementation.

Key Actions

- Promote a safe learning environment for girls (including infrastructure and Menstrual Hygiene Management).
- Support the development of school curriculum, learning materials
- Provide gender-transformative pedagogical upskilling for teachers and school governance actors to foster inclusive decision-making
- Tackle harmful social norms and traditional practices around education by working alongside caregivers, parents, traditional leaders and role models to promote the value of education among key moral duty bearers and challenge stereotypes about the education of girls.
- Support implementation of education policies promoting Children, Adolescents and Youth (CAY) agency and be able to make decisions on issues that affect them.



Expected Impact and outcomes

IMPACT	Children and adolescents, particularly girls, complete an inclusive quality education and lead collective action to influence policy implementation.
Outcome 1	Teachers facilitate an environment where all CAY can achieve and enjoy their learning.
Outcome 2	District and local authorities implement policies and establish relevant and well-resourced education opportunities for out-of-school children.
Outcome 3	Regional, District and local authorities implement education policies to ensure the provision of inclusive, gender-transformative quality education services that interrogate challenges, the root causes of gender inequality, particularly for girls, as well as gendered harmful cultural and gender barriers that impede the progression of girls' education and opportunities for that need to be explored and exploited to advance girls' education as well as that of boys.
Outcome 4	School management and governance structures provide education in a protective, safe, secure environment.
Outcome 5	Government policymakers and authorities provide content, capacities and resources for comprehensive, inclusive and gender-transformative curriculum and teaching.
Outcome 6	CAY (including those with disabilities) stay in primary and secondary schools, even in emergency situations.
Outcome 7	Young people increase their foundational capabilities needed to act as effective drivers of change in line with human rights, gender equality and inclusion as it relates to education.





Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

We will ensure that children, adolescents and youth in all settings enjoy their sexuality in supportive, protective and gender-transformative communities.

Key Actions

- Promote access to SRHR among adolescents and youths, with a particular focus on adolescent girls in a violence-free environment.
- Prevent violence against CAY and teenage pregnancies by ending harmful practices such as Child, Early and Forced Marriage (CEFM).
- Promote adolescents and young people's agency in all their diversity, including those with disabilities, to make informed decisions and to demand and access their SRHR.
- Advocate for an enabling environment at all levels and engage parents and caregivers at the community level who are influential in transforming harmful norms to support young people's access to SRH information and services.
- PIM will work with service providers to transform negative attitudes and improve youth service delivery, as well as with policymakers at the national level to promote Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) and enhance positive sexuality among the youth.

Expected Impact and outcomes

IMPACT	CAY live lives free from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect, enjoy control over their bodies and make informed sexual and reproductive choices in gender-transformative communities, including in humanitarian settings.
Outcome 1	CAY have increased understanding of SRHR, positive attitudes and confidence to challenge and address harmful practices and other forms of GBV within their environment and at all levels.
Outcome 2	CAY have access to safe and privacy-driven SRH and HIV services and supplies/commodities when they're needed and use them appropriately.
Outcome 3	Vulnerable and excluded girls and young women who are most at risk build positive coping mechanisms and engage in social networks.
Outcome 4	Communities and community leaders promote SRHR, act, and facilitate local initiatives that challenge stigma and harmful practices, including CEFM.
Outcome 5	Service providers and health facilities act to provide quality adolescent and gender-responsive and inclusive SRH services.
Outcome 6	CAY who demonstrate knowledge of child protection risks and behaviours and parents and caregivers who report using positive parenting practices with their children.
Outcome 7	Community-based child and family protection mechanisms (CBCPMs) function effectively to prevent and support response mechanisms to violence perpetuated against children, adolescents and youth structures.
Outcome 8	Social service providers have the required capacity to manage and respond to cases of violence against children and IPV at the community level in cooperation with government structures, traditional authorities, civil society and the community.
Outcome 9	CAY know where, how and when to report a protection violation and are confident to report, including in times of crisis.



Youth Community-Based Distribution Agents under the Improving Youth Friendly Health Services project are supported with push bikes to reach out to more youth with family planning methods.

A photograph showing two young women in blue work clothes working on a red generator. One woman is standing and leaning over the generator, while the other is kneeling and working on the side. The background is blurred, showing an outdoor setting with buildings and trees.

Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE)

We will ensure that girls and young women enjoy economic wellbeing and cope with climate change and shocks through decent work opportunities, economic opportunities and climate change justice.

Key Actions

- Support educational and technical institutes in providing quality technical education that is gender responsive and inclusive, responds to market needs, and links graduates with self- or wage employment opportunities.
- Support the TEVET sector in Malawi in collaboration with other stakeholders to review current TEVET curricula and align them to green skills requirements.
- Support the creation of green jobs among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) through the promotion of the use of locally available materials, innovation in renewable, efficient and clean energy technologies, improved waste management and creation of awareness on climate-resilient infrastructure and investments.
- Promote digital skills among youth, especially for girls and young women.
- Engage parents to support girls to pursue non-gender-stereotyped careers.
- Work with the private sector to offer jobs with a minimum wage sufficient to meet the full basic needs and support the holistic development of young women.
- Engage the government to create a safe working environment, equal pay, and opportunities for women, and amend the labour law to achieve decent work regulations in rural areas, incorporating the national apprenticeship policy and a social protection system for the informal sector.

Expected Impact and outcomes

IMPACT	To contribute towards resilience, sustainable livelihoods, wage and self-employment among adolescents, youth, women and men
Outcome 1	Young people, especially women, build on and develop their skills for wage and self-employment opportunities.
Outcome 2	Young people, especially women in their diversity, pursue decent work opportunities, including green skills of their choosing, whether wage employment or self-employment.
Outcome 3	Private sector companies invest in and practice decent work principles for young people, particularly women, in their diversity and businesses throughout their supply chains.
Outcome 4	Increased food, nutrition and income security at the household level.
Outcome 5	Increased resilience among children, adolescents, and youth; families and communities to respond to disasters and effects of climate change.





Resilience Building and Humanitarian Assistance

In addition to the core programmes and as part of Plan International's Global push to scale up humanitarian programming, PIM will strengthen its capacity for humanitarian assistance.

Over the past five years of programme implementation, PIM has learnt that children and girls are disproportionately affected when emergencies strike. Protracted crises and disasters have increased in occurrence. If we are to honour our ambition, we cannot sit back and only intervene when it fits within our current parameters. PIM will, therefore, scale up the quality, pace, size, and reach of our work primarily by building up preparedness for our program areas. Strong leadership, planning, and robust and simplified processes will help us start and scale responses quickly.

Key Actions

- Strengthen early warning systems among families and the community to improve their ability to effectively respond to seasonal shocks such as flooding, drought and disease outbreaks.
- Support post-recovery actions informed by Plan International's global guidance derived from post-pandemic programming experiences.
- Strengthen young people's resilience, ensuring they can cope, survive, and thrive amid humanitarian disasters.
- Pilot and roll out the Nexus approach based on existing best practices and learnings from other Plan International Country Offices and other organisations doing this well. The Nexus approach will focus on strengthening the interlinkages between humanitarian responses and long-term development, as well as collaboration, coherence and complementarity to realise rights, reduce needs, vulnerabilities and risks, promote gender equality and address drivers, socio-economic impacts and underlying causes of hazards over the long-term.

- Undertake an environmental impact assessment for all significant programmes likely to negatively affect the environment and devise an action plan to reduce our programmatic carbon footprint.
- Continue to respond to the protracted refugee situation in the Dzaleka refugee camp, depending on resource availability, by providing direct assistance to refugees.
- Continue to lobby the government and other development partners to adopt a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) to enable refugees to benefit from the collective resources that the CRRF provides.

Expected Impact and outcomes

Outcome 1	Girls and young people can cope with, survive and even thrive amid humanitarian disasters.
Outcome 2	Families and households at the community level can effectively respond to seasonal shocks such as flooding, drought and disease outbreaks.
Outcome 3	More diversified funding for children and youth in displaced settings.
Outcome 4	Humanitarian initiatives are integrated with resilience programmes in the three priority areas.



Where We Will Work

Present in
14 districts
& 103
 Traditional Authorities
 Across the Country

- Sponsorship programme areas
- Non-sponsorship priority districts
- WFP programming
- No Presence

North
 Mzimba North (6 TAs)
 Chitipa (6 TAs)
 Karonga (3 TAs)
 Nkhatabay (2 TAs)

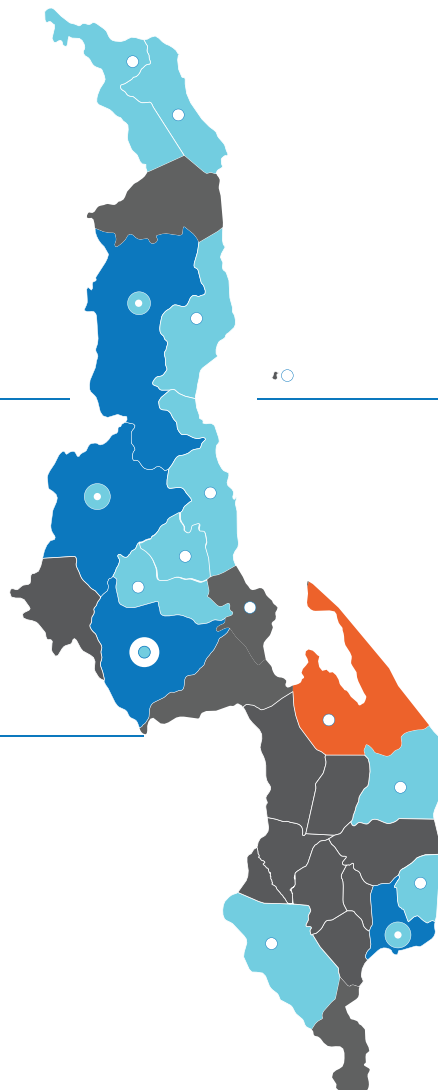
Present in
4 districts
& 17
 Traditional Authorities
 in the north

centre
 Kasungu (31 TAs)
 Lilongwe (7 TAs)
 Nkhatakota (7 TAs)
 Ntchisi (7 TAs)
 Dowa (2 TAs)

Present in
5 districts
& 54
 Traditional Authorities
 in the centre

South
 Mulanje (6 TAs)
 Machinga (10 TAs)
 Mangochi (8 TAs)
 Chikwawa (5 TAs)
 Phalombe (3 TAs)

Present in
5 districts
& 32
 Traditional Authorities
 in the south



Who We Will Seek to Support (Primary Target Group)

Plan will work with:

- **3.5 million** marginalised and vulnerable girls and boys and young women and men aged 10-24 with and without disabilities.
- Teen mothers and youth groups as critical change agents
- Girls withdrawn from child marriages, adolescents and young people living with HIV and AIDS, child-headed families, and families with children with disabilities as direct beneficiaries of all our programmes.
- Boys and men will also be targeted as crucial champions of change.



Who We Will Work With (Key Partners)

Plan will work with the following key stakeholders to drive our programme and influencing agenda:

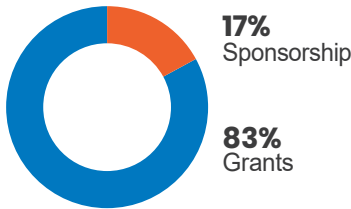
- Parents and caregivers
- Government extension workers (all sectors) and teachers as critical moral duty bearers
- Government line ministries and departments as key policymakers
- Traditional, religious and other influential leaders,
- Academic institutions, research organisations
- Local and international like-minded NGOs.
- UN Agencies.
- Media organisations

Our Financing Requirements

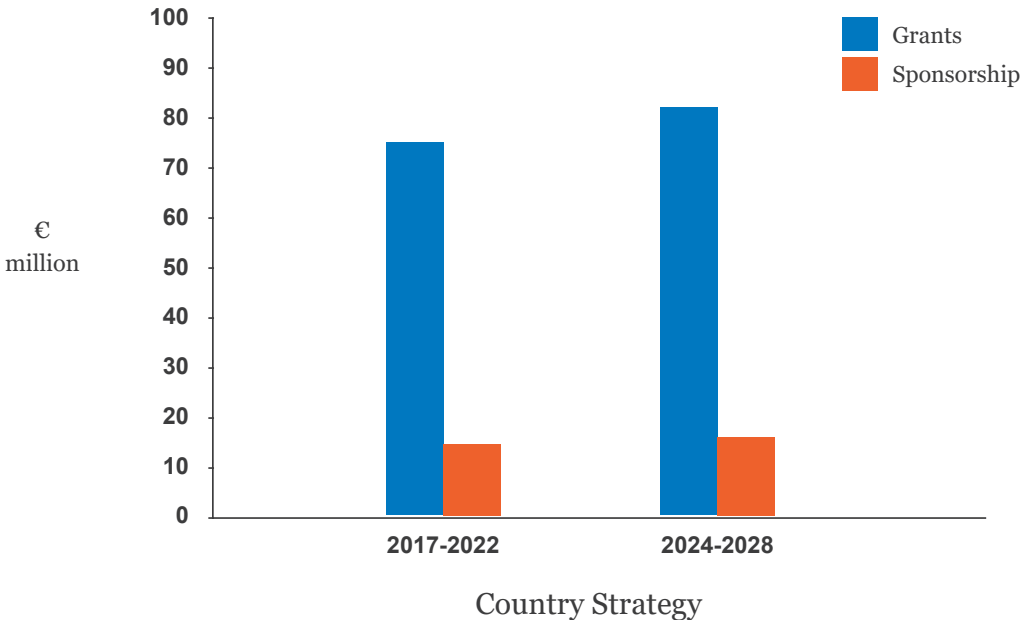
Overall budget requirement for the CS:

€ 81.7 million

Income Growth from previous CS: **7%**
 Projected Annual Income: **€16.3m**



The grants vs sponsorship income ratio



- Performance varied during the last strategy due to the changing donor landscape, affording PIM to raise €76m (€61m from Grants and €15m from sponsorship).
- This excludes the country’s operating costs over the same period of time (a five-year period), and represents an average of €15.2m per year against a target of 16.9m per year over the last 2 years (2021 and 2022).

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