



*Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.*

A stylized world map composed of dots. The landmasses are represented by light orange dots, while the oceans are white. A large, dense cluster of dark blue dots is centered over Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region. A dotted blue arc starts from the top left, curves over the top, and ends with a solid dark blue dot in the lower right, passing near the CIS region.

# **EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EUROPE AND THE CIS (2011-2013)**

Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme





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May 2013

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the evaluation focal point team at the Centre, Patrick Gremillet, Andrey Pogrebnyak, and Maria Ten, and programme managers, as well as colleagues at the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, including Cihan Sultanoglu, Haoliang Xu, Rosemary Kalapurakal, and Lene Jespersen. All country offices in the Europe and the CIS region responded to the general country office survey conducted under the evaluation, providing critical insights into the performance of the regional programme. The Evaluation Office also acknowledges the information provided by representatives of government, civil society organizations, the private sector and other development partners in the region, during field visits and interviews during the data collection phase, which was used as part of the analysis.

# FOREWORD

The United Nations Development Programme, in addition to supporting the development of 177 countries and territories through its country and multi-country programmes, runs global and regional programmes to address issues of global and regional nature, provide coherence to its technical support and facilitate exchange of knowledge and experience across the countries it serves.

During 2011, the Evaluation Office conducted a series of evaluations of these global and regional programmes. This evaluation covered the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) 2011-2013, implemented by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS, through its Regional Centre in Bratislava. It examined the results achieved by the regional programme articulated in seven outcomes under the four topical areas: response to climate change, social inclusion, local development, and promotion of new partnership in development cooperation.

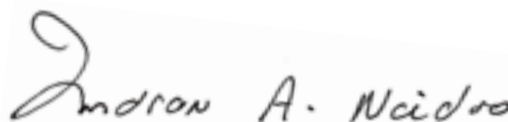
The evaluation found that, at the midpoint of its cycle, the regional programme is making important progress in all areas. The thematic focus areas of the programme were found highly relevant to the development needs of the region. In the area of climate change, UNDP has positioned itself as a broker of environment finance in the region, supporting countries access critical funds required for transition into low-emission and climate-resilient economies as well as to pursue sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources. Social inclusion focused on building national partners' capacity to address equity issues among the vulnerable population, such as the Roma, disabled and those with HIV/AIDS, particularly through the establishment of reliable data, awareness raising and improved civil society engagements. Local development addressed public

administration reforms and human rights and justice through tailored advisory services and local ownerships. Capacity-building support was provided to emerging donor countries through the promotion of a new partnership programme.

In general, the programme has been delivered in an efficient manner, with emphasis on the implementation of regional projects supplemented by high-level advisory services, production of knowledge products, and active communication and advocacy. Delays in the timely availability of funds for regional projects, challenges in the measurement of results in some outcome areas as well as in the overall results framework for the region, and the need for specific approaches for the subregions are among the issues highlighted in the evaluation.

In moving forward, the evaluation recommended that UNDP should take a holistic sustainable development approach to the overall programme, with specific subregional strategies; further intensify cross-practice approaches; place more focus on regional dimension of the programme; ensure inclusive consultation processes when developing a regional strategy; and strengthen its results framework.

As UNDP prepares to develop a Strategic Plan, I hope this series of evaluations will shed light on how UNDP can further enhance the value of its services by utilizing these global and regional programme instruments more effectively and efficiently.



Indran A. Naidoo  
Director, Evaluation Office

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|          |  |
|----------|--|
| AfT      | Aid for Trade  |
| BCPR     | Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)                           |
| BDP      | Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)                                       |
| BERA     | Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy (UNDP)                           |
| BRC      | Bratislava Regional Centre (UNDP)  |
| BSEC     | Black Sea Economic Cooperation   |
| CARRA    | Central Asia Regional Risk Assessment                                      |
| CAREC    | Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation                                 |
| CDM      | Clean Development Mechanism  |
| CEDAW    | Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women |
| CEU      | Central European University (Budapest)                                     |
| CIS      | Commonwealth of Independent States   |
| CoP      | Community of Practice  |
| CRM CA   | Climate Risk Management in Central Asia                                    |
| CSO      | Civil Society Organization   |
| DACI     | Directorate for Anti-Corruption Initiative (Montenegro)                    |
| DG Regio | Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (European Commission)    |
| DRR      | Disaster Risk Reduction  |
| EBRD     | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development                           |
| EC       | European Commission  |
| ECIS     | Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States                          |
| ECOM     | Eurasian Coalition on Male Health  |
| E&E      | Environment and Energy   |
| EEG      | Environment and Energy Group (BDP)   |
| EIB      | European Investment Bank   |
| EO       | Evaluation Office (UNDP)   |
| ESCAP    | United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific     |
| EU       | European Union   |
| EurAsEC  | Eurasian Economic Community  |
| EU-SILC  | European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions                  |
| FYR      | Former Yugoslav Republic (of Macedonia)                                    |
| FRA      | European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights                               |
| GDP      | Gross Domestic Product   |
| GEF      | Global Environment Facility  |
| GFATM    | Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria                        |
| GHG      | Greenhouse Gases   |
| GIM      | Growing Inclusive Markets  |

|          |   |
|----------|---|
| GRPE     | Global and Regional Programme Evaluations   |
| HIV/AIDS | Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome  |
| HRBA     | Human Rights Based Approach   |
| IAEA     | International Atomic Energy Agency  |
| ICRIN    | International Chernobyl Research and Information Network  |
| ICRPD    | International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities   |
| IDP      | Internally Displaced People   |
| ILO      | International Labour Organization   |
| IWP      | Integrated Work Plan  |
| IWRM     | Integrated Water Resource Management  |
| LEDS     | Low-Emission Development Strategy   |
| MCN      | Multi-country Climate Network   |
| MDG      | Millennium Development Goals  |
| MEPS     | Minimum Energy Performance Standards  |
| NALAS    | Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe   |
| NCNs     | National Climate Networks   |
| NGO      | Non-Governmental Organization   |
| NHDR     | National Human Development Report   |
| NHRI     | National Human Rights Institution   |
| ODA      | Official Development Assistance   |
| ODIHR    | Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights   |
| OHCHR    | Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights  |
| OSCE     | Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe   |
| OSI      | Open Society Institute  |
| PAC      | Project Appraisal Committee   |
| PAR      | Public Administration Reform  |
| PHASE    | Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice for Social Inclusion and Legal Empowerment   |
| PLHIV    | People Living with HIV  |
| POPP     | Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (UNDP)   |
| PRS      | Poverty Reduction Strategy  |
| RBEC     | Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (UNDP)   |
| RCPAR    | Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform  |
| REDD+    | Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries |
| ReSPA    | Regional School of Public Administration  |
| RHDR     | Regional Human Development Report   |
| ROAR     | Results Oriented Annual Report  |
| RP       | Regional Programme  |
| RPD      | Regional Programme Document   |
| RRF      | Results and Resources Framework (of RPD)  |

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| RTA    | Regional Technical Assistant (GEF)                                 |
| SEA    | Strategic Environmental Assessment                                 |
| SIDA   | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency               |
| SMART  | Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound            |
| SME    | Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise                                  |
| SPECA  | United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia |
| TGDL   | Think Globally, Develop Locally                                    |
| TIKA   | Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency           |
| ToR    | Terms of Reference   |
| UNAIDS | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS                         |
| UNCAC  | United Nations Convention Against Corruption                       |
| UNDAF  | United Nations Development Assistance Framework                    |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                               |
| UNECE  | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe                      |
| UNEG   | United Nations Evaluation Group                                    |
| UNEP   | United Nations Environment Programme                               |
| UNFCCC | UN Framework Convention on Climate Change                          |
| UNFPA  | United Nations Population Fund                                     |
| UNIFEM | United Nations Development Fund for Women (now part of UN Women)   |
| UNMIK  | United Nations Mission in Kosovo                                   |
| UNODC  | United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime                           |
| UPR    | Universal Periodic Review  |
| WB     | The World Bank   |



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as part of its annual workplan approved by the Executive Board, conducted the regional programme evaluations for all five UNDP regions and the global programme evaluation in 2012. The present document is the evaluation of the regional programme for the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region.

The regional programme evaluation is an independent programmatic evaluation with the objectives of providing substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board; facilitating learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2014; and providing stakeholders in the programme countries and development partners with an objective assessment of the development contributions achieved through UNDP support and in partnerships with other key players through the regional programme.

This is the second evaluation of the regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. It covered the current programme period 2011-2013 and was guided by the regional programme document and its results and resources framework. The evaluation took into account changes made by the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) over time, which has selected three thematic issues of strategic importance to the region, i.e. response to climate change, social inclusion and local development, and the new partnership with emerging donors. The contribution of the programme to the

development outcomes was assessed according to a standard set of evaluation criteria used across all regional programme evaluations: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.

The evaluation used a combination of desk reviews of material, field visits to six selected countries, and interviews with various stakeholders. The country office survey, developed and administered jointly by all regional and global programme evaluations conducted by the Evaluation Office, was used to obtain critical insights into the regional programme operation from the country offices in the region.

## II. BACKGROUND

Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States is a large and highly diverse region, including countries with different aspirations and development challenges. Countries represented in the region broadly fall into three groups: the European Union Member States and those seeking European Union membership in the Western Balkans, and Turkey; countries situated in the Western Commonwealth of Independent States and the Caucasus; and Central Asia, where absolute poverty is still widespread. The Multidimensional Poverty Index varies significantly across the region.

Despite its cultural and economic diversity, much of the region shares the legacy of communism followed by 20 years of democratization, as well as of political turmoil and ethnic conflicts. Progress has been made in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) since 2000, including food security, women's employment, and child and maternal mortality. The recent global economic crisis, however, has blocked or reversed the progress, hitting hard the poor and vulnerable people. Recurrent human rights

violations, e.g. those against Roma and people with disabilities and HIV/AIDS, are a concern in some countries where national policies have not yet fully addressed the issues. Women's economic opportunities and empowerment remain constrained in many countries.

The development challenges faced by the region in environment and energy include the management of water resources, mitigation of biodiversity loss, climate change, and the need for improvement in energy efficiency and utilization of renewable energy. Governance, particularly local governance, is another critical area for the region. Many countries in the region have gone through significant institutional changes in the last two decades through, for example, extensive administrative reorganization, improvement in institutional framework and capacity development. Strengthening of the rule of law, however, remains a major challenge for many countries.

RBEC currently supports 29 countries through its 20 country offices and five project offices. Its long-term mission is to help countries in the region to develop socio-economic structures and governance systems that ensure sustainable, inclusive, equitable, high and growing human development. The Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC) links country offices with the headquarters and global networks of development expertise as the main knowledge and advisory hub. The centre provides technical advisory services to country offices upon request, implements a set of regional projects, and seeks to improve the impact of UNDP work in the region through its active communication and advocacy.

The current regional programme document, approved by the Executive Board in 2010, defines the framework of UNDP intervention in the region. The regional programme is designed to promote development cooperation across the countries, support the diagnosis of shared challenges, catalyse development solutions, and support investment in knowledge and expertise for the benefit of more than a single country. The

programme is articulated in seven programme outcomes. By using the issues of critical importance to the region, results are grouped in the following four topical areas:

- (a) Response to climate change:  
Environment and energy (Outcomes 1 and 2);
- (b) Social inclusion:  
Poverty, inequality and social inclusion (Outcome 3);
- (c) Local development:  
Regional support to subnational governance and development (Outcome 4);  
Good and effective governance and social cohesion (Outcomes 5 and 6);
- (d) Promotion of new partnerships in development cooperation (Outcome 7).

### III. KEY FINDINGS

#### RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE - ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

**The portfolio addresses one of the recognized challenges of the region and is aligned with regional and country strategies.** The portfolio has two outcomes, i.e. improved capacity to support the transition to low-emission and climate-resilient economies at the national and subnational levels, and improved capacity for sustainable conservation and management of ecosystems and natural resources by 2013. UNDP has responded to climate change with two flagship projects: climate risk management in Central Asia and in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Effects of climate change can be particularly significant in Central Asia with its glaciers. With regard to water governance and management of ecosystems and natural resources, UNDP has supported the capacity development of countries to ensure that environment and energy issues are addressed when developing national policies and programmes.

**At the midpoint of the programme cycle, a number of targets are making solid progress.**

Gender mainstreaming has not yet taken root at the programme level. On both the climate change and ecosystem and natural resources components, the planned targets in establishing relevant legal and regulatory frameworks have already reached or are reaching the expected goals. BRC has mobilized USD 97 million from the Global Environment Fund (GEF) and other funds in 2011 for climate change, against the initial target of USD 50 million, and the full target of USD 45 million for ecosystem and natural resources has also been met. Thirty-five against the total target of 30 initiatives to integrate sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources into national socio-economic development were established by the end of 2011, particularly in biodiversity, trans-boundary waters and Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) projects, and in international waters learning. Regarding the portfolio's target that 50 percent (later reduced to 30 percent) of interventions show gender mainstreaming under the climate change component, the indicator lacked the baseline and in its specificity, and no progress has been reported at the regional level. At the project level, countries are making their own effort through, for example, climate risk management. Tajikistan reported having spent 27 percent of its budget on gender issues, and Kyrgyzstan introduced an indicator measuring the gender ratio in training.

**Various practice areas collaborated with the environment and energy team in programme implementation. Lack of funds at the start of a project was often an issue, forcing the programme team to revisit the project design.**

Cross-practices were commonly used to improve programme synergy with various practice teams, e.g. with the crisis prevention and recovery and poverty reduction teams for climate risk management, with governance in addressing climate change and environmental justice at the local level, and with poverty reduction to highlight their critical linkages. Efficiency was not optimal, however, owing to a significant

deviation between the amount of total resources required and the actual resources available at the beginning of projects. Climate Risk Management for Central Asia, the largest project under the climate change component, had secured only 50 percent of the budget required (USD 12 million) at the start of the project. For IWRM, only USD 3.5 million of the required USD 5.4 million was available when the project launched. The effort for acquiring required funds was often left to programme managers during the actual project implementation. Staff addressed the situation by revisiting the project designs (e.g. a shift from having a pilot activity to selecting a low-cost alternative practice for making the communities more resilient to climate change under climate risk management), and ensuring synergies with other projects through cost-sharing activities (IWRM). The provision of advisory services by BRC advisers was highly appreciated by country offices, particularly those of a high-level policy nature as demonstrated in the preparation for the Rio+20 Summit, support through the community of practice, and support in the development of project proposals for GEF and the European Union. Project Every Drop Matters has established an efficient partnership with the private sector, which has now grown into a global programme that engages countries in the Arab and Asia and the Pacific regions.

**Robust project designs with practical approaches and the focus on capacity-building and knowledge-sharing are likely to contribute to programme sustainability. The institutional platforms, however, have yet to be fully established.** The portfolio has shown elements likely to foster its sustainability, e.g. regional projects that focus on country-level actions; allocation of funds to national activities and assignment of dedicated managers; national stakeholder engagements when defining priorities and fine-tuning the projects; and focus on institutional capacity as climate change-related issues may be new to some countries. One example of UNDP support to integrate climate risk management into a government policy was the capacity development at the Turkish Ministry of Environment and



Urbanization on monitoring its climate change action plan. However, the institutional platforms vary and are not yet well established among countries. For example, data are often scattered between different ministries, e.g. the Ministry of Environment with data on climate change adaptation and the Ministry of Emergency Situations with disaster risk management data. Institutional set-ups for climate risk management are focused either on water resources or disaster response and risk reduction. Institutionalization of climate risk management fully into existing national platforms remains a challenge in the region.

## SOCIAL INCLUSION

**The programme is consistent with the priorities outlined by UNDP. It is relevant to the development needs of the region, owing to its focus on subregional challenges and the development of knowledge products. More inclusive consultation processes could enhance its relevance.** Social inclusion is addressed in the regional focus area of poverty reduction, inequality and social inclusion, which aims at increasing the capacity of public, private and civil society actors to address human development challenges through evidence-based, inclusive and sustainable policies and through private-sector-based pro-poor development. The UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and the RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013 articulate UNDP work in the area. In the Western Balkans and European Union Member States, the programme has been guided by the European Union social inclusion and European integration agenda among others. BRC, in partnership with the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the World Bank and the Open Society Institute, carried out a survey in 2011 to address the need for Roma data through a regional project Tools and Methods for Evaluation and Data Collection. In the Western Commonwealth of Independent States and the Caucasus, projects such as Aid for Trade and the Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion programme, and advisory services on agriculture and rural development are implemented, guided by the principles of the European

Neighbourhood Policy. The Regional HIV/AIDS Project 2010-2011 and HIV, Human Rights and Universal Access in Eastern Europe addressed the HIV epidemic. In Central Asia, a significant number of advisory services and the Support for MDG-oriented Policies project have supported countries to develop, monitor and evaluate national/local strategies and development plans. Important knowledge products, such as the new social exclusion measurement methodology, presented in the Regional Human Development Report 2011, were produced. Interviews indicate that the programme relevance could be further enhanced with more inclusive consultation processes, particularly with governments and other national stakeholders.

**Strong results have been reported in a number of areas, with some areas under limited progress.** Key results were achieved in the following areas: (a) the development of reliable and robust data (e.g. ethnically disaggregated data, vulnerability databases, social exclusion data); (b) support to human development literacy through reflection of MDGs in national development reports and strategies; (c) increased awareness of the relationship between trade policy, human development and poverty; (d) improved civil society engagement in social services and human rights advocacy; and (e) improved capacity in monitoring the violation of the rights of people with HIV/AIDS. Limited progress was reported in the private sector engagement to address poverty and inequality and in the reduction of gender-based segregation in the labour market. The technical knowledge and expertise of advisers, the partnerships with relevant and influential development partners, multi-practice work in the portfolio development, focus on capacity-building and pilot activities, and intensive dissemination campaigns on social inclusion have contributed to results. At the same time, staff turnover, lack of commitment by some countries to take on pro-poor approaches, and delays in project funding slowed down programme implementation. Weaknesses in the results framework, in particular the selection of indicators, also affected the manner in which results can be measured.



**Activities have progressed as planned in most cases and resources have been used in an efficient manner.** BRC has taken prompt action to address any implementation issues. Regional projects were efficiently implemented when: (a) they were complemented by advisory services and knowledge products, e.g. the Regional Human Development Report; (b) the country programmes have been well integrated into the regional efforts (e.g. Aid for Trade in Georgia); and (c) when the economies of scale were achieved within a subregion (e.g. the Decreasing Roma Vulnerability project in the Western Balkans). Advisory services were most appreciated when they helped the national partners to use resources more efficiently, were complementary to local actions, thus increasing the efficiency of both operations; and supported resource mobilization. Funding gaps, staff turnover and communication issues between the centre, national implementation teams and donors have affected efficiency.

**Efforts in capacity development and partnerships with relevant development partners suggest favourable sustainability prospects. Inclusive consultations, decentralized implementation and integration of local approaches are important in ensuring sustainability.** Results have favourable sustainability prospects, owing to embedding capacity development in all regional efforts, engagement of country offices and partnerships with relevant development partners. Regional projects that have a decentralized implementation approach, with locally available funding and responsibilities, and those integrated in the country programmes or activities of national counterparts are reported as having enhanced national ownership. The partnerships with United Nations and other partners have been important in increasing synergy and efficiency of interventions and in promoting methodologies and approaches among partners. Networks and alliances with civil society organizations, private sector and academia to increase knowledge transfer, replication of good practices and advocacy have been promoted.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (1) – SUBNATIONAL GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**

**The programme reflects local development challenges in its design and has made progress towards results.** The programme aims at improved capacity of national and subnational institutions to deliver sustainable and integrated activities reflecting good governance and climate change considerations. It includes projects such as Human Security for Individuals and Communities in Chernobyl-Affected Areas through Local Information Provision, which has established the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN), Advocacy and Outreach in Central Asia, which provides a framework for undertaking the Central Asian Regional Risk Assessment, and Think Globally, Develop Locally, which focuses on administrative reforms and local development and attempts to link good governance and climate change. Notable initial results in Think Globally include, for example, the enhanced capacity of several municipalities in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia through a pilot initiative of inter-municipal cooperation for energy management. Advisory support provided by the capacity development team with the ICRIN project, through a concrete capacity development plan, has now been adopted in Turkey and Moldova.

**Efficiency is maintained by synergies between regional projects and advisory services, tailored approaches to country needs, and partnerships. Funding-related issues affected timeliness in implementation.** The contribution of strong and flexible advisory services provided upon request from country offices, complemented by the conduct of regional projects, has been significant in local governance. Partnerships with United Nations agencies have contributed programme efficiency, as in the case of the ICRIN project with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), where agency-specific tasks have been clearly defined, as well as in Think

Globally where collaboration with the Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe has helped reach more potential beneficiaries. The lack of funds at the start of a project has caused delays in some projects (e.g. Think Globally, Develop Locally) and postponement of initially envisaged activities.

**The programme enjoys a relatively high level of ownership among counterparts. The scaling-up of the portfolio may be difficult owing to funding and other issues.** All projects under the portfolio share, to some extent, good sustainability prospects, e.g. strong end-user orientation in the interventions and focus on fostering project ownership among national/subnational partners and on capacity-building. For example, Think Globally interacts with the Network of Associations of Local Authorities, through which a number of local authorities are engaged in finding the solutions related to inter-municipal service delivery. Synergies between Think Globally activities and national projects, e.g. Moldova's Integrated Local Development project and Ukraine's Community-Based Approach to Local Development, will enhance programme sustainability. The scaling up of the project to the Central Asia level, however, may not be feasible given funding gaps and lack of a supporting environment.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT (2) – GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL COHESION**

**The programme, which seeks to strengthen governance and institutional capacities to ensure a more equitable delivery of public services, and contribute to peaceful and tolerant societies, is of particular relevance to the region, where despite much progress, the subjects remain a priority in many countries.** The programme is highly relevant to the region as many countries still require strengthening of governance in their institutional structure and implementation of international conventions, e.g. the United Nations Convention against Corruption, to which all Europe and

Commonwealth of Independent States countries are parties. Many of the country offices in the region are undertaking activities on public administration reforms and anticorruption. The regional interventions such as Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice for Social Inclusion and Legal Empowerment (PHASE) have supported selected institutions to build peaceful and tolerant societies and assisted countries engage in international principles, e.g. the follow-up to the Universal Periodic Review. The importance of these issues are articulated in the regional strategy documents and country programmes.

**Through advisory services and regional projects, targeted support to national counterparts was provided on anti-corruption and legal empowerment issues. Some indicators are not suitable for measuring results.** While the programme has just begun, a number of concrete activities to bring about changes are implemented in various countries, e.g. capacity-building of beneficiaries through training, assistance in conducting United Nations Convention against Corruption self-assessments, raising awareness on corruption measurement and risk assessments, and the development of national anti-corruption strategies. Country offices found support from BRC advisers valuable, e.g. in the conceptualization of national projects and resource mobilization. In Ukraine, support from the centre has helped the country office better position itself among the experts and practitioners, facilitating its engagement with the Ministry of Justice in legal empowerment of the poor and access to justice. In Serbia, the centre support helped the country office finance the development of a web portal by a local non-governmental organization that collects citizens' opinions and data as part of the Universal Periodic Review process. A donor's request to reflect the human rights-based approach in the local development project in Moldova was achieved with technical support from Bratislava. However, the assessment of programme results was hampered by weak indicators. For example, two of the four

indicators used for the anti-corruption portfolio are not appropriate for measuring intended results within the regional programme.

**Collaboration with country offices and United Nations agencies was critical in ensuring programme efficiency. Constraints included the timeliness in the availability of funding.** Strong partnerships at the country level and with relevant partners were instrumental to the success of many activities implemented. On anti-corruption, the diverse but targeted support was provided to country offices by filling the capacity gap and focusing on the United Nations Convention against Corruption review process and on public services. Regional projects are complemented by specific advisory services to maximize the effects. Collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in anti-corruption and with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in bringing technical expertise and United Nations mandates in human rights monitoring and protection, for example, has promoted programmatic synergies among the partners working in common areas. While most of the projects have been delivered in a timely manner, only about 60 per cent of resources required for the anti-corruption component and 40 percent for social cohesion were available at the time of evaluation. The withdrawal by a key donor from the Public Administration Reform project, for example, has delayed its implementation.

**National ownership, efforts in capacity-building and partnerships are embedded in the anti-corruption and PHASE projects to facilitate sustainability.** The anti-corruption portfolio contains elements that will facilitate its sustainability: strong interest by national counterparts and country offices; tailored project design to address the needs of varying stakeholders; and focus on enhancing the skills of direct beneficiaries to use the appropriate tools to fulfil national and international obligations. Initiatives such as the support to the Anti-Corruption Practitioners Network and the community of practice have facilitated the transfer of know-how

and East-East exchanges of experiences. Filling the technical gaps among country office staff to better work with local institutions has been an important component. Similarly in PHASE, country offices, selected public human rights protection institutions, and other national partners such as civil society organizations are defined as the programme's critical beneficiaries. The BRC democratic governance team has promoted partnerships with OSI and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

## PROMOTION OF NEW PARTNERSHIPS

**The programme for promoting new partnerships in development cooperation is of high relevance to the region, but the intervention logic is not conducive to realizing its objectives and its intended results have not yet been fully measured.** The programme aims at supporting governments in the region, particularly those graduating from the support of UNDP, to effectively manage and coordinate their development activities. The subject is relevant to the region, where a number of countries are recognized as emerging donors. Through regional projects such as the Emerging Donor Initiative, capacity-building support was provided to countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan, and a high-profile lecture series has been implemented to share lessons and experiences. The portfolio has begun slowly mobilizing resources through partnerships. However, challenges in the underlying design, e.g. weaknesses in the selection of indicators and lack of clearly defined targets, limited focus on policy-level decision-makers in its outreach strategies, and modest resources available for the programme team, have prevented the programme from fully exploiting its potential.

**The overall breadth of provision of services for emerging donor support remains limited, and more attention should be paid to intensifying the provision of policy services.** The programme team is composed of two international staff, one of whom joined the team only in late 2011, and

two national staff. Efforts made by the staff have been appreciated by country offices, e.g. on the seminars on how to work with the Russian Federation as a donor, advisory services related to the emerging donor initiative with Turkey, and capacity-building through staff exchanges. However, the amount of time spent on advisory services by the programme advisers has been relatively limited, compared to what has been spent by advisers in other practices. The overall provision of policy advice needs to be intensified to strengthen its support.

### **STRATEGIC POSITIONING AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES**

**In each of the three topical areas of strategic importance, the regional programme has found its strategic relevance and responded to critical challenges at hand.** In its response to climate change, BRC has played a critical role of facilitating funds that are externally available, e.g. GEF and EC Clima East Fund. In social inclusion, the centre has moved strategically to become one of the key actors supporting countries in the Western Balkans to advance the European Union integration agenda. The MDG-related activities were particularly relevant in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The programme focused on intensive human development training, production of a range of knowledge products (e.g. the Regional Human Development Report and the Development and Transition Newsletter) and extensive use of social media and interactive platforms. In local development, the regional programme has built on results achieved by country offices through the inter-municipal development project and has expanded its focus by introducing climate considerations. The anti-corruption portfolio has been particularly critical in supporting country offices in the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Central Asia. Support in the implementation of human rights recommendations has emanated from the Universal Periodic Review and other mechanisms. The UNDP comparative strength of impartiality has been crucial in the programme.

**The definition of a regional project is not clear. The current guidelines do not seem to encourage the formulation of projects between the countries under the different regional bureaux.** In reviewing existing regional projects, some projects were found to have been implemented only in one country, and others were implemented in multiple countries but without carrying concrete objectives and changes defined at the regional level. The focus on activities, rather than on effects to be achieved at the regional level, compromises the value of implementing a regional project. It was also found that based on the current UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures, the formulation of a regional project is for countries belonging to the same regional bureau, making it difficult for countries to link with those who could provide support regardless of their affiliation with a UNDP regional bureau.

**Efforts should be strengthened in the assessment of the quality of advisory services, and the utility of knowledge products.** The internal service tracker system is designed to collect feedback from country offices on the quality of the BRC advisory services. Data recorded in the system, as well as survey results indicate general satisfaction among them on the services provided. In some individual cases, however, country offices expressed dissatisfaction with the content of the advisory services which lacked the international standards or did not meet their expectations. In 2011, a limited amount of feedback was captured in the system. Numerous knowledge products varying in their size, profile and complexity were released during the review period. Innovative tools, e.g. teamworks, twitter, and online media platforms, were used to facilitate the information sharing. When asked about the familiarity with those products, however, country offices were likely to refer to those that had been highly publicized (e.g. the Regional Human Development Report) or those that had directly involved them during the production phase. The level of utility and impact of those knowledge products is not fully known.



**The regional programme document has only partially reflected gender and human rights aspects.** BRC has taken strategic action to advance gender equality at the country and regional levels within the framework of the RBEC Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 project. The analytical work on regional gender issues, provision of gender disaggregated data to policy makers and practitioners, and highlighting of gender dimensions in economy, poverty, health and education have contributed to informed legal reforms and policy development. Gender mainstreaming capacity-building for practitioners in the region has also been provided. The regional programme as defined in its programme document, however, has not fully reflected gender perspectives. The programme outcomes in the results and resources framework are often gender-blind and most of the indicators are not gender disaggregated. Regional projects have scored low in the gender marker exercise. On equity and human rights, while a range of vulnerable groups and duty-bearers are identified as stakeholders, they are not engaged in the programme document consultation processes, and the efforts are often left to individuals. The full engagement of the stakeholders may take time, but can be done by, for example, effectively partnering with regional organizations or with country offices when they conduct their own internal consultation exercises of developing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and country programmes.

**Much effort has been made in the promotion of other United Nations values. Further attention should be paid to the measurement of their results.** As poverty is not always openly discussed in official policies in some countries, the promotion of human development and MDGs as part of the regional programming strategy has not been easy. BRC has taken innovative approaches to actively promote this important value by, e.g. the production of analytical reports, development of new measurement methodologies, and linking of the subject with trade, economic planning, human rights, social inclusion, HIV/AIDS,

and sustainable development. National capacity development is incorporated in the formulation of all seven outcomes, and is addressed well in project designs. However, the extent of results produced by the efforts is often unclear, as the actual contribution is not systematically measured or reported. Bratislava has also promoted East-East cooperation through, e.g. capacity development support to emerging donors, inter-municipal cooperation in local development, and innovative triangular partnership projects through the project office in Poland that has engaged not only the countries in the region but those in other regions (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan and India). Efforts have often been made, however, without having been fully articulated in the programme document and its results framework (e.g. the scope of cooperation and the rationale for selecting related projects).

**Resource mobilization efforts should be strengthened.** Results suggest that country offices require more support in mobilizing their resources through BRC. Rigidity with UNDP administrative/contractual procedures and requirements was often raised as a bottleneck to materializing potential partnerships with donors. Within the Centre, some practice areas, e.g. environment and energy and HIV/AIDS, health and development, have been more successful than others in raising funds. The partnership and resource mobilization strategy should be strengthened at the regional level by analysing the recent donor landscape and their requirements for engaging with UNDP and defining clear targets and approaches.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. While the programme is at its midpoint and full results are yet to be seen, the regional programme is making important progress within its framework. The selection of the three themes – response to climate change, social inclusion and local development – as emerging priorities for the programme has been appropriate for the region, given the needs and**

**challenges faced by the countries in the region. Tangible results have been observed in each of the areas.**

With regard to the response to climate change, UNDP has positioned itself as a broker of environmental finance in the region, helping countries to access funds available in global and regional trust funds. It has also successfully set the standards in climate risk management. Using cross-practices as the foundation of the programme implementation, e.g. collaboration among the energy and environment, crisis prevention and recovery, poverty reduction, and governance teams, the programme has provided high-level advisory services and engaged in capacity-building efforts to achieve the objectives under environment and energy.

Placing social inclusion and equity-related interventions at the heart of the regional programme has been a big step forward in the work of BRC. Regional projects were particularly relevant when they focused on specific subregions with shared concerns and common development challenges, and when they had a flexible design at the country level. The programme has helped strengthen national partners' capacity to address social exclusion, and human development challenges generally, through evidence-based policies and measures. Progress has been made in the provision of reliable and contextualized data (e.g. on Roma, social exclusion, vulnerability, and gender), facilitation of pro-poor trade initiatives, engagement of civil society in social economy and in the monitoring and advocacy platforms for the promotion of the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. The expertise of BRC advisers, partnerships with reputable and influential partners and the creative use of social media have facilitated the achievement of results in the social inclusion programme.

Similarly, in the local development and governance portfolio, the combination of regional projects, advisory services and knowledge products have contributed to programme effectiveness. Most notable achievements were

made in the areas related to public administration reforms and human rights and justice. The initiatives supporting national and subnational institutions in local development are in their early stage of implementation and the progress to date is limited. Factors instrumental for the success achieved to date include the tailored, high-level expertise provided and high level of local ownership. The main factor hampering further progress in this programmatic area has been the lack of or delays in funding.

**Conclusion 2. Regional projects have often lacked explicit regional dimensions and objectives which could contribute to results at the regional level.**

Many of the current regional projects provide support to multiple countries (i.e., so-called multi-country and cross-border projects) but often without the clear goals set as regional effects. The projects have produced results at the individual participating country level, but have not necessarily brought about the development changes at the regional or subregional level. The regional efforts as defined in the UNDP guidelines seem to discourage the formulation of joint projects across various regional bureaux, limiting the opportunities for countries to seek support from any geographical region.

**Conclusion 3. While the three subregions vary in their development challenges, a specific strategy for each of them is not clear. There is subregional variation in the degree to which regional support has been valued among the country offices.**

The Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States region is represented by three distinct subregions with varying challenges and needs. In the Western Balkans and Turkey, the main challenges relate to meeting the European Union accession criteria. In the Western Commonwealth of Independent States and Caucasus, the challenges derive from the European Neighbourhood Policy requiring adoption of policies conducive to sustainable growth,

regional development, and strengthening of the small and medium-sized enterprises. In Central Asia, countries are faced by challenges related to climate change, poverty, human rights and weak civil society. While efforts to tailor the subregional needs are made at the individual portfolio level, a specific strategy for tackling each of the three distinct subregions is not clearly defined in the current regional programme.

Responses from country offices revealed that services provided by Bratislava advisers have been generally more appreciated in Central Asia than in other subregions. The Western Balkan countries had the lowest level of demand for such services. One reason may be that the regional centre does not have a strong focus on and sufficient expertise with European Union accession-related topics, particularly in the negotiation chapters and related *acquis communautaire*, i.e., the cumulative body of European Commission laws, comprising the Commission's objectives, substantive rules, policies and, in particular, the primary and secondary legislation and case law.

**Conclusion 4. The consultation process in shaping the overall regional programme and regional projects was not always sufficiently inclusive. Regional projects and knowledge products that are designed and implemented by close engagement with country offices are likely to be successful in enhancing the relevance and ownership at the country level.**

The regional programme as defined in its programme document was developed based on a large consultation process of country offices. However, there was a general lack of ownership of the programme among the country offices, possibly due to perceived insufficient subregional programmatic focus and incentives for formal endorsement by the countries. Engagement of national and regional partners (governments, civil society, and major donors) in the design and appraisal of the programme document was limited. The lack of national ownership has serious drawbacks as it weakens the sustainability of the policy advice generated within the regional programme.

The inclusiveness of the consultation process to ensure country offices and government ownership in regional projects varied across the practice areas and project portfolios. When properly done (e.g. climate risk management, Roma, social inclusion, HIV/AIDS), the end results were rewarding i.e. upscaling of pilot projects, complementary funding, embedding of results (methodologies, tools, data) in policies and practices. The national ownership and efficiency increased when the management of regional projects was decentralized to the country level and flexible implementation arrangements were put in place according to local circumstances. Knowledge products that had engaged the country offices in their development and were contextualized for country use were reported to be particularly useful (e.g. Regional Human Development Report and RBEC Development Stories).

**Conclusion 5. The regional programme has promoted human rights and gender equality in the region. The integration of a more thorough human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming in the design of the regional programme document and its results and resources framework would further strengthen UNDP efforts, by particularly facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of results and better accountability for their achievement.**

The regional programme has promoted human rights in the ECIS region, providing opportunities for Regional Centre advisers to work with national partners to develop the relevant legal and institutional framework and to increase citizen access to justice, information, basic services and public decision-making. At the same time, there is insufficient reflection of the use of a human rights-based approach to programming, the critical gaps being the lack of engagement of rights-holders in the consultation, analysis and review processes of the programme document and the lack of disaggregated data in its results framework. The programme document has thus been partially instrumental for assessing its contribution to the realization of human rights in the region and for accountability purposes.

The work carried out within the framework of the regional programme has contributed to the strengthening of the gender mainstreaming capacity of gender practitioners in the region. It also informed legal reforms, policy developments and measures through the provision of gender-disaggregated data to policy makers and practitioners. The programme document has, however, only partially mainstreamed gender equality in its results framework. It has thus not fully served as a guiding framework for the monitoring, evaluation and accountability for gender equality results.

**Conclusion 6. There is ample room for improvement in orienting technical services towards meeting the needs of regional development and the recipients of such services.**

The regional centre provides country offices with its technical expertise through the use of three operational modalities of support, i.e. the implementation of regional projects, development of knowledge products and the provision of advisory services. Each of those modalities can be further strengthened by taking a standpoint of meeting regional development challenges as well as of the direct recipients of such expertise and services. In many regional projects, for example, successful results through cross-practices have been reported in some areas, e.g. climate change, HIV/AIDS, and human rights. Not all project designs, however, necessarily articulate the rationale or means of how cross-fertilization of efforts will be created, other than organizing a set of ad hoc joint activities, involving all relevant practice areas.

Advisory services provided by the regional centre staff were viewed, in several instances, as not having met the expected international standards. In particular, in the middle-income countries of the region, the availability of qualified local expertise has allowed some country offices and partners to benchmark the quality of advisory services prior to committing for regional centre expertise. While the feedback on the quality of services is sought from country offices, only

limited comments have actually been collected. The mechanism of systematically soliciting unbiased country office feedback on the quality of services provided has not yet been fully established. Knowledge products have not always reflected the needs of countries in the region as demonstrated by limited reference made by the country offices except for large publications. A follow-up assessment of the utility of these products has not been systematically done.

**Conclusion 7. Insufficient funding and often reduced size of funds have posed a threat to successful implementation of regional projects.**

Funding gaps in regional projects can be observed in the majority of portfolio areas. There are either gaps between the requested funds and available funds as stated in the project document or, in some cases, gaps between the available funds still to be confirmed and their actual availability at project start. Under the current circumstances, project managers need to acquire funds during the project implementation. If the funding gaps are not sufficiently addressed, the projects are unlikely to be implemented as anticipated in the project documents.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1. The regional programme should focus on a limited number of targeted thematic areas and on holistic sustainable human development. A clear strategy for each of the three subregions should also be developed.**

Sustainable human development should be clearly elaborated in the new regional programme as the goal of UNDP work in the region, which would be in line with the post Rio+20 agenda, Europe 2020, and the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and with the UNDP Agenda for Organizational Change. The concept would facilitate the streamlining of the project portfolio and more focused use of resources, as well as cross-practice programming and delivery. The regional programme should also acknowledge the diversity within



the region of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States by providing targeted subregional responses.

Partnerships with major international financing institutions (e.g. the European Union the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank) and funds (e.g. GEF and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria) would be instrumental in supporting UNDP to advocate for macroeconomic policies in the region, which set employment objectives, promote sustainable growth, control inflation and expand the fiscal space for social protection policies. Advisory services on social security, fiscal issues and budget allocations to reduce inequality would be of highest priority.

**Recommendation 2. The regional programme and the regional projects within, reflecting the outcome and the output levels, should be developed to ensure that they address the regional dimension of development challenges.**

Currently, the primary characteristic of many of the regional projects is that they are implemented among several countries, rather than being focused on generating results at the regional level. Results may have been achieved at the country level, but mutual collaboration is required by all participating countries to bring about the results at the regional level. The critical opportunity is missed unless a common strategy or thread of efforts exists. In future, guidelines on the classification and typology of regional projects should be established. In the process of designing a project, the desired effects at the regional and country levels should be clearly defined.

The current geographical focus of the regional projects may be substituted or supplemented by a more issue-focused approach, so as to allow regional projects to involve countries from other regions, as appropriate. This has also been recommended by the previous RBEC regional programme (2006-2010) evaluation. Regionality criteria for regional programming should also

be established to determine when a regional approach is appropriate, as recommended in the evaluation of the UNDP Contribution at the Regional Level to Development and Corporate Results (2010).

**Recommendation 3. A cross-practice approach should be firmly embedded in the regional programme practice architecture to foster greater cross-fertilization of programme results and to support the sustainable development goal of the regional programme.**

There is evidence of ‘multi’-practice work in the form of ad hoc joint activities, but often without the formulation of a well-conceived programme/project framework, from the conceptualization and design stage, developed by the direct participation of all relevant practice teams. The integration of the human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming in the design and implementation of the regional programme document and its results framework should be ensured. A new regional centre cross-cutting practice may be created by merging the existing gender team with the team of human rights advisers in the democratic governance practice, which would be mandated to support all regional centre practices.

The BRC management should further promote a cross-practice culture in the organization and in region at large. The provision of appropriate advice and monitoring the cross-practice activities for the ultimate goal of sustainable development would be important to this function. Cross-practice work should be formally brought into the programme document. The promotion of communities of cross-practices may also be considered. Regional projects should start with the joint conceptualization and planning of activities by all relevant practices, which should be clearly reflected in the project documents and their joint accountability firmly agreed to for results. The same applies to advisory services and knowledge products.

**Recommendation 4. Given the fact that the fully required funds for regional projects are not often available at the critical start of the projects, the regional centre should continue to explore an efficient resource mobilization strategy.**

BRC should explore options to strengthen its resource mobilization and partnership strategy, including, for example the establishment of a dedicated business development function within the centre. In all three thematic areas, i.e. response to climate change, social inclusion and local development, the challenges of not having full funding already available at the start of the regional projects were raised. Programme managers have often been forced to acquire funds in the middle of their project implementation. While some practices (e.g. energy and environment and HIV/AIDS, health and development) have been more successful than others in fundraising, all projects should be able to begin their intended activities from their start without concerns for insufficient funds. Projects and their outputs, at the same time, should be realistically designed based on available resources. A concerted effort at the regional centre should be made in order to comprehensively plan its funding requirements for all of its activities envisaged for the programme defined in its programme document, in close consultation with other offices within UNDP, including the Partnership Bureau, the Bureau for Development Policy/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and the regional bureau.

**Recommendation 5. Staff development should be a strategic priority for the regional centre, given the significant role its staff members are expected to play in providing technical expertise and knowledge to country offices.**

BRC should encourage staff learning, providing access of its staff to top-level, up-to-date learning opportunities for personal and professional development. Monitoring of learning outcomes and continuous improvement of knowledge and skills should be a priority. The regional centre should

carry out a regular skills profiling to check gaps between the existing expertise and demand from country offices and to inform the staff development policy of the centre. A clear distinction between advisers, project managers and business development staff should be introduced as they need different knowledge and skill sets. For the Energy and Environment practice, the GEF portfolio managers could also contribute to advisory services. It is also recommended that the regional centre introduce an institutional memory system to address high staff turnover issues, in order to ensure that knowledge and expertise is capitalized and not lost with the leaving of staff from the regional centre.

**Recommendation 6. The regional programme should be developed on the basis of more inclusive consultations with relevant partners to ensure its full alignment with regional and subregional needs and challenges. Incentives for the ownership and formal endorsement of the regional programme by the country offices, national partners and relevant regional institutions should be introduced to enhance joint accountability for results.**

The regional programme should be considered as a programme for the region and of the region. Currently, it is considered more like a programme of the regional centre, which has solely been kept accountable for its implementation and results. Such perception should be reversed by more systematic and more inclusive consultations, at very early stages, with the country offices and regional institutions, with the participation of governments and civil society organizations to the extent possible. As strongly requested by the country offices, inclusive consultations should also apply, as a rule, to all regional projects, pipeline projects, and to the selection of themes for knowledge products. Advisory services should be based on terms of reference developed by the country offices, as is now the case. In addition to ensuring more inclusive consultations, subregional focus and decentralized management at the country level should be increasingly

used as crucial incentives for accountability and ownership.

**Recommendation 7. The regional programme should be designed in such a way that the three thematic issues of importance to UNDP in the region are effectively translated into the outcomes of the regional programme. Indicators and outputs should be clearly linked to the envisaged outcomes.**

The current outcomes 1 and 2 of the environment and energy portfolio should be integrated as one outcome, incorporating all climate and energy and environment-related aspects. This would end an ongoing distinction between support required in climate change and in biodiversity and ecosystems and would further foster the energy and environment cross-practice work. Under poverty and social inclusion, an outcome on inclusive growth should be formulated, focusing on private sector development, pro-poor trade, rural development and employment creation.

The introduction of an outcome on equity and social inclusion should also be considered, addressing social equity, fiscal issues and social inclusion. In democratic governance, two outcomes should be considered, i.e. one outcome on local development and subnational governance (current outcome 4) and the other on integrating governance interventions at the national level, anti-corruption and rule of law initiatives (merger of current outcomes 5 and 6). The new structure will facilitate the combination of different advisory services with regional projects and measurement of the results achieved. Human rights and gender should be mainstreamed in all outcomes. In the new regional programme document and its resources and results framework, the formulation of indicators should clearly support the outcomes. Each outcome should have clearly assigned outputs to be measured against a set of output indicators. Reporting on regional projects and advisory services should be done against those indicators.



## CHAPTER 1.

# INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the purpose and scope of the evaluation, an overview of the approach and methodology used in the design, detailing the evaluation criteria and questions, data collection and analysis and the evaluation process and management. The structure of the report is also presented at the end of the chapter.

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as part of its annual work plan approved by the Executive Board, conducted evaluations of regional programmes for all five UNDP regions as well as the global programme in 2012.<sup>1</sup> This is an assessment of the Regional Programme for the Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS) region.

A regional programme evaluation is an independent programmatic evaluation with the following objectives:<sup>2</sup>

- Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board.
- Facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2013.
- Provide stakeholders in the programme countries and development partners with an objective assessment of the development contributions achieved through UNDP support

and in partnerships with other key players through the regional programme.

The evaluation examined UNDP's contribution to development results from two perspectives, namely the extent to which programme objectives were realized based on the programme framework developed for the region and UNDP's strategic positioning there. A set of forward-looking recommendations were provided, which are expected to feed into the formulation of a new Regional Programme Document (RPD) for the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS (RBEC).

### 1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In 2009 the Evaluation Office conducted an evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) for the programme period 2006-2010. This is the second evaluation conducted for the region, covering the current programme period 2011-2013. The evaluation assessed UNDP's programme performance, guided by the results and resources framework set forth in the RPD. The evaluation also took into account strategic changes made over time by RBEC in terms of its programmatic focus, which have emphasized UNDP's response to climate change, social inclusion and local development. Based on the terms of reference (Annex 1), the evaluation examined various aspects of work undertaken by the Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC), such as the provision of technical advisory services, the implementation of regional projects and the sharing of knowledge and lessons within and beyond programme countries in the region.

<sup>1</sup> The five regions of UNDP are: i) the Africa region; ii) the Asia and the Pacific region; iii) the Arab States region; iv) the Europe and the CIS region; and v) the Latin America and the Caribbean region.

<sup>2</sup> See UNDP Evaluation Policy for a description of an independent programme evaluation.

### 1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

The evaluation was carried out by drawing on regional, linguistic and thematic expertise provided by three external experts selected from the ECIS region. An overview of the evaluation criteria and questions, data collection and analysis, and the evaluation process and management is presented below.

#### EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

UNDP's performance was examined from two aspects. First, the evaluation team assessed the organization's contribution to regional development results through its thematic programmes, and, second, through the assessment of the effectiveness of UNDP's strategic position in the region. The programme contribution was assessed against the following criteria:

- *Relevance:* The extent to which the regional programme is relevant to the priority development challenges and the emerging needs of the region.
- *Effectiveness:* The extent to which the regional programme has contributed (or is likely to contribute) to the realization of the intended outcomes.
- *Efficiency:* The extent to which the regional programme has made appropriate use of its financial and human resources.
- *Sustainability:* The likelihood that the results achieved through its regional programme are sustainable.

The assessment of UNDP's strategic position in the region examined how UNDP, one of many development partners in the ECIS region, has positioned itself in contributing to development priorities and challenges there. This was assessed against various criteria, including the following:

- *Strategic relevance and responsiveness:* Relevance of UNDP interventions to regional development challenges and priorities, and

their responsiveness to emerging issues in the region.

- *Use of partnerships and comparative strengths:* The extent to which UNDP has explored/established effective collaboration with other development partners in the region, and used its own comparative strengths, to address development needs.
- *Promotion of UN values:* The extent to which the regional programme has facilitated policy dialogue on key UN principles, such as support to gender mainstreaming, equity and human rights, promotion of human development and achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), capacity development and East-East cooperation.

These two focus areas formed the basis for the evaluation design. An evaluation design matrix detailing the evaluation criteria and sub-questions was developed at the start of the evaluation and is attached to this report (Annex 15, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).

#### DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation used various data collection methods:

- *Desk reviews:* A list of background documents and reference material was prepared by the Evaluation Office in collaboration with BRC. The evaluation team collected and reviewed any additional material required throughout the evaluation (Annex 3). A comprehensive list of projects and activities under the current regional programme framework, grouped by outcome, was provided by BRC (Refer to Annex 5 online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>). The regional programme comprised a total of 90 projects, of which 54 were examined in depth.<sup>3</sup> BRC has also

<sup>3</sup> The projects for in-depth reviews were selected by using the criteria including the following: the relative size of the budget; geographical outreach, e.g. projects covering multiple countries; flagship projects identified by BRC; and projects that are likely to provide lessons and good practices.



made available an initial list of knowledge products, which was further enhanced by the evaluation team (Annex 11, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>). The evaluation team also received access to the BRC Service Tracker, an internal monitoring and reporting system of activities conducted by its staff, such as advisory services, for its analysis (Annex 10, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).

- *Stakeholder interviews:* The evaluation team conducted face-to-face and telephone interviews with relevant stakeholders, including BRC staff, representatives and programme managers of the UNDP country offices, donors, development partners and beneficiary groups. A full list of people consulted during the evaluation is attached to the report (Annex 2).
- *Field visits:* Between 5 June and 13 July, the team was divided in groups to visit six countries for in-depth study of the regional programme: Armenia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkey, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The selection criteria of the countries included the overall thematic coverage and subregional divisions, volume of programme activities, and existence of major achievements/challenges from which the evaluation could draw lessons and best practices.
- *Country office survey:* A joint survey aimed at capturing UNDP country office feedback for use by the five regional programme evaluations and the global programme evaluation, was developed and administered by the Evaluation Office (May/August). The survey consisted of 24 questions on the perceived quality of technical support, knowledge products and regional/global projects delivered by their respective regional centres. For the ECIS region, all 20 country offices replied to the survey, yielding a response rate of 100 percent. Results of the survey for

the ECIS region are attached to the report (Refer to Annex 7 online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).<sup>4</sup>

## DATA ANALYSIS

Quantitative data collected through the survey were tabulated and responses to open-ended questions were content analysed. Results of interviews and observations from field visits were recorded and summarized by the evaluation team during data collection and used for analysis in presenting findings and evidence. All findings were triangulated, including those from reviewed reference material. It should be also noted that preliminary findings from the cybermetric analysis on knowledge products and platforms, currently being conducted by the Evaluation Office for all five regional programme evaluations, were also used in the analysis as a reference.

## EVALUATION PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT

The evaluation began by a preparatory mission to BRC conducted by the Evaluation Office task manager between 6 and 8 February 2012, after which the terms of reference for the evaluation were developed. Following the evaluation team's internal video conference of 24 April on its preparatory work, an inception mission was conducted by the entire evaluation team in Bratislava from 25 April to 10 May, where the team received programme briefings, discussed the specifics of an evaluation design matrix and developed its evaluation methodology. Given the proximity between UNDP regional and global programmes, a team member of the global programme evaluation, responsible for the ECIS assessment, also joined the mission.

Following the completion of the main data collection activities, e.g. field visits and the survey, the evaluation team reconvened in Bratislava between 29 August and 1 September 2012 to

<sup>4</sup> The survey was also shared with the project offices. Three offices replied, and their results are included.

discuss preliminary results. The draft evaluation report was prepared after further assessment by the evaluation team of its findings, ensuring their consistency across various data sources and methods, before arriving at a set of conclusions and recommendations. The report was reviewed by an external reviewer and BRC and RBEC headquarters in New York before being finalized for submission to the Executive Board in 2013.

## **1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

The evaluation report consists of five chapters. Following the present Introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the development context and challenges of the ECIS region, as well as UNDP's response to those challenges, providing the rationale, evolution of the regional programme and the content of the current programme framework for the period 2011-2013. Chapter 3 presents the assessment of UNDP's contribution to regional development

by each thematic area. In particular, three RBEC emerging priorities are examined: response to climate change (corresponding to outcomes 1 and 2), social inclusion (corresponding to outcome 3) and local development (corresponding to outcomes 4, 5 and 6). The assessment of partnerships (outcome 7) is also included. Chapter 4 presents the assessment of UNDP's strategic positioning in the region to support regional development priorities. Finally, drawing on specific findings, evidence and assessments, a set of conclusions and recommendations are summarized in Chapter 5. The main report is followed by a number of annexes. The first four annexes – the terms of reference, list of people consulted, list of documents consulted, and the management response – are contained in the present report. The remaining annexes are contained in Volume II available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.



## CHAPTER 2.

# THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND UNDP RESPONSE

This chapter provides the development context in which UNDP operates, including major challenges and priority areas facing the region, an overview of UNDP's regional strategy and managerial structure, and a brief summary of the regional programme under assessment.

### 2.1 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

ECIS is a large and highly diverse region that includes countries with different aspirations and development challenges. Despite its cultural and economic diversity, most of the region shares the legacy of communism followed by 20 years of 'transition' to a democratic society and market economy, as well as of political turmoil and ethnic conflicts. The region is faced by several critical challenges, such as rising income inequality (affecting especially the rural areas and the vulnerable), erosion of human capital as a result of brain drain and lagging quality of education, persistent gender inequalities, high HIV prevalence, lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all, uneven governance and policy implementation capacity, shrinking social protection, expansion of informal economy, and low access to sustainable energy.<sup>5</sup> The region has been

hit hard by the global economic crisis<sup>6</sup> and is now recovering from its impact.

### MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS)

From 2000 to 2008, there was significant progress in the region in the areas of food security, women's employment, child and maternal mortality, and environmental sustainability.<sup>7</sup> The global economic crisis, however, has blocked or reversed the progress. The hardest, and disproportionately hit were the poor and other categories of vulnerable population, e.g. women, minorities, the elderly, internally displaced people and migrants, people with disabilities. The full achievement of MDGs in the region has been hindered by the inequality and other major challenges.<sup>8</sup> The number of countries with HIV integrated into poverty reduction strategies has been limited and few have local or subnational-level HIV responses in place.

Progress has been registered in the monitoring of MDG achievement in the countries of the region based on improved statistical data, i.e. disaggregated by sex, geographical area, ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups. The capacity of communities of people living with

<sup>5</sup> UNECE (coord.), 'The MDGs in Europe and Central Asia: Achievements, Challenges and the Way Forward', New York and Geneva 2011.

<sup>6</sup> For example, decline of GDP, increases in unemployment, reduced spending for health and social protection, sharp income polarization.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> They include: poor quality of primary education in rural areas; low enrolment in primary school for girls in Central Asia and Roma children in Eastern Europe; poor decent work opportunities; gender disparity in access to economic and financial resources; under-representation of women in decision-making positions; unequal access to primary health care and reproductive health for the poor and socially excluded groups, and in remote rural areas; maternal mortality, especially in Central Asia, but also in some Balkan countries; lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation in rural areas of Central Asia and Western Balkans; rising HIV and tuberculosis prevalence in parts of the region (Belarus, Russian Federation, Ukraine and Central Asia).

HIV and of other non-state actors to monitor, advocate for and enforce rights related to quality HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support services, has been strengthened in recent years because of the support provided by several international organizations.

## POVERTY

Economic growth in the region has been uneven, with large and persistent disparities between countries as well as between different groups of population and geographical areas within countries. The Multidimensional Poverty Index varies dramatically across the region, from a value of 0.000 in countries like Slovenia or Slovakia to a value of 0.068 in Tajikistan (Refer to Annex 8 online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>). Almost 40 percent of people in the region are poor or vulnerable.<sup>9</sup> Absolute poverty is widespread in Central Asia, where around six million people are affected.<sup>10</sup>

Many countries face rising unemployment and a significant setback in social protection. The potential for employment and social services provision of social enterprises has recently been explored. Better awareness of inclusive market business models and approaches, pro-poor trade reforms and trade capacity development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and farmers in the region as well as increased private sector engagement in poverty reduction and sustainable development have been given attention by governments and donors to mitigate

the social impact of the crisis and the market exclusion of the poor and vulnerable people.<sup>11</sup>

Due to increased unemployment and declining incomes, women have been hit hard by poverty. Youth unemployment in Central and South East Europe and CIS reached the highest regional rate in the world in 2009 and it is still high: 9.6 percent in 2010.<sup>12</sup> Roma is another group severely affected by poverty. About 90 percent of Roma live in households below national poverty lines.<sup>13</sup> Less than one third of Roma have paid employment. Thirty percent of Roma with a university education are unemployed, compared to 14 percent for the rest of the university-educated population.<sup>14</sup> Many lack access to drinking water, sanitation and electricity, and live in substandard, overcrowded homes. The progress achieved in the development of ethnically disaggregated data and monitoring of Roma-targeted policies is an important step forward for the development of more effective, evidence-based policies and measures.

## SOCIAL EXCLUSION

According to a recent survey<sup>15</sup>, 35 percent of people in the region are excluded from society, ranging from 12 percent in the Former Yugoslav Republic (FYR) of Macedonia to 72 percent in Tajikistan. People over the age of 65 experience levels of social exclusion that are often twice as high as those for the rest of the population. On average, 42 percent of children (aged 0-15) and 35 percent of youth (aged 15-29) live in households that are socially excluded.

<sup>9</sup> World Bank, 'The World Bank Annual Report 2009: Year in Review', Washington D.C., 2009.

<sup>10</sup> UNECE (coord.), 'The MDGs in Europe and Central Asia: Achievements, Challenges and the Way Forward', New York and Geneva, 2011.

<sup>11</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Business Solutions to Poverty – How Inclusive Business Models Create Opportunities for All in Emerging Europe and Central Asia', November 2010.

<sup>12</sup> International Institute for Labour Studies, 'World of Work Report 2011: Making Markets Work for Jobs', Geneva, October 2011.

<sup>13</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, UNDP, 'The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States: Survey Results at a Glance', 2012.

<sup>14</sup> UNDP, 'Faces of Poverty, Faces of Hope: Vulnerability Profiles for Decade of Roma Countries', Bratislava, 2004.

<sup>15</sup> UNDP, RBEC, 'Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies', Regional HDR, Bratislava, 2011.

Factors that increase social exclusion are: unemployment;<sup>16</sup> low levels of education;<sup>17</sup> ethnic background;<sup>18</sup> rural and small-town residence;<sup>19</sup> and disability. Until recently, there was a lack of understanding in the region about the concept of social exclusion and its impact on human development. Generally, human development paradigm is still insufficiently understood and human development audits of national and local policies are scarcely applied.

## ENVIRONMENT

The recent Human Development Report<sup>20</sup> concludes that “industrial pollution and other environmental challenges could undermine development progress in Eastern Europe and Central Asia”. Indeed, pre-transition industrialization models in Central Europe and the CIS, in which environmental effects and external cost of production were hardly taken into consideration, left a heritage of pollution and severe environmental problems that have not yet been entirely addressed, such as urban air pollution and water pollution of pan-European rivers.

Among the challenges faced by the region are governance of (transborder) water resources and mitigation of biodiversity loss. Possible mechanisms are the establishment of protected areas and sustainable forestry and land management. Biodiversity is also a pan-European challenge; there are current efforts to link these protected areas to bio-corridors to enhance effectiveness.

Climate change mitigation and adaptation is another significant challenge that calls for regional and global solutions. Glacier melting in Central Asia is one of the concrete regional and global climate risks. Climate risk management integrates elements of climate change adaptation and climate-related disaster risk reduction. It aims to manage social vulnerability associated with, first, short-term climate variability and, second, long-term climate change.

Energy efficiency and promotion, and utilization of renewable energy can contribute to lowering greenhouse gas emissions. These require a strengthened environmental governance capacity, not only at the country level but also at the regional level to fully embrace the actual and future challenges in the climate change context.<sup>21</sup>

## GENDER

Apart from Kosovo, all countries of the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Over the last years, progress has been achieved in women's participation in the labour market as well as in the political life at the local level.<sup>22</sup> Legislation to prevent violence against women has been improved in some countries, while others have adopted policies promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Despite this progress, gender equality challenges are still widely spread in the region, with certain subregional characteristics. The Gender Inequality Index varies from 0.15 in FYR of Macedonia and 0.17 in Croatia to

<sup>16</sup> Social exclusion among the unemployed is 12 percent higher than among the rest of the population in most countries of the region (Regional HDR, 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Social exclusion among people with low levels of education is two times higher than the overall rate of social exclusion in Serbia, FYR of Macedonia and Ukraine.

<sup>18</sup> Social exclusion among Roma is 86 percent, compared with 19 percent for the rest of the population in Serbia.

<sup>19</sup> Almost four times more socially excluded people in rural than in urban areas.

<sup>20</sup> UNDP, 'HDR 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All', New York, 2011.

<sup>21</sup> UNDP RBEC, Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2011-2013)', Bratislava, Slovakia, August 2010.

<sup>22</sup> World Economic Forum, 'The Global Gender Gap Report 2011', Geneva, 2011.

over 0.41 in Georgia and 0.44 in Turkey<sup>23</sup> (Refer to Annex 8 online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).

Women in the region are underrepresented in decision-making positions. On average, women hold less than 19 percent of seats in national parliaments.<sup>24</sup> Women's underrepresentation in political parties, election bodies and public administration is also a reality. An unequal share of power fosters inequality and gender-blind policies.

Women's economic opportunities and empowerment remain severely constrained in many countries of the region. In Caucasus and Western CIS, 70 percent of illiterate adults are women and 50 percent of working women are employed in low-paid jobs.<sup>25</sup> In the Balkans and Turkey, women hold only two percent of managerial positions. In general, women are more frequently in part-time, undervalued and informal work. Quality of employment and career development opportunities represent another dimension of gender inequality. Because of labour market segregation, women across the region earn 26 to 57 percent less than men.<sup>26</sup> In Eastern and Central Europe, 22 percent of women over 65 are at risk of poverty compared to 16 percent of men. Given the lack of childcare services and inadequate maternity- and paternity-leave legislation, women tend to leave more often their jobs to provide care for their children. Maternity protection and sharing of family responsibilities with men have not advanced sufficiently, hampering women's participation in employment.<sup>27</sup>

## HUMAN RIGHTS

Transition to a democratic society brought about an important increase in civic and political freedoms in the countries of the region. Observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms was guaranteed by Constitution, some countries making a range of far-reaching commitments in the field of equality and anti-discrimination. Many of them have signed on to a broad range of United Nations international conventions and were elected to the United Nations Human Rights Council. The national legal frameworks have been amended to include provisions against discrimination. The countries engaged in the EU accession process set up national human rights institutions (NHRIs) and judicial bodies to ensure access to justice, accountability of public institutions and protection of human rights and democratic freedoms. The countries from Caucasus and Western CIS with reform-oriented governments have also advanced human rights, anti-discrimination and public accountability, as part of a broader governance reform agenda. No significant improvements have been noted, however, in Central Asia on democratic governance, human rights and access to justice.

Despite considerable progress, human rights treaty bodies and Universal Periodic Review (UPR) indicate recurrent human rights violations in a number of areas, exacerbated in some countries by a legacy of intolerance as a result of past conflicts. Legal aid and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are still weak. Discrimination of certain groups (people with disabilities, Roma, persons living with HIV/AIDS) is an area ill addressed by the national health, employment and education policies.

<sup>23</sup> UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All', New York, 2011.

<sup>24</sup> UNDP in Europe and Central Asia website, 'Gender Equality Data in the Region', <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/data/show/7DBEAB0D-F203-1EE9-B006350F6D51EE5C>>, accessed 18 September 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Bratislava Regional Centre, Infographic 'Gender Equality. Caucasus & Western Commonwealth of Independent States', 2012.

<sup>26</sup> UNDP in Europe and Central Asia website, 'Women's Access to Economic Resources', <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/data/show/84CB6B27-F203-1EE9-B1ECFE0D524564AD>>, accessed 18 September 2012.

<sup>27</sup> UNDP, ILO, 'Maternity Protection in the Context of Work-Life Reconciliation for Men and Women', December 2011.



## GOVERNANCE AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

All countries in the ECIS region have passed through significant institutional changes in the last two decades. This transition entailed extensive administrative reorganization of the countries but has not lead to uniform changes to the governance systems across the region.

The extension of EU accession perspective in recent years to Western Balkan countries has operated as a powerful catalyst for reforms. It has been guiding those countries towards improving the institutional framework and capacity development, largely succeeding in establishing functional governance systems. However, strengthening the rule of law remains a major challenge for most enlargement countries and is a crucial condition for moving towards EU membership.<sup>28</sup> As the reform process has not been finalized, the development challenges will continue to correspond to the priorities set by the European Commission: accountability of institutions, creation of effective public administration and services, fighting against corruption, ensuring the independence of the judiciary and law enforcement bodies.

The process of reforms of the governance systems and of the rule of law in Western CIS, Caucasus

and Central Asia did not unfold uniformly. It was only partially successful, showing better results in terms of governments' capacity to formulate sound policies and improve the quality of public services<sup>29</sup> in Western CIS and the Caucasus. The EU integration process is indicated as a priority by some of the countries (e.g. Moldova and Ukraine)<sup>30</sup> in these subregions, and Georgia and Armenia also promote closer links. In Central Asia the dynamic of reforms is significantly weaker and levers that can be used to promote changes are limited. In this subregion there is still an imbalanced division of power, with strong presidential systems; the lack of public accountability and widespread corruption remain a significant challenge<sup>31</sup> as confirmed also by relevant indicators<sup>32</sup>.

Apart from reforming the governing institutions, the transition has also promoted significant decentralization processes<sup>33</sup>, which coincided with devolution of power from central authorities to local government units in order to promote better service delivery and ultimately to enable local development. The pattern of this process followed closely that of governance systems, with countries of Central Asia continuing to be highly centralized<sup>34</sup> and where the first initiatives for promoting area-based development are just starting.

<sup>28</sup> European Commission, 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012', Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2011) 666 final, Brussels, 12 October 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Governance Matters 2009, Worldwide Governance Indicators, 1996-2008. <<http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2009/06/29-governance-indicators-kaufmann>> and recent data retrieved at <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>.

<sup>30</sup> Government of Republic of Moldova, 'Rethink Moldova. Priorities for Medium Term Development', March 2010, available online at <<http://www.gov.md/doc.php?l=en&cid=447&id=2774>>, accessed 9 October 2012; Law of Ukraine On the Foundations of Domestic and Foreign Policy, 2010, available online at <[http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb\\_n/webproc4\\_1?id=&pf3511=37809](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=37809)>, accessed 9 October 2012.

<sup>31</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security', Bratislava, 2005.

<sup>32</sup> See for example data collected by Transparency International <<http://cpi.transparency.org/cpi2012/>>, the World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators <[http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc\\_country.asp](http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/sc_country.asp)>.

<sup>33</sup> Nikolov, Dimce, 'Decentralization and Decentralized Governance for Enhancing Delivery of Services in Transition Conditions', UNDESA/DPADM/GPAB, 2006, available at <<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/un/unpan025134.pdf>> and Siugzdiniene, Jurgita and Popic, Dejana, 'Discussion Paper. Local Governance and Decentralization in the ECIS Region', 2004, available online at <<http://europeandcis.undp.org/files/uploads/LG/LGD%20in%20ECIS.pdf>>, accessed 9 October 2012.

<sup>34</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Central Asia Human Development Report. Bringing Down Barriers: Regional Cooperation for Human Development and Human Security', Bratislava, 2005.

## REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE ECIS REGION

One of the most active regional institutions, of particular relevance to UNDP, is the European Commission (EC). It provides technical and financial support to Western Balkan countries, Turkey, Moldova and Ukraine in view of their accession to the European Union (EU). Countries in the Caucasus have also benefited from EC support within the European Neighbourhood Policy framework. Other EU agencies relevant to UNDP's mission in the region include, e.g. the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), European Training Foundation, and European Environment Agency.

In the area of human rights, democracy and rule of law, particularly active are the Council of Europe and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which addresses economic and environmental issues.

In the Black Sea region (comprising 12 countries), an important player is the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) with which RBEC signed an agreement in December 2006 with a view to act in close cooperation on issues of common interest including implementation of projects and programmes in poverty reduction, regional integration, capacity-building, good governance, gender equality, energy and environment (E&E) and other areas.

Also relevant for economic cooperation in the region are the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia, the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Programme and the Eurasian Economic Community, active in Western CIS and Central

Asia. Other major players in the region are the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). They provide finance and expertise for investment projects which contribute to furthering EU policy objectives, focusing on European countries, but reaching Central Asia as well with the implementation of the financial aspects EU's external and development policies (e.g. EBRD is a multilateral partner supporting CAREC as is UNDP).

## 2.2 UNDP IN THE REGION

This section presents an overview of UNDP's strategic foundation based on which the regional programme framework has been defined, programme countries covered by the region, and the Regional Centre in Bratislava which implements the regional programme.

### UNDP STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK FOR REGIONAL PROGRAMME

The UNDP Strategic Plan<sup>35</sup> provides the overarching framework for UNDP operations. Based on this foundation, UNDP supports programme countries and territories to identify solutions and implement actions to meet their challenges in human development, as well as to develop national capacities.<sup>36</sup> Following the approval of the Strategic Plan in 2007, UNDP embarked on a process of aligning its headquarters bureaux and regional service centres to ensure the effective and efficient achievement of development results at the country level. Known as the UNDP regionalization policy paper, 'Functional Alignment of and Implementation Arrangements for Regional Service Centres'<sup>37</sup> released in 2008 by the UNDP Administrator's

<sup>35</sup> UNDP, 'UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011, extended to 2013. Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Geneva 2008.

<sup>36</sup> The Strategic Plan defines two roles of UNDP as follows: "to support the coordination and enhancement of United Nations system efficiency and effectiveness at the country level" and "to provide knowledge, policy advice, advocacy, and technical support in four focus areas on the basis of good practice and comparative advantage: poverty reduction, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, and environment and sustainable development."

<sup>37</sup> UNDP, 'Functional Alignment of and Implementation Arrangements for Regional Service Centres', Office of the Administrator, May 2008.

Office, strengthened the practice architecture at the regional level. The 'practice' was defined as the entirety of UNDP experience, knowledge and expertise in a priority programmatic or management area. The main objective of the regional service centres was set to support country offices in achieving development results through advisory services, implementation of regional programmes country operations and support to management results.

## REGIONAL PROGRAMME COUNTRIES

The Regional Programme for ECIS covers 32 countries. The region mainly comprises middle-income countries with relatively high average levels of human development.<sup>38</sup> The only low-income countries are Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which have medium levels of human development. Moldova, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan also have medium human development levels, although they are middle-income countries. The Human Development Index varies from 0.607 in Tajikistan to 0.884 in Slovenia. The countries represented in the region can be broadly characterized as follows:

- EU Member States<sup>39</sup> and countries seeking EU membership, from Western Balkans<sup>40</sup> and Turkey.

The Western Balkan countries share a similar past due to similar historic, multi-ethnic, institutional and political heritage, as well as future in the light of their aspiration for EU membership. The European agenda, set out by the Stabilization and Association Process<sup>41</sup>, is the dominant stability and development

factor in the subregion following intra-state ethnic conflicts and rise of nationalism in Western Balkans. Turkey has also pursued EU accession and faces various challenges related to the rule of law and human rights. With a mature market economy, Turkey is becoming a major donor, similar to the EU Member States of the subregion.

- Countries situated in Western CIS<sup>42</sup> and Caucasus<sup>43</sup>.

The countries also share some common features and challenges. They suffered disproportionately from the global economic crisis. Geographic location and natural resources (oil, gas, food) make them part of an important economic and political subregion. There is an intensive relationship with the EU, especially for those aspiring for EU integration (Ukraine, Moldova). Although the subregion has been shaken by political and ethnic conflicts, there is a general trend towards growing democracy, freedom of expression, dynamic political discourse, and a lively civil society.

- Central Asian countries.<sup>44</sup>

Countries in this subregion share considerable historical, cultural and, at times, linguistic similarities, but are subject to different economic advantages, with huge advances in the oil/gas-based wealth of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, against impoverishment in the two mountain states, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, with Uzbekistan in an intermediate position. The countries of the subregion are faced with common development challenges, most notably climate

<sup>38</sup> UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2011. Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All', New York, 2011.

<sup>39</sup> Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta.

<sup>40</sup> Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>41</sup> The Stabilization and Association Process is the EU's policy towards the Western Balkans, which sets out common political and economic goals and which rests on bilateral stabilization and association agreements, trade relations, financial assistance and regional cooperation.

<sup>42</sup> Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and Russian Federation.

<sup>43</sup> Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan.

<sup>44</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

risks, corruption, violation of human rights, lack of transparency and accountability of public bodies, underdeveloped civil society.

RBEC, with its headquarters in New York, currently serves 29 countries<sup>45</sup> through its 20 country offices and five project offices. RBEC is also active in other four countries with projects on the ground, managed by BRC (see Table 1).

According to the UNDP strategy for the region, RBEC's long-term mission is to help countries in the ECIS to "develop socio-economic structures and governance systems that ensure sustainable, inclusive, equitable, high and growing human development".<sup>46</sup> The main functions of the bureau are corporate policy and corporate/regional strategy setting, supporting, servicing, and overseeing country offices work, as well as managing regional programmes through its regional service centre. RBEC's budget for country offices and BRC was USD 480 million in 2011 and USD 467 million<sup>47</sup> in 2012.

The RBEC practice architecture comprises eight practices: energy and environment; poverty reduction; HIV, health and development; gender; capacity development; crisis prevention and recovery; democratic governance; and knowledge and innovation. A ninth practice, i.e. emerging donors and new partnerships, exists only in the practice architecture of BRC. The RBEC portfolio includes 1,074 projects active in 29 countries of the region. In terms of human capital, RBEC relies on its advisers, project managers and other categories of practitioners as well as on external consultants. An overview of RBEC capacity in terms of project portfolio and practitioners is presented in Annex 6 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

## BRATISLAVA REGIONAL CENTRE

### Institutional Structure

BRC was established in 1999 to serve the RBEC region. Until 2003, BRC hosted the BDP-managed ECIS Subregional Resource Facility

**Table 1. RBEC Country-Level Offices**

| RBEC  | Country Offices   | Project Offices                             |
|---|---|---|
| Division 1  | (9) Albania; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Croatia; Kosovo; FYR of Macedonia; Montenegro; Romania; Serbia; and Turkey | (4) Bulgaria; Cyprus; Greece; and Lithuania |
| Division 2  | (5) Armenia, Belarus; Georgia; Moldova; and Ukraine   | (1) Russia                                  |
| Division 3  | (6) Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Turkmenistan; and Uzbekistan                                |   |
| (4) countries where UNDP has BRC-managed projects: Hungary; Poland; Slovak Republic; St. Helena |   |   |

<sup>45</sup> In the past, UNDP had projects managed by BRC in Czech Republic, Malta and Slovenia.

<sup>46</sup> UNDP, 'A Strategy for RBEC from 2008 to 2011', February 2008, updated in January 2009. The Strategy identifies the four goals of RBEC efforts as follows: i) To become the 'go to' agency for institutional development – strengthening economic and democratic governance – in the countries of ECIS; ii) to scale up successful poverty reduction and local governance programmes within and between countries; iii) to help shape UNDP's middle-income country agenda in the region, especially strengthening platforms for inter-country development cooperation; and iv) to reinforce the UN's position as an honest broker, a partner that adds value, and an advocate that opens unresolved issues related to economic transition, global concerns, e.g. the distributional effects of global warming and more specific concerns to the RBEC region.

<sup>47</sup> UNDP executive financial snapshot available on UNDP intranet at <[http://atlas-snapshot.undp.org/?report=financial\\_summary&tab=&hq\\_co=CO&bureau=RBEC](http://atlas-snapshot.undp.org/?report=financial_summary&tab=&hq_co=CO&bureau=RBEC)>, accessed 30 December 2012.



and the RBEC regional programme. The merger of the two in 2004 had several implications: i) the introduction of the current matrix management system;<sup>48</sup> and ii) the establishment of a single advisory board of BRC,<sup>49</sup> which has the responsibility to oversee the work of BRC, approve the work plan, monitor the results, quality and efficiency of BRC services and other functions and the implementation of the regional programme<sup>50</sup>.

Following the launch of the regionalization policy in 2008, the RBEC Deputy Regional Director was appointed Director of BRC and posted in Bratislava. Tasks include day-to-day oversight and management of BRC. The practice architecture of the Centre has been aligned to the UNDP corporate practice architecture and streamlined according to the guidance provided the policy paper of the UNDP Administrator's Office (see Table 2).

There is a Central Asia hub, which is also part of the practice architecture. The hub was set up in 2009 to ensure better management of projects and allow BRC advisers to be closer to the countries in Central Asia subregion, respond better to the needs and specificities of

the subregion and reduce travel costs. BRC has assigned three advisers to Almaty (Kazakhstan) who are reporting to the leader of the practice they belong. Until 2010, BRC also included the country support team, which provided UNDP assistance in the countries of the region where UNDP no longer has a country office (see Table 1).

In February 2009, a long-term agreement<sup>51</sup> was signed by RBEC and BDP directors which defined the roles and responsibilities for funding operations and management of BRC. The agreement covered the period of the UNDP Strategic Plan (2008-2011). As the plan was extended until 2013, the agreement is supposed to cover this additional period as well, thus being applicable to the operations under the RBEC Regional Programme 2011-2013.

## Functions

BRC is the main UNDP knowledge and advisory hub for the ECIS region, connecting the country offices to RBEC headquarters and to global networks of development experts. It provides advisory services to country offices and other interested parties, based on request, and also

**Table 2. BRC Practice Architecture**

| Thematic areas      | Energy & Environment                 | Poverty Reduction | Democratic Governance | HIV, Health & Development | Crisis Prevention & Recovery |
|---------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cross-cutting areas | Gender                               |                   |                       |                           |                              |
|                     | Capacity Development                 |                   |                       |                           |                              |
|                     | Knowledge and Innovation             |                   |                       |                           |                              |
|                     | Emerging Donors and New Partnerships |                   |                       |                           |                              |
|                     | Management                           |                   |                       |                           |                              |

<sup>48</sup> Practice leaders report to both RBEC and BDP, with the exception of the crisis prevention and recovery practice leader who reports to RBEC and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR).

<sup>49</sup> The Board includes the RBEC Regional Director (chair), representatives of BDP, BCPR, Bureau of Management and Bureau of External Relations and Advocacy, as well as three Resident Representatives representing the three divisions (presented in Table 1). Currently represented are the Resident Representatives from Montenegro (Division 1), Moldova (Division 2) and Uzbekistan (Division 3).

<sup>50</sup> UNDP, 'Long-Term Agreement on Regional Service Centre Cooperation. RBEC, Bratislava Regional Centre – Bureau for Development Policy (BDP)', February 2009.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

manages regional projects. BRC aims to capture and spread development successes and best practices in the region and to improve the impact of UNDP's work through effective communications and advocacy. In this respect, it develops and disseminates a large range of knowledge products. The main functions of BRC are presented in Box 1.

BRC is thematically organized, focusing on supporting national and regional programming content and quality, knowledge management, and regional partnerships. RBEC headquarters is focused on corporate policy, country programme

coherence, relevance, and strategic positioning of UNDP in the countries of the region. Since the functions of BRC and RBEC headquarters are closely inter-connected, issues and priorities are discussed through regular consultations.

### Staffing

In January 2012, BRC had 153 staff members and contractors<sup>52</sup> working in Bratislava, but also in other duty stations (Athens and Warsaw). The staff of BRC is diverse, composed of members of 38 nationalities. The gender balance across the staff working in BRC practices seems balanced

#### Box 1. BRC Functions

##### **1. To strengthen development results through providing advisory services to its clients (mainly country offices in the region), manage the regional programme, and provide knowledge services**

- Advisory Services: substantive and programmatic support to country offices and headquarters; advice on region-related development policies, strategies and trends; input to overall corporate policies and practice-level policies and strategies
- Knowledge Services and Communications: support to corporate knowledge management platform; develop regional and national practice-based communities of practices; develop flagship knowledge products; promote exchanges within ECIS region and across regions
- Regional Projects: formulation; support to evaluation; direct implementation of regional and subregional projects

##### **2. To strengthen management results through providing management and operational advisory services to country offices**

- Project and programme management support
- Financial management support
- Procurement support
- Human resources management
- Information and communication management support

##### **3. To manage national non-core programming in many of the new EU Members States where UNDP no longer has office representation**

- Management by the country support team of non-core programming in the countries where UNDP no longer has a country office

##### **4. To strengthen UN coordination results and manage regional development partnerships**

- Support to the Regional Director's team
- Create new development partnerships, focused on East-East cooperation, emerging donors, preparation for EU accession of some countries in the region

Source: Based on 'Long-Term Agreement on Regional Service Centre Cooperation. RBEC, Bratislava Regional Centre – Bureau for Development Policy (BDP); February 2009.

<sup>52</sup> UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre 'Human Resources Strategy 2012-2013'.

(52 percent female and 48 percent men). Out of 10 practices/teams, however, only one is headed by a woman. Concerns raised during the interviews with the BRC staff included a high staff turnover due to rotational positions (50 percent of international staff) and unclear UNDP promotion policy and career path for national staff.

Practice leaders are funded by BDP, except the CPR practice leader, who is funded by BCPR. The remaining staff members are either financed by RBEC or by BDP. Recruitment, reporting and performance management for the practice leaders are done jointly by RBEC and BDP/BCPR. As mentioned earlier, the practice leaders report both to RBEC and their

respective central bureau that funds their position (BDP/BCPR). This matrix management system explains the substantial number of advisory services that BRC has provided for BDP and BCPR (in 2011, 250 person-days and 111 person-days, respectively).<sup>53</sup> For example, around 43 percent of gender advisory days recorded in the Service Tracker in 2011 were dedicated to BDP, while the country offices benefited from 57 percent of the gender advisory services.

### Funding

Table 3 provides a summary of funds managed by BRC, disaggregated by core and non-core sources.<sup>54</sup>

**Table 3. Overview of BRC-Managed Funding Sources (US\$)**

|                                      | 2010        | 2011        | 2012            |            | 2013                |                   |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------|
|                                      | Expenditure | Expenditure | Funds Available | Budgeted   | Projected Available | Projected Expense |
| 1. Total Core                        | 7,450,332   | 6,920,016   | 9,592,466       | 8,631,816  | 8,309,716           | 8,309,716         |
| 1.1. Biennial Support Budget, incl.: | 2,201,332   | 2,602,216   | 2,731,766       | 2,731,716  | 2,731,716           | 2,731,716         |
| Staff costs                          | 1,903,832   | 2,304,716   | 2,449,166       | 2,449,116  | 2,449,116           | 2,449,116         |
| GOE                                  | 297,500     | 297,500     | 282,600         | 282,600    | 282,600             | 282,600           |
| 1.2. Regional TRAC                   | 5,249,000   | 4,319,800   | 6,860,700       | 5,900,100  | 5,578,000           | 5,578,000         |
| 2. Total Non Core                    | 10,704,739  | 9,854,102   | 19,681,693      | 18,891,693 | 16,165,000          | 12,065,000        |
| 2.1. XB, including:                  | 1,045,739   | 1,254,102   | 2,455,000       | 1,665,000  | 1,965,000           | 1,265,000         |
| Staff costs                          | 908,382     | 1,314,611   |                 | 1,350,000  |                     | 1,090,000         |
| GOE                                  | 137,357     | 939,491     |                 | 315,000    |                     | 175,000           |
| Transfers                            |             | (1,000,000) |                 |            |                     |                   |
| 2.2. Cost Sharing (Govt & 3rd party) | 9,600,000   | 8,200,000   | 16,000,000      | 16,000,000 | 14,100,000          | 10,600,000        |
| 2.3. Interest on CS                  | 59,000      | 400,000     | 1,226,693       | 1,226,693  | 100,000             | 200,000           |
| 3. BDP & other unit funded advisers  | 2,346,100   | 4,144,097   | 5,587,097       | 5,587,097  | 5,600,000           | 5,600,000         |

<sup>53</sup> Based on data retrieved from the BRC Service Tracker, without considering the multi-client person-days (refer to Annex 10 online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).

<sup>54</sup> Note: 2012 available TRAC amount is calculated as 2012 ASL + 2011 balance carry over + over budget (10 percent). Abbreviations: GOE=General Operating Expenses; TRAC=Target for Resource Assignments from the Core; XB=Extra-Budgetary; CS=Cost-Sharing; ASL=Authorized Spending Limit. Source: UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Key Achievements in 2011 and Review of Strategic Priorities for 2012', internal paper presented at the Advisory Board Meeting, 12 June 2012.

According to the self-assessment of BRC<sup>55</sup>, the centre had a good financial performance and the financial outlook for 2012 and 2013 is stable. Some problems may arise in 2014 due to the large dependence on incomes from Cyprus that will stop at the end of 2013. In this context, it becomes increasingly important for UNDP corporately to revisit the cost-recovery mechanism for its regional centres, including BRC. For example, BRC may further explore expanding the use of its advisers to provide services outside the regional boundaries, on a fee-paid basis, as it has already done in the past.<sup>56</sup>

## 2.3 THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME

### ROLE AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME

The RBEC RPD, consisting of a narrative description of the programme and the Results and Resources Framework (RRF), is the framework defining UNDP's specific interventions for the ECIS region. Its aim is to enhance UNDP's impact in the region by promoting development cooperation across the countries, supporting the diagnosis of shared challenges, catalysing development solutions, and supporting investment in knowledge and expertise for the benefit of more than a single country.<sup>57</sup>

The regional programme reflects several development effectiveness principles, most notably capacity-building, advocacy for key challenges, exchange of knowledge and experience, cross-practice cooperation, gender equality and human-rights-based approach, ownership of national and regional counterparts, fostering

of partnerships. There is strong evidence these principles have been closely followed in the implementation of the regional programme, as detailed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this report. Apart from UNDP Strategic Plan and effectiveness development principles, the RPD has drawn RBEC's analysis of the development challenges specified in its Rolling Strategy 2011-2013.<sup>58</sup>

### STRUCTURE OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME

The UNDP Executive Board approved the regional programme in February 2010. It covers the programming period 2011-2013 and BRC is responsible for day-to-day management. The programme is articulated in seven outcomes grouped under five focus areas.

- ==>Focus area 1 - Environment and energy (outcomes 1 and 2)
- ==>Focus area 2 - Poverty, inequality and social inclusion (outcome 3)
- ==>Focus area 3 - Regional support to subnational governance and development (outcome 4)
- ==>Focus area 4 - Good and effective governance and social cohesion (outcomes 5 and 6)
- ==>Focus area 5 - Promotion of new partnerships in development cooperation (outcome 7)

Most of the focus areas are thematically linked to the three emerging priorities set out by RBEC management in late 2011<sup>59</sup>: (1) climate change, (2) social inclusion, (3) local development. Focus areas 1 and 2 are logically linked to priorities 1 and 2, respectively, whereas focus areas 3 and 4 are related to priority 3. Only focus area 5 remains

<sup>55</sup> UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Key Achievements in 2011 and Review of Strategic Priorities for 2012', internal paper presented at the Advisory Board Meeting, 12 June 2012.

<sup>56</sup> According to the Service Tracker analysis, BRC provided advisory services to UNDP Africa, Asia and the Pacific and Arab States regions, and local governments, in 2011 (249 person/days) and in 2012 (295 person/days).

<sup>57</sup> UNDP RBEC, Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2011-2013)', Bratislava, Slovakia, August 2010.

<sup>58</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013', February 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Meeting of RBEC management dated 28 October 2011.

unrelated to RBEC emerging priorities. Figure 1 (see page 21) presents the overall structure of the RPD by focus areas, emerging priorities and outcomes. Within this structure, the programme also addresses cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, capacity development, knowledge sharing, and East-East cooperation.

In line with the UNDP Programme and Operations Policies and Procedures (POPP), the RBEC RPD 2011-2013 has been prepared following a consultation process. This process involved the country offices and several UN agencies, governments to a certain extent (diplomatic missions) and few emerging donors<sup>60</sup>, while the Programme Appraisal Committees (PAC) meeting for the RPD review was attended by RBEC, other UNDP bureaux and BRC.<sup>61</sup>

## REGIONAL PROGRAMME BUDGET

The projected budget of the regional programme is about USD 5.9 million annually from core funds (i.e. USD 17.7 million).<sup>62</sup> The RRF details the envisaged allocation of resources across the seven outcomes, amounting to some USD 18.6 million of indicative regular resources and USD 19.7 million of other resources (i.e. approximately USD 38.3 million in total). The 2011 and 2012 total budgets were USD 18.5 million and USD 12 million, respectively (see Table 4).

These data indicate that in the first two years of the programming period the core funds allocated were not significantly different from estimates in the RPD (the actual core funds were some USD 1.1 million less than estimates). In terms of non-core resources, during the first two years the whole amount estimated has been collected.

The expenditures disaggregated by outcome are presented in Table 5 (see page 18).

## MODALITIES OF PROGRAMME DELIVERY

The regional programme has been delivered by using three operational modalities: the provision of technical advisory services, production of knowledge products and the conduct of regional projects.

### 1) Advisory Services

Advisory services are a distinct feature of BRC support under the regional programme, where technical expertise and knowledge are provided to country offices upon request. They are delivered in all practices areas. The resources budgeted in 2011/2012 for these services and allocated across outcomes are significant, amounting to USD 6.7 million.

**Table 4. RPD Budget in 2011 and 2012 According to BRC Management (US\$)**

| 2011      |            |            | 2012      |           |            |
|-----------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Core      | Non-core   | Total      | Core      | Non-core  | Total      |
| 5,081,541 | 13,405,751 | 18,487,292 | 5,634,100 | 6,355,030 | 11,989,130 |

Source: BRC Management.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Consultation Process for the Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2011-2013 for Europe and CIS and Comment Log', February 2010.

<sup>61</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Bureau Programme Appraisal Committee Meeting (BPAC) for Regional Programme Document 2011-2013', February 2010.

<sup>62</sup> Paragraph 28, UNDP, Regional Programme Document 2011-2013.

<sup>63</sup> Data elaborated from file provided by BRC management on 20 April 2012.

Data recorded in the Service Tracker indicated that, in 2011, BRC spent 3,880 advisory days.<sup>64</sup> The practices utilizing the services most were: poverty reduction practice (981.1 days or 25.3 percent of the total), democratic governance practice (631.3 days or 16.3 percent), crisis prevention and recovery team (575.8 days or 14.8 percent) and energy and environment practice (479.3 days or 12.4 percent). Advisory services were used by all country offices within the region and by

offices in New York. Uzbekistan country office was the main user of such services, followed by BDP and Tajikistan country office. Other country offices extensively using advisory services included Moldova, Ukraine and Kazakhstan.

To ensure the efficiency of the advisory services, BRC has controlled the use of the tracker and monitored feedback received from the recipients of advisory services. It also uses questionnaires to

**Table 5. RPD Budget and Expenditure per Outcome in 2011 (US\$)**

| Outcome   | Budget     | Expenditure | %    |
|-----------|------------|-------------|------|
| Outcome 1 | 2,482,534  | 2,113,198   | 85.1 |
| Outcome 2 | 5,231,614  | 4,043,192   | 77.3 |
| Outcome 3 | 9,082,143  | 6,816,305   | 75.1 |
| Outcome 4 | 1,423,652  | 924,824     | 65.0 |
| Outcome 5 | 1,937,266  | 1,449,158   | 74.8 |
| Outcome 6 | 105,379    | 104,065     | 98.8 |
| Outcome 7 | 1,771,934  | 1,615,707   | 91.2 |
| TOTAL     | 22,034,522 | 17,066,449  | 77.5 |

Source: BRC IWP 2012

## **Box 2. Service Tracker – A Tool to be Expanded**

Among UNDP regional centres, BRC is the frontrunner in using a tool such as the Service Tracker – an online advisory service management tool – to serve as: tracking tool for monitoring and reporting purposes of BRC activities (collective and individual level); knowledge resource and database related to services provided to clients; and historical and projection information on the demand for BRC support services.<sup>65</sup>

The tracker allows analysis of the assistance provided by BRC to country offices, using the significant amount of data stored. Tracker's data can be queried and disaggregated for monitoring purposes. It captures also the feedback of the 'clients', which is currently provided on a voluntary basis for assignments delivered on the field (missions).

Currently, the tracker potential is not exploited at full, being perceived by some of BRC staff as an additional administrative burden. Data/information inputting is not consistently done by some BRC staff. In addition, not all country offices staff members are aware of the tracker availability and use (as revealed by interviews in the field). As tagging services delivered are left to the staff involved, individual differences by staff members in interpreting the type of services that applies may result in imprecision that reflects on the information obtained querying the tracker. A secondary constraint that applies mostly when retrieving information for evaluation purposes is that the tracker does not currently link the delivered services to a certain regional project and/or regional programme outcome.

A detailed analysis of the advisory services recorded in the tracker is provided in Annex 10 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?valid=6676>

<sup>64</sup> Refer to Annex 10 online: (<http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?valid=6676>) for the Service Tracker analysis.

<sup>65</sup> Extract from the Tracker Help page: <<http://km.undp.sk/index.cfm?event=st.help>>.



collect country office feedback and maintain this online management system (Box 2).

## 2) Knowledge Products

During the review period, BRC has released numerous publications and reports, aimed at disseminating critical know-how and sharing lessons (Annex 11 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>). The products vary in their profile and complexity. BRC has also employed innovative approaches in disseminating information, e.g. Teamworks, Twitter and various online media platforms for facilitating the sharing of documents (ISSUU and SlideShare), to promote its knowledge products and their widespread dissemination.

## 3) Regional Projects

The third category of modality is the implementation of regional projects. A list of full regional projects is included in Annex 5 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>. Excluding the advisory service components, the portfolio under evaluation included several key project intervention areas for each outcome: six areas under outcome 1, 12 areas under outcome 2, 16 under outcome 3, five under outcome 4, five under outcome 5, two under outcome 6, and four under outcome 7.<sup>66</sup>

In reviewing the existing regional projects for ECIS, two issues were raised: i) how to define a 'truly regional' project; and ii) 'regionality' of a project.

First, as the terms of reference for the evaluation indicate, UNDP regional programmes can

be typically classified into the following set of activities:

- (i) *Regional public goods*, (e.g. advocacy materials or tools that can be used by any party concerned in the region);
- (ii) *Subregional or cross-border activities* that are delivered in multiple countries, addressing an issue of the cross-border nature; and
- (iii) *Multi-country activities* put together for the purpose of achieving cost-efficiency by organizing a group event, for addressing politically sensitive issues, or for any other purposes where participation of multiple countries would be deemed more appropriate.

While it is fully legitimate, this classification seems to have been organized from the standpoint of 'activities' to be delivered, rather than 'effects' to be achieved at the regional level. Among the interventions delivered as 'regional projects' for ECIS, some projects were delivered with national components with a substantial budget.<sup>67</sup> However, few could be considered as 'truly' regional projects, with the emphasis on the participation of multiple countries in the implementation of specific activities of regional interest. For example, some projects are implemented in only one country,<sup>68</sup> and others tend to be simply multi-country interventions without carrying clearly defined objectives and changes anticipated at the regional level<sup>69</sup>. The EC has guidelines for monitoring of regional programmes with classification of regional projects, which may be of interest to UNDP for its review.<sup>70</sup>

Second, the current UNDP guidelines seem to limit the opportunity for all relevant countries,

<sup>66</sup> See the list of 'Awards' for each outcome shown in Annex 5 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>67</sup> For example, Climate Risk Management in Central Asia (CRM CA), Improving Human Development, and Human Security for Individuals and Communities in Chernobyl-Affected Areas. The CRM project in Central Asia has a 2011-2012 budget of USD 2.3 million and the project Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) in Central Asia a budget of USD 1.5 million.

<sup>68</sup> For example, Public Lighting Slovakia, Land and Water Management in Laborec-Uh Region, Training and Integration of the Vulnerable into the Workplace – St. Helena, and those included under outcome 7 and some others.

<sup>69</sup> For example, Aid for Trade.

<sup>70</sup> Annex 9. Classification of EU-Funded Regional Projects and Representation of the Categories of Regional Projects, available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

regardless of their regional classification, to participate in projects of mutual interest. According to POPP, regional programming relates to activities common to more than one country (*several* in the POPP) in a region/subregion serviced by a regional bureau.<sup>71</sup> POPP defines that a region and subregions can be composed exclusively of countries belonging to a specific bureau, and that regional projects cannot be implemented in countries belonging to different bureaux.<sup>72</sup> The ‘territorial’ dimension of the region supersedes other considerations, reducing the possibilities for a regional project to target goals that cross regional bureaux’s boundaries. As a result, effects as promoting the aggregation of countries based on common economic elements, or fostering integration and facilitating exchanges between countries cannot be fully pursued. In ECIS, the limitation set by these regulations are particularly relevant for Armenia, which maintains open borders only with Georgia and Iran and cannot implement regional projects with the latter, regardless of the economic links between the two countries and of the potential for environmental cooperation, because it belongs to a different bureau. This type of limitation compromises the growing interest among various countries in Central Asia which hope to benefit from learning experiences in Asia.

## LINKAGES WITH THE GLOBAL PROGRAMME

The regional and global programmes are closely linked. The regional programme, with its priorities and focus, informs the formulation of the global programme managed by BDP. The regional programme serves as a bridge between country and global initiatives, notably by promoting the adaptation and application of global initiatives at the regional and country level. The global programme strengthens UNDP’s role at the regional level by supporting the analysis of development challenges, formulating solutions and promoting knowledge sharing and innovation.

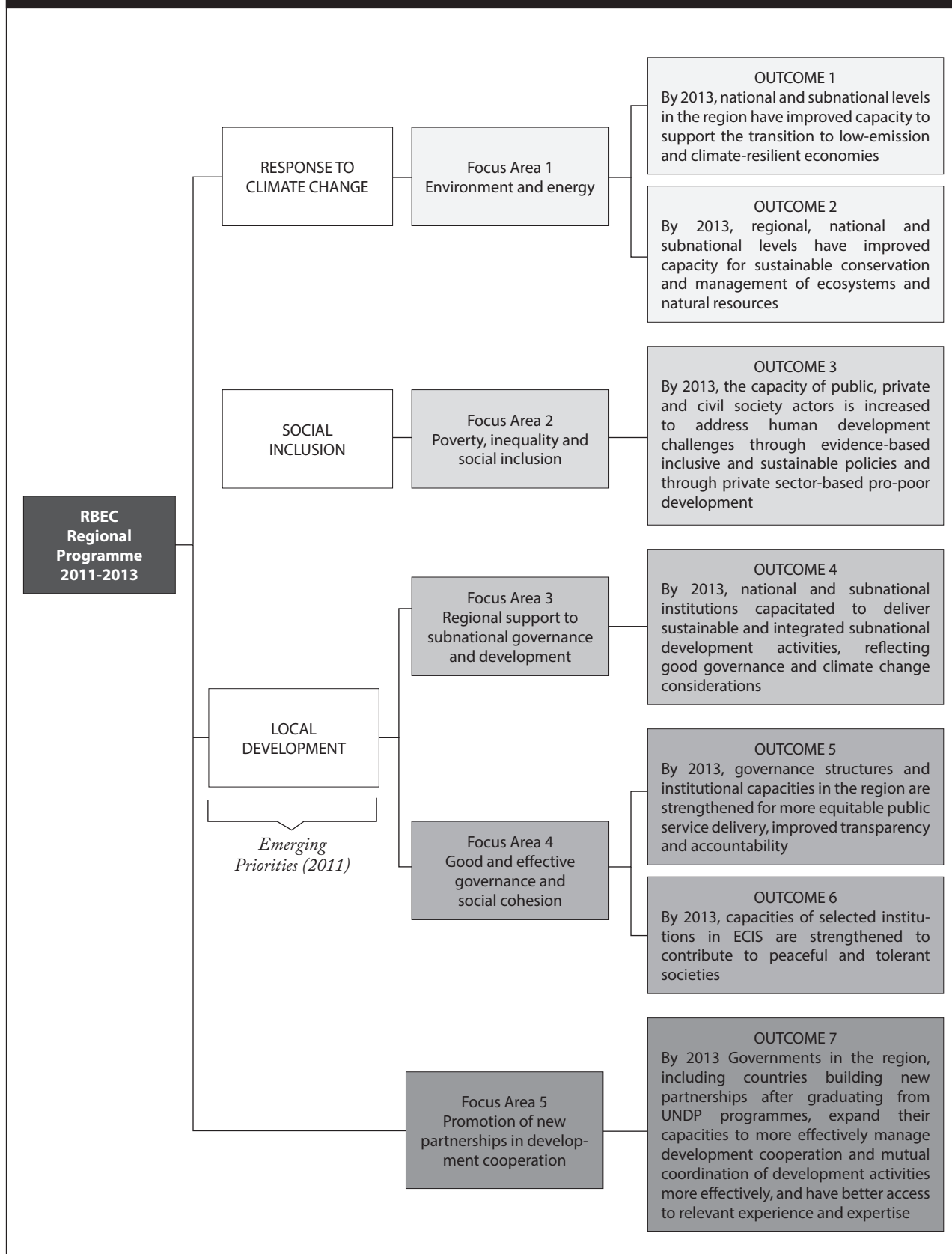
In the ECIS region, the global programme supports some aspects of the regional programme’s interventions,<sup>73</sup> as well as the financing of a majority of BRC adviser positions. However, funds provided to advisers are tied and can only be used for predetermined activities. An important function played by the global programme, of particular relevance to ECIS, is the provision of services focused on knowledge and policy experience aimed at enhancing the development effectiveness of UNDP work. An important element of such services is ‘Teamworks’, a new online platform designed to record the collective knowledge and learning of UNDP and make it accessible.

<sup>71</sup> The previous evaluation of the regional programme mentioned “at least three”, see UNDP Evaluation Office, ‘Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States 2006-2010’, December 2009.

<sup>72</sup> POPP, ‘Specific Policies for Global and Regional Programming’. <<https://intranet.undp.org/global/popp/ppm/Pages/Specific-Policies-for-Global-and-Regional-Programming.aspx>>. The exception is stated as “a non-programme country may also participate in a regional project provided that it meets any additional costs that arise. The POPP guidelines with their emphasis on territoriality apply without taking into account other considerations (such as the opportunity to widen the scope, or possible effects of the project and synergies that can be generated if activities beyond the region’s boundaries are conducted). Only at subregional level, given that the main precondition (i.e. countries involved belonging to a given bureau) is respected, the grouping of various countries for implementing a regional project can be justified by other motives – geographical, political, economic, or ecological considerations – enhancing the impact potential of projects.

<sup>73</sup> For example, in mainstreaming gender equality and women’s empowerment in government policies and institutions, or in strengthening regional-level capacity to implement anti-corruption initiatives.

**Figure 1. RBEC Regional Programme 2011-2013 Structure**





## CHAPTER 3.

# CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Chapter 3 presents the main findings from the evaluation, grouped by the three emerging priorities of the region – response to climate change (outcomes 1 and 2), social inclusion (outcome 3) and local development (outcomes 4, 5, 6) – followed by findings on partnerships (elaborating on outcome 7). Each outcome is assessed based on four evaluation criteria. The specific indicators and their status are attached to Annex 12 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation-admin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

### 3.1 RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

This section addresses the thematic area of response to climate change and its corresponding outcomes 1 and 2 of the regional programme.

#### OUTCOME 1

Outcome 1 aims at promoting climate change adaptation and mobilizing environmental

financing. The objective is for national and sub-national levels of the region to have improved capacity to support the transition to low-emission and climate-resilient economies by 2013.

#### Relevance

**The portfolio is aligned with regional and country strategies. Climate change is one of the recognized challenges in the region.**

The regional programme responds to the related needs with two flagship projects, i.e. Climate Risk Management in Central Asia (CRM CA) with its regional component and country projects in the five Central Asian countries, and Climate Risk Management in Eastern Europe and CIS (CRM ECIS). In particular in Central Asia with its glaciers the regional (and global) effect of climate change is potentially significant.

The objectives of CRM projects are in line with the E&E goal of UNDP, namely to strengthen capacity

#### Box 3. Climate Risk Management

The Climate Risk Management in Central Asia (CRM CA) takes a holistic approach to addressing climate variability and change through the use of CRM. CRM integrates both elements of climate change adaptation and climate-related disaster risk reduction. It aims to manage societal vulnerability associated with, first, short-term climate variability and, second, long-term climate change. This dual approach is critical for preventing disasters and protecting development both in the short and long term.

CRM assesses existing and future patterns of risk stemming from climate variability, including those deriving from climate change, and integrates them into development strategies, policies, plans, and projects. CRM is aimed at:

- Providing climate information for decision support in climate-affected sectors;
- Improving sustainable development outcomes in the face of present climate variability;
- Providing the capacity required to cope with both current and future variability and change;
- Reducing socio-economic vulnerability to extreme climate events, combined with strategies to enable communities to capitalize on favourable climate conditions, where/when such may exist.

Source: Project description, CRM.

to management the environment in a sustainable manner. Climate change mitigation (low emission, energy efficiency) and adaptation (climate resilience) are among the declared areas of main concern of the regional programme.<sup>74</sup> Sustainable environment and energy efficiency is also one of the focal areas of the RBEC Rolling Strategy.<sup>75</sup>

The countries in the region and/or the subregions are faced with a number of common environmental and climate-related challenges, including the need for support in formulation, accessing funding and implementation of low-emission and climate-resilient development strategies, in particular those mitigating the adverse effects of climate change on the poor; support to development of enabling legal and policy frameworks, especially those that help combine energy and financial savings and tap the potential of carbon finance; developing and showcasing projects on energy efficiency in buildings, including scalable and replicable 'module' approaches which could be incorporated into public works programmes or community development initiatives; in extensive programming in biodiversity area management and protection; and diversifying the funding base as country offices and BRC do currently depend excessively on GEF.<sup>76</sup>

The regional programme outcome 1 (and 2, as later elaborated) is also relevant at the programme country level, as addressed in the country programmes and action plans of the respective country offices, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) and their strategic notes. For the six countries visited by the evaluation team, environment, energy and climate change have been high on their agenda.<sup>77</sup> Environmental governance and strengthening of the respective legal framework are objectives found in all countries visited. For example:

- In Tajikistan, pillar 3 of UNDAF 2010-2015 focuses on clean water, sustainable environment and energy with its four national priorities/goals and four agency (UNDP) outcomes, respectively.<sup>78</sup>
- The UNDP country office in Turkey reflects the focus area E&E in its environmental and sustainable development programme<sup>79</sup> and as result 3 of the United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy Turkey 2011-2015<sup>80</sup>.
- The partnership framework for Ukraine 2012-2016<sup>81</sup> stated in its area 4, environment and climate change, three anticipated outcomes.

<sup>74</sup> UNDP RBEC, Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (2011-2013)', Bratislava, Slovakia, August 2010.

<sup>75</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013', February 2011.

<sup>76</sup> Presentation of the E&E practice about the main challenges. This list include challenges related to both outcomes, 1 and 2.

<sup>77</sup> See examples of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Armenia, documents provided by the country office in course of the field missions.

<sup>78</sup> United Nations Country Team, 'United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Tajikistan 2010-2015', Dushanbe, 2009, available at <[www.undp.tj/files/strategic\\_documents/UNDAF\\_2010-2015](http://www.undp.tj/files/strategic_documents/UNDAF_2010-2015)>. The agency outcomes at the national level include national and transnational agreements and policies addressing environmental and natural resources better designed and implemented; increased access to energy based on alternative and renewable energy technology; more widely understood and practiced sustainable natural resource management and enhanced disaster risk management capacities to integrate improved environmental and water management.

<sup>79</sup> UNDP Turkey website: <[www.undp.org.tr](http://www.undp.org.tr)>.

<sup>80</sup> 'Strengthened policy formulation and implementation capacity for the protection of the environment and cultural heritage in line with sustainable development principles, taking into consideration climate change, including disaster management, with a special focus on the gender perspective,' Government of the Republic of Turkey and the United Nations System, 'UN Development Cooperation Strategy Turkey 2011-2015', Ankara, December 2010 and in the National Rio+20 report <<http://www.uncsd2012.org/index.php?page=view&nr=490&type=400&menu=45>>.

<sup>81</sup> 'Adaptation of policy frameworks and mechanisms to ensure reversal of environmental degradation, climate change mitigation and adaptation, prevention and response to natural and man-made disasters; Regulatory and legislative mechanisms for sustainable management of natural resources are created,' Government of Ukraine – United Nations Partnership Framework 2012-2016, Kiev 2011, available at <[http://undp.org.ua/files/en\\_68669Ukraine-UN\\_Partnership\\_Framework\\_FINAL\\_ENG.pdf](http://undp.org.ua/files/en_68669Ukraine-UN_Partnership_Framework_FINAL_ENG.pdf)>.



- For the UNDP Armenia country office, “promoting sustainable development with an emphasis on green economy and energy efficiency, and further enhancing the capacity of the disaster risk reduction system” is one of the three UNDP key strategic priorities.<sup>82</sup>

During the field visits, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan in particular appreciated the relative autonomy in selecting the thematic country priority for the CRM CA project, as it improves the relevance of the CRM project at the national level. The regional component, managed through the UNDP Central Asia office (‘hub’) in Almaty, was instrumental in the sharing and transfer of experience within the subregion Central Asia, as confirmed at the regional and national levels.

### Effectiveness

**Outcome 1 has produced tangible results, such as the establishment of legal and regulatory frameworks, as the important foundation. Advisory services have been effective by raising funds for 2011 in terms of USD 100 million translating into a portfolio of over hundred thematically related GEF country implementations. Gender mainstreaming has not yet been introduced at the portfolio level.**

RBEC self-assessment reports ‘significant progress’ in one of the indicators (indicator 3), ‘some progress’ in another one (indicator 1) and ‘no change’ in the remaining two indicators (2 and 4). The latter two have not been ‘ready to use’ for an analysis’.<sup>83</sup>

Results on indicator 1 (number of legal and regulatory frameworks that address climate change challenges) are more favourable than reported in the self-assessment (i.e. a new law

on renewable energy in Montenegro and new minimum energy performance standards (MEPS) for public buildings in Croatia). Various additional legal and regulatory frameworks that address climate change challenges have been approved or are in the process of being approved, as result of CRM projects or related often detailed advisory services.

The forestry code in Tajikistan<sup>84</sup> has recently been approved at all stages, and is currently at the Higher Chamber of the Parliament for final clearance. In Uzbekistan, the CRM country project is involved in the development of the (Climate) Adaptation Strategy and is in the process of revising the water code. In Moldova, UNDP together with the Civil Protection and Emergency Services, developed risk management toolkits, methodologies for risk assessment and reduction to support 20 severely vulnerable communities in adapting to climate change.

New or revised policies were supported by the regional programme Supporting RBEC Transition to Low-Emission Development, for example, low-emission and climate resilient strategies were adopted in Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and in Moldova to be adopted in the beginning of 2013. The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) as part of a climate change programme has developed a Green House Gases (GHG) inventory. In 2012, a Low Emissions Development Strategy (LEDS) was developed in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia, to be finalized in early 2013.

In 2011 the CRM-CA project developed the concept of Multi-country Climate Network (MCN) and National Climate Networks (NCNs). Altogether, one regional and five

<sup>82</sup> The Armenia country office has the following priorities in the field of outcomes 1 (and 2): green economy and energy efficiency (through development of a national strategy for energy efficiency and low-carbon economy); DRR (through development of National DRR Strategy and Action Plan and establishment of a Crisis Command Centre and National Disaster Observatory). The above policy advice and policy options provided to the Government of Armenia were based on and informed by the evidence generated by pilot projects.

<sup>83</sup> RBEC ROAR, 2011. Refer to Annex 12 online: (<http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>) for the summary of indicators.

<sup>84</sup> Also contributing to the potential sustainability of outcome 2 due to its biodiversity-related aspects.

national inception workshops were conducted in 2011, and a concept paper has been composed on the subject. During 2012 these networks were supposed to be active.

For indicator 2 (tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emission reduced at the regional level), there has not been an independent verification of achievements available so far. This indicator relates to emission reductions achieved through the GEF portfolio. Interviews with the programme team indicated that the regional programme is 'not directly involved' in emission reduction activities (it is involved in climate policy and climate risk/adaptation work) but the E&E practice at BRC is through the GEF work; and that there are no adequate proxy indicators, which is why the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) has established a rigorous and credible (but also costly and cumbersome) methodology for emission reductions.

On the amount of funds mobilized by BRC from GEF, carbon finance and adaptation funds for governments and private sector in RBEC (indicator 3), the programme has been particularly effective. For 2011 USD 97 million in acquired funds have been reported, against a target of USD 50 million.<sup>85</sup> Among the reported project proposals won at GEF under outcome 1 are three larger scale grants of a total of USD 13.16 million for Kazakhstan alone, i.e. Sustainable Transport in the City of Almaty, Promotion of Energy Efficient Lighting in Kazakhstan and Standards and Labelling for Energy Efficiency in Buildings<sup>86</sup>.

On the extent to which environment programming contribution to reducing gender inequalities can be shown (indicator 4), the target was defined as 50 percent of programming interventions can show extent of gender mainstreaming.<sup>87</sup> In the absence of a baseline, the availability of gender-related indicators at the project level (of the project portfolio of outcome 1) has been chosen by the evaluation team as a proxy indicator.<sup>88</sup> The analysis reveals that only four projects in the portfolio have introduced gender-related indicators, i.e. percentage of budget spent on gender issues with a target of 15 percent, and all projects are country implementations of the CRMCA regional project. Also, only two of the four projects have reported progress against them: Tajikistan reported in 2011 progress on this indicator of 27 percent budget spent on gender issues and is thus over fulfilling the self-set target. Kyrgyzstan shares this indicator and has introduced a second one, i.e. women/men ratio of training is close to 50/50. For 2011, no concrete progress was reported in Kyrgyzstan except a qualitative narrative statement provided.<sup>89</sup> The target for 2012 was lowered from 50 percent to 30 percent female participation. Based on the interviews with BRC staff, no progress on indicator 4 has been made at the regional programme level, nor has a serious attempt been made for gender mainstreaming at the programme/project level.

## Efficiency

**Outcome 1 has been managed efficiently, despite the absence of sufficient funds, with a good 'coping' mechanism. The scarcity of funds has remained an issue.**

<sup>85</sup> The list of GEF projects and information about the breakdown by status and country was provided by E&E practice (updated October 2012).

<sup>86</sup> Overview lists of ongoing and pipeline projects won/submitted by the E&E team under GEF; resource mobilization by E&E team for ECIS; only projects acquired after 1 January 2011.

<sup>87</sup> IWP.

<sup>88</sup> IWP.

<sup>89</sup> The narrative reports: "Exact ratio has not been estimated, however, all efforts have been made to adequately address both men and women during the trainings and other events conducted by the project" and "There is no agreed methodology within CA-CRM on how to estimate percentage of budget spent on gender issues. Awaiting guidance from BRC and regional project."

The expenditure figures were for the majority of projects under outcome 1 within a normal range (80 to 100 percent) for 2011. For 2012, all but two projects<sup>90</sup> (that have had a rather low expenditure rate of 27 percent) showed a normal flow of expenditure. Overall, there is a significant deviation between the total resources required and resources available at the start of projects, which needs to be addressed at the BRC level.

One example is the CRM CA project, the largest portfolio under the outcome, where only 50 percent of the total budget required (USD 12 million) was secured at the start of the project. The CRM project team coped with the situation well. When revising the project document the project managers tried to be conservative in their expenditure, not investing the scarce resources in an expensive component of the project, such as piloting. Instead, the available resources were allocated to low-cost options (e.g. alternative agro-practices aiming to make the communities more resilient to climate change and climate-related risks). At the same time the project management tried to mobilize additional funding. In the first two years of implementation, CRM managed to raise more than 50 percent of the budgetary gap (or about USD 3 million).<sup>91</sup>

During the interviews, the existing requirements associated with the legalities of contracting were raised as a key challenge in staff's resource mobilization efforts, as they are very demanding and considered as rigid by partners and donors.<sup>92</sup> This constitutes a major limitation, when projects are

often required to acquire funds during the course of their implementation.

Feedback from the country offices indicates general satisfaction with the technical implementation of regional projects and advisory services under the portfolio.

There are two main practices at BRC contributing to the outcome 1 portfolio: E&E and CPR. Country office survey results show that E&E team enjoys one of the highest satisfaction rates among all service areas on the quality of support provided.<sup>93</sup> The country office that responded 'unsatisfied' expressed in an interview no particular concerns about the quality of the services, but about the delays in responding to their request by one adviser. The Service Tracker data also reflect generally high satisfaction with the portfolio by the country offices.<sup>94</sup>

The E&E team at BRC is partly staffed with GEF advisers, staff financed with the percentages granted in case of project approval endorsement by GEF.<sup>95</sup> This has strengthened the human resource base available to provide services to the region at BRC. The team of GEF advisers was also reported as being efficient in supporting national partners in applying for GEF and other funding. This was evidenced by the successful bidding for GEF and other funds, leading to a large number of newly acquired projects in the field of E&E.<sup>96</sup> Interventions were reported as contributing to the enhancement of the thematic discussion.

<sup>90</sup> Reference is made to Mobility in Slovakia and the Turkmenistan component of CRM.

<sup>91</sup> Progress report, CRM project, 2012.

<sup>92</sup> One staff put the challenge as, "While trying to go through this procedure, interest in cooperation (with UNDP) disappears."

<sup>93</sup> Question 14, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>94</sup> Service Tracker Analysis, Annex 10 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>95</sup> The amount awarded is 10 percent of the project budget grant, divided by 3 percent for UNDP country office, 3 percent for the regional centre, and 4 percent for the headquarters, the latter divided in equal parts by the UNDP GEF partnership office and the RBEC office (RBEC is paying 0.3 percent for central services).

<sup>96</sup> UNDP gets a General Management Support fee of 10 percent from GEF which is distributed as follows: 3 percent for country office, 3 percent for the regional GEF team and 4 percent for headquarters.

The CPR practice also received favourable results in the survey: a majority of those offices responding expressed 'satisfied' or very 'satisfied' with the support received.

A number of advisory services and regional projects were acknowledged as particularly useful in the survey. References were made to the high-profile policy advice provided in the areas of Climate Change Strategy, establishment of the Regional Climate Change Centre, and Rio+20 preparations; to community of practice (CoP) work by the CRM project providing opportunities for knowledge sharing with peers from the region; identification of interventions in the area of climate change, energy efficiency and renewable energy.<sup>97</sup> Support in the development of GEF proposals (including GEF REDD+<sup>98</sup>) and other project proposal for the EU (Clima East Fund) was reported as being provided in an efficient manner, and technically and financially useful.<sup>99</sup>

Interviewees at the country level, including beneficiaries in government, country office staff and project managers, particularly commented on the CRM project as having demonstrated flexibility in the drafting of documents and during the inception phase (which included a revision of the project documents at the country level). This has allowed each participating country to reflect its own local project priorities aligned with national priorities. This has not only enhanced project efficiency, but also set the base for sustainability. A competent and experienced project manager at the regional component level combined with a relatively high degree of decentralized management at the country level (with fairly independent implementation) was an important factor. Finally, working with the existing UNDP communities' realistic policies for programme development based on the grass-roots level experiences is an exemplary approach, e.g. as demonstrated in

the community-based interventions in Tajikistan under the CRM project.

### **Sustainability**

**The activities under outcome 1 show elements promising sustainability of efforts, such as the robust project design and practical approaches, and capacity development and knowledge exchange in some countries. The institutional platform for climate change, however, has not yet been well established.**

There are some factors that have been identified as fostering sustainability prospects of regional projects in the outcome 1 portfolio, backed by interviews at the country level, design of project documents and information provided in reporting and monitoring tools: (1) setting up regional projects with a regional component and country-level implementation; (2) the decentralization of funds, i.e. resourcing each of the country-level projects with a budget and a dedicated project manager enhances the interest and commitment at the country level of country office and stakeholders; (3) specific demand orientation, i.e. involvement of the national stakeholders and counterparts, in particular the Government, in the process of fine-tuning the project design and definition of particular priority areas for in country implementation; and (4) involvement of institutional strengthening and capacity-building, as some climate change adaptation and climate risk management are relative recent topics, and results achieved need an institutional 'home'.

Among the anticipated outputs related to outcome 1 are: "Integrated climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies at the national and sub-national levels supported"; "Governments in the region have improved capacity to participate in the international climate change negotiations";

<sup>97</sup> This feedback relates to both outcome 1 and outcome 2.

<sup>98</sup> Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, Sustainable Management of Forests and Enhancement of Forest Carbon Stocks in Developing Countries.

<sup>99</sup> This feedback relates to both outcome 1 and outcome 2.



and “Countries in the region are supported in integrating climate risk management into the development strategies and policies”.

The institutional platform for climate change at national levels as well as on the regional level is not well established, or even existent, varying from country to country in the subregion. Typically climate data is spread between climate change adaptation at the Ministry of Environment, whereas the disaster risk management is hosted at the Ministry of Emergency Situations in Central Asian countries. The climate side of available knowledge is improving, but is generally still at a moderate level. Integration of the topic in curricula at university and academia level helps to spread and profound the knowledge. Institutional platforms for CRM are either water resources focused, or disaster response and risk reduction related like the newly established Central Asian Disaster Response and Risk Reduction Centre in Almaty.<sup>100</sup> One of the challenges that remain is to institutionalize CRM further either in existing or emerging platforms.

The Central Asian Regional Risk Assessment (CARRA) project, promoting primarily the interagency dialogue in Central Asia over disaster risk issues, has promoted cross-fertilization of expertise, partnerships and coordination mechanisms, which are continuing as a new CARRA project is under elaboration that will ensure that the dialogue will continue the flow of benefits.

There are positive examples from Turkey and Tajikistan for advisory services provided that are supporting government structures in integrating CRM into their policies. Among other encouraging examples is the capacity development at the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization on monitoring in general and specifically, the Climate Change Action Plan in Turkey and the support to the Government of

Tajikistan and implementing ministries. Another sustainable result is the support to GEF proposals by the E&E practice team: two new standards for energy efficiency in buildings have been recently introduced. All these initiatives have the potential to contribute to the sustainability of the projects and potentially also to a regional effect.

## OUTCOME 2

The outcome aims at mainstreaming environment and energy, and expanding access to E&E services for the poor. The objective is defined as the improved capacity for sustainable conservation and management of ecosystems and natural resources at the regional, national and subnational levels by 2013.

### Relevance

**The focus of the outcome is aligned with regional and country strategies, addressing the emerging needs of the region in water governance and management of ecosystems and natural resources.**

Under outcome 2, UNDP continues to support capacity development for countries to ensure that environment and energy issues are addressed when developing and implementing national policies, strategies and programmes, as well as when considering the inclusion of multilateral environmental agreements. This can be summarized as environmental governance. Such capacity will include the ability to conduct environmental and energy assessments and ensure broad public participation in policy articulation. UNDP will provide advice, methodologies and tools. Substantive support will be offered in combating land degradation and desertification; water governance and resource management; biodiversity and ecosystem services for development; chemical management; and energy service delivery. On land degradation and biodiversity conservation, UNDP will continue to mobilize GEF and other funding

<sup>100</sup> Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan established a joint centre for disaster response and risk reduction.

in its capacity as an implementing agency of the GEF.<sup>101</sup>

### **Effectiveness**

**A number of targets for outcome indicators under outcome 2 have made solid progress, including the establishment of legal frameworks and transboundary mechanisms.**

The RBEC self-assessment reports that, of the five indicators under the outcome, ‘significant progress’ has been made on two (indicator 1 and 2) and ‘some progress’ on the remaining three indicators (3, 4, and 5).<sup>102</sup>

Outcome indicator 1 (“the number of legal and regulatory frameworks that address the sustainable conservation and management of ecosystems and natural resources”), with a baseline of 14 frameworks in the ECIS region and a target of 20 frameworks to be established, 16 frameworks in biodiversity (including forestry), 2 in water and 2 in environment was established in the first year.

On the number of interventions resulting in integration (mainstreaming) of sustainable management of ecosystems and natural resources into countries’ socio-economic development frameworks (indicator 2), the target of 30 projects/interventions in biodiversity and sustainable land management and water plus 2 country interventions in poverty and environment interventions have been exceeded: In 2011 there were already 24 interventions in biodiversity and 10 interventions in trans-boundary waters and IWRM reported, plus 1 project in international waters learning (total 35).

A common indicator for outcome 1 and outcome 2 (though with different targets) is the amount of funds mobilized through international funds, bilateral donors, green fund and carbon finance and adaptation fund (indicator 4). The target of USD 45 million has been mobilized already through GEF in 2011: USD 35.5 million of new (GEF-5) resources in ecosystems portfolio, USD 19.5 million waiting for GEF-5 pipeline entry. Euro 4.5 million in EU funding was awaited for a proposal that was finally not funded. Instead BRC is receiving a funding of Euro 0.6 million in 2012 and Euro 1.5 million is expected for 2013. The GEF partnership has been critical in ensuring sufficient funds to implement projects in line with the objectives of outcome 2.<sup>103</sup>

For the progress made in the achievement of the target of indicator 4, there is concrete evidence of support provided by the BRC-based E&E team, mainly by the GEF advisers (11 of the 24 international staff members, a significant force within the E&E team) for national GEF projects with USD 35.5 million in ecosystems portfolio. The ecosystem and biodiversity team at BRC is exclusively composed of GEF advisers, financed by the royalties gained by submitting successful GEF project proposals. This team, together with the water governance team, are forming the core of advisers on outcome 2 related advisory services.

Indicator 5 (the number of transboundary mechanisms for natural resource management established with the support of the projects or supported by the projects) targets the establishment of six new mechanisms, of which two have been accomplished in 2011. One of the mechanisms was established for the Tisza River Basin.

<sup>101</sup> The expectations for the larger environment and energy practice in UNDP are summarized in the Strategic Plan 2007–2013. Among other themes, the Strategic Plan lays out four key focal areas for UNDP’s work in the area of environment and energy.

<sup>102</sup> Annex 12 Outcome Indicators and Status, RBEC ROAR, 2011 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>103</sup> Examples of ongoing projects are Integrated Natural Resource Management in the Baikal Basin Transboundary Ecosystem (GEF), Improving the Coverage and Management Efficiency of Protected Areas in the Central Tian Shan Mountains/Kyrgyzstan (GEF project) or Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Territorial Planning Policies and Land-Use Practices in Moldova). A full list of ongoing and approved projects was provided by the E&E practice at BRC, October 2012.



The final evaluation of the project states that the most significant outcome was the successful development of the Integrated Tisza River Basin Management Plan.<sup>104</sup> The plan was endorsed by ministers and high-level representatives of the five basin countries in a signed memorandum of understanding in April 2011 and is notable for its full compliance with the EU Water Framework Directive and will now be binding on the participating EU Member States. This project has delivered a clear regional effect.

Advisory services have contributed to results at the national level. Examples for projects tendered and won with support of BRC advisers are: Mainstreaming Biodiversity Conservation into Russia's Energy Sector, a USD 7.2 million GEF grant; and Expanding and Strengthening Management of Protected Areas in Designated Desert and Semi-Desert Systems, a USD 4.4 million GEF grant for Kazakhstan.

### **Efficiency**

**The efforts under the portfolio have been efficiently carried out. In particular, the advisory services are highly recognized among stakeholders, for example in Mainstreaming Biodiversity in Russia's Energy Sector policies and operations and in-depth revision of the 'Armenian paper' introducing environmental aspect into the Human Development Index for submission to Rio+20 side event (cross practice of E&E and poverty practice).**

A notable feature of projects under outcome 2, like some projects under outcome 1, is a low level of regular UNDP core funds, leading to a high level of dependency on other resources that have to be acquired during project implementation.

Furthermore, the synergy between advisory services and regional and national projects and priorities were indicated in the country office

survey as having enhanced the relevance of the interventions. An example is the mainstreaming of environmental aspects into economic indicators (supported by services related to the Poverty and Environment Initiative (PEI) in Armenia).

The average financial expenditure rate for projects under the outcome in 2011 was 77 percent (between 44 percent and 100 percent). For the period between January and August 2012 the average rate was 33 percent, ranging from 16 to 96 percent among the projects.<sup>105</sup> A significant deviation between total budget resources required and allocated exists for some of the projects in the outcome portfolio. The IWRM project experienced a chronic underfunding throughout project implementation. While the required budget was estimated at USD 5.4 million (including in-kind contribution from countries in total amount of USD 1 million), only USD 3.5 million was available, within which USD 0.8 million was to be confirmed. This amount, however, has never been made available for implementation, leaving just above 50 percent of the required budget available for implementation.

The project management of IWRM applied two main coping mechanisms: (1) utilization of additional funding from other donors, and (2) ensuring synergies with other projects operating in the same sector and introducing cost-sharing of activities. Some trade-offs occurred with the arrival of this additional funding, as specific earmarking or specific ToR came along with the respective funds.

The funding source of staff within the BRC E&E practice is unique compared to other practices. Of the 24 international experts in the team, only two are financed by the regional programme. Among the 18 positions financed by BDP, 11 are financed through the fees from having successfully supported GEF proposals. Within

<sup>104</sup> Final Evaluation UNDP/GEF Project 'Integrating Multiple Benefits of Wetlands and Floodplains into Improved Transboundary Management for the Tisza River Basin', June 2011.

<sup>105</sup> BRC IWP 2012.

the sub-team of 'ecosystems and biodiversity' all staff members are financed through GEF, and in the sub-team of 'energy, infrastructure, transport and technology', all but one staff member are financed through GEF. In the sub-team of 'water governance' there are two GEF advisers. There is a strategic strength generated by the strong resource mobilization capacity of the E&E practice. On the other hand, it shows the limited core-funding base of the regional programme. The division of thematic work between GEF-related work on one hand and other projects of the practice is not always clear-cut. The vast majority of projects in the practice portfolio (not of the regional programme though) are GEF funded.

Advisory services are often not clearly differentiated between the two outcomes related to environment (outcomes 1 and 2). The high satisfaction rate indicated for services provided by E&E advisers in the country office survey, discussed under outcome 1, also applies to outcome 2. High demand for services is also evident in the analysis of the Service Tracker.<sup>106</sup> Some notable comments provided in the survey included the usefulness of support of the GEF regional technical advisers in GEF project development, including with in-country missions, particularly in the biodiversity focal area, as well as the specific technical expertise provided in-house that is not easily available at the country office level. Also acknowledged in the survey was that advisory services are often linked to the acquisition of funds contributing to resource mobilization and to new country-led projects.<sup>107</sup>

The portfolio also includes unique or innovative approaches with a regional dimension, as in case of the GEF-UNDP regional project Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst

Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS). It is the first-ever attempt globally to introduce sustainable integrated management principles in a transboundary karst freshwater aquifer of the magnitude of the Dinaric karst (carbonate rock formations) system.<sup>108</sup>

## Sustainability

**A number of indicators suggest the sustainability of the outcome, including high ownership and legal frameworks established. Institutional setups at the country and regional levels to set forth the services and ensure benefits delivered are not always strong.**

A mid-term assessment of the regional programme indicates a number of elements with favourable sustainability prospects, in particular for those projects that are ongoing and can mature in course of further implementation. There has been also a high demand for advisory services that led to new projects contributing to the sustainability of outcome 2. Among the anticipated outputs under the outcome are "Adaptive water governance interventions supported at regional, subregional, national and subnational level"; "Biodiversity conservation and land degradation projects supported"; and "Environmental and poverty issues integrated in national and subnational development planning and interventions".

There are several positive examples promising sustainability of efforts in the region.

- In Armenia, the Poverty and Environment Initiative benefited from project-related services and additional advisory services that were provided by members of the cross-practice team from Bratislava. This has

<sup>106</sup> In the Service Tracker analysis, 480 days of advisory services were delivered in 2011, putting the E&E practice in fourth place of all practices, Annex 10 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluation-detail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>107</sup> Concerning the resources acquired through partnerships, GEF is the most successful, along with other schemes as Clima East Fund and Adaptation Fund. Currently there are 152 ongoing GEF projects in the region, with an estimated country budget between USD 15 million and USD 30 million. These projects are likely to contribute to the overall achievement of UNDP objectives in the environment and energy sector.

<sup>108</sup> Protection and Sustainable Use of the Dinaric Karst Transboundary Aquifer System (DIKTAS), Inception Report, March 2011.

substantially contributed to the advancement of the discipline of environmental economics and the integration of related indicators in economic analysis and academia.

- High political commitment was attested to the Tisza project, aiming to enhance environmental sustainability. There are further plans to make the Tisza outcomes a flagship initiative of the wider EU Danube Strategy and first signs of emerging advocacy for the notion of a Tisza Basin Commission.<sup>109</sup>
- There are two examples of projects implemented under outcome 1 that will also contribute to the sustainability of objectives under outcome 2, i.e. mainstreaming biodiversity and land management concerns into project-sector policies and activities, and supporting water governance, respectively: (1) The forestry code in Tajikistan<sup>110</sup> has recently been approved at all stages, due to its biodiversity-related aspects and (2) the CRM country project is involved in the revision of the water code in Uzbekistan; this is an 'adaptive water governance intervention' and – once successfully completed – will also contribute to the sustainability of outcome 2.
- In Ukraine a sustainable effect was generated through intervention of Every Drop Matters, a small regional project implemented by the country with a budget of USD 100,000. It supplemented a local development project in waste management (budget: Euro 17 million) with an ecological edge to public services by offering the communities another opening like cleaning of community springs, provision of access to springs, and small recreation areas.

There are also elements that potentially jeopardize the sustainability of the outputs. The Integrated Water Resource Management project, for example,

is currently drafting an exit strategy. Unfortunately this process started only four months prior to the end of the project, when an exit strategy should ideally be embedded in a project from its outset.

The Ministry for Water and Natural Resources, implementing partner of the IWRM project in Tajikistan, is seeking funding to implement a water strategy action plan that is currently available in draft version. The ministry, supposed to carry forward the project at the national level, is apparently also lacking human resources, mainly at the senior management level. This is limiting sustainability prospects. Brain drain and resulting lack of staff are common phenomena in public institutions in the region.

### 3.2 SOCIAL INCLUSION

The UNDP goal in the thematic area of social inclusion is reflected in its Strategic Plan within the broader area of "Poverty eradication and achievement of internationally agreed development goals, including the MDGs"<sup>111</sup>. UNDP's work concentrates on promoting inclusive growth, gender equality and achievement of MDGs, fostering inclusive globalization and mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria on human development. Social inclusion is one of the 'substantive priorities' of the RBEC Rolling Strategy as well.<sup>112</sup> In Regional Programme 2011-2013, social inclusion is part of the focus area 2 'poverty, inequality and social inclusion'. This section addresses key findings in social inclusion, corresponding to outcome 3.

### OUTCOME 3

#### Relevance

**The activities carried out in the area of social inclusion are highly relevant to the**

<sup>109</sup> Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project 'Integrating Multiple Benefits of Wetlands and Floodplains into Improved Transboundary Management for the Tisza River Basin', 2011.

<sup>110</sup> Also contributing to the potential sustainability of outcome 2 due to its biodiversity-related aspects.

<sup>111</sup> UNDP, 'UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Geneva, June 2008.

<sup>112</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013', February 2011.

**development needs of the region, through their focus on subregions with shared concerns and common development challenges as well as through their flexible design of intervention at the country level in development areas that are highly context specific. The programme is also consistent with the priorities of the RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013 and specific UNDP strategic papers<sup>113</sup>.**

In the Western Balkans and EU Member States, the work under the regional programme was driven by the EU social inclusion and European integration agenda, as well as key strategic documents, most notably the Enlargement Strategy<sup>114</sup> and Europa 2020<sup>115</sup>. In the case of Roma, for instance, the EU Member States must adopt national Roma integration strategies<sup>116</sup>, backed by a robust monitoring mechanism and yearly reporting against quantified targets. As Western Balkan countries are in various stages of preparation for EU accession, this framework is also applicable to them. The need for robust data on Roma has been extensively addressed in the regional programme, through the active involvement of BRC in a large 2011 survey, carried out in partnership with FRA and the World Bank (WB) within the framework of the regional project Tools and Methods for Evaluation and Data Collection. The advisory services provided by BRC to Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Serbia, Romania and Slovakia also aimed at helping them advance their national Roma strategy preparation and alignment to EU social inclusion policies (Croatia).

In the Western CIS and Caucasus, the regional programme responded to the challenges deriving from the European Neighbourhood Policy which calls the countries in this subregion to advance the implementation of economic and social reforms, including adoption of policies conducive to stronger, sustainable and more inclusive growth, development of SMEs, to tackle economic disparities and to strengthen trade ties.<sup>117</sup> The regional projects Aid for Trade (AFT) and Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion Programme as well as the extensive BRC advisory support to regional development, agriculture and rural development were a response to these needs (Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine). Another major challenge related to the fast spreading of HIV epidemic was tackled by the Regional HIV/AIDS Project 2010-2011 and HIV, Human Rights and Universal Access in Eastern Europe along with BRC advisory services.

In Central Asia, the regional programme addressed various poverty, social inclusion and human rights challenges, private sector development needs and CSO demand for capacity-building. A significant number of advisory services and the work done within the framework of Support for MDG-oriented Policies project aimed at supporting the countries to develop, monitor and evaluate national and local strategies and development plans which reflect MDGs (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan) and which are based on poverty assessments (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan) and critical reviews of social assistance and employment policies (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan). The work on promoting inclusive market business models and engagement of the private sector

<sup>113</sup> For instance, Fresno, J.M., 'Articulating A Common Position of the United Nations System to Advance Roma Inclusion in Europe', Final draft, 28 November 2011.

<sup>114</sup> European Commission, 'Enlargement Strategy and Main Challenges 2011-2012', Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM(2011) 666 final, Brussels, 12 October 2011.

<sup>115</sup> European Commission, 'EUROPE 2020: A Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', Communication from the Commission, COM(2010) 2020, Brussels, 3 March 2010.

<sup>116</sup> European Commission, 'EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies up to 2020-2011', Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2011) 173 final, Brussels, 5 April 2011.

<sup>117</sup> European Commission, 'A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A Review of European Neighbourhood Policy', Brussels, 25 May 2011.



in poverty reduction addressed the economic decline, aggravation of poverty and rising unemployment, in line with the Strategic Framework for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme 2011–2020<sup>118</sup>. The portfolio of regional projects which tackled these challenges includes Growing Inclusive Markets (GIM) and AfT.

A significant number of knowledge products were developed in support of raising awareness, development of knowledge and serving advocacy purposes on major challenges faced by the countries of the RBEC region. A notable example is the new social exclusion measurement methodology which was tested in six countries and was presented in the UNDP Regional Human Development Report (RHDR) 2011. While the methodology is highly relevant to Central Asia, Caucasus and even Western CIS, reservations concerning its relevance and use in the future have been expressed by the Western Balkan countries, Turkey and EU Member States, as the countries have to follow the EU methodology of monitoring and measuring social exclusion, EU-SILC.<sup>119</sup> Nevertheless, the methodology is relevant for identifying marginalized communities and socially excluded groups (e.g. minorities) which EU-SILC is not able to do, as it is too general. It can also contribute to the Open Method of Coordination process in EU Member States, acceding and candidate countries.

The regional programme has responded in a relevant manner to the emerging needs of the region in the area of poverty reduction and social inclusion due to demand orientation of BRC advisory services provided at the subregional level and development of relevant knowledge products.

The crisis has provided a unique opportunity for RBEC to use its comparative strengths to promote the UN values and advance the agenda of poverty reduction, social inclusion, inclusive growth and human development in the region. The office of the senior economist for RBEC developed vulnerability databases to facilitate the monitoring of socio-economic trends affecting vulnerable households. It also helped the governments in the identification of evidence-based solutions for the mitigation of social impact of economic crisis.<sup>120</sup>

The regional programme was most relevant when the activities implemented in the area of social inclusion had the following features: a) focus on specific subregions with shared concerns and common development challenges (e.g. Roma, social economy in Western Balkans and EU Member States, HIV in Caucasus and Western CIS); b) flexible design of interventions at the country level in development areas which are highly context specific (e.g. trade in Central Asia); c) design of regional projects based on thorough preliminary needs assessments and analytical work (e.g. needs assessments in the first phase of AfT which informed the second phase, UNDP Business Solutions to Poverty,

<sup>118</sup> Asian Development Bank, 'CAREC 2020: A Strategic Framework for the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Programme 2011–2020', Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Asian Development Bank, 2012.

<sup>119</sup> For example, references are made to: i) 'Human Development Study Serbia. Drivers and Outcomes of Social Exclusion', Belgrade, UNDP Serbia, 2011 that states "It is hard to make precise estimate of the number of socially excluded without reliable methodology, like hopefully SILC will offer" and ii) 'Description of Target Variables: Cross-sectional and Longitudinal', Eurostat, 2012 that states "Bulgaria and Turkey started the full implementation of the EU-SILC instrument in 2006 while Romania did it in 2007 (...). Three further countries i.e. Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and Serbia, are in test of implementation". EU-SILC is the EU reference source of comparative statistics on income, poverty, social exclusion and living conditions at the European level.

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Slay, Ben (ed.), 'Energy and Communal Services in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan: A Poverty and Social Impact Assessment', UNDP, Bratislava Regional Centre, 2011 which aimed to provide answers to Central Asian governments to the difficult challenges raised by the increasing costs of these services brought by the crisis and which affect especially the low-income households.

2010 which presented successful inclusive business models which inspired the GIM project); d) effective monitoring of the country situations (e.g. vulnerability databases, monitoring of Roma situation since 2005, active CoP – poverty, HIV, gender – which provide updates on emerging challenges).

The programme would have been more relevant if more inclusive consultation processes were implemented. During the field interviews, the evaluation team was informed that this was not the case. Proper consultation with governments and other key national stakeholders might have provided, for instance, quicker entry points of the new social exclusion methodology into regular data collection systems in Western Balkans.

### Effectiveness

**The programme achieved significant results in the development of reliable and robust data to inform policy makers, increased human development literacy in the region, advanced the understanding of pro-poor trade reforms and empowered CSOs to engage in service provision and human rights advocacy. Less progress was made in engaging the private sector to address poverty and in reducing gender-based segregation on the labour market.**

The outcome in the area of poverty reduction, inequality and social inclusion is “increased capacity of public, private and civil society actors to address human development challenges by 2013 through evidence-based, inclusive and sustainable policies and through private sector-based pro-poor development”. This outcome is to be measured by a set of nine indicators which RBEC assessed after one year of programme implementation to be met in case of four indicators, on the way of being met in case of other

four indicators and not registering any progress in the case of the last one<sup>121</sup>. The evaluation team’s assessment is largely similar to that of RBEC.

According to RBEC ROAR 2011, the number of countries with national development strategies incorporating MDGs and supported by statistical databases, inclusive analysis and monitoring framework has increased from ‘few’ in 2010 to ‘ten’ at the end of 2011. Checking the exact number of individual country strategies that benefited from direct regional programme support is difficult, since the evaluation team had incomplete access to information<sup>122</sup>. Nevertheless, there is evidence of significant regional programme contribution to the development of ethnically disaggregated data, vulnerability databases and social exclusion data as well as country poverty assessments, which were made available to country offices and national counterparts with a view to informing the design of the national development strategies. In this respect, the excellent partnership developed with the EC, FRA, WB and Open Society Institute (OSI) for the collection and analysis of Roma data has been of crucial importance. Improved Roma strategies and action plans were developed in Croatia, Romania, Slovakia and Serbia, a fourth poverty reduction strategy is awaiting adoption in Tajikistan while in Kyrgyzstan the programme enabled the government to draft and adopt a national pro-poor strategic document<sup>123</sup>. The region has now a tested social exclusion measurement methodology able to be used for identifying most vulnerable groups and for planning policy interventions. Linking conceptualization with capacity-building of research teams and country testing of methodology was very effective. There is little evidence, however, about poverty reduction programmes fully mainstreaming HIV, which is a regional programme target.

<sup>121</sup> See Table 3 in Annex 12 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>122</sup> During the interview with the responsible adviser in BRC, it was confirmed that many national development strategies are not available in English, but in the national language of the respective countries. In the IWP 2012 Monitoring (July 2012), there is no progress recorded related to the project Support to MDG-Oriented Policies.

<sup>123</sup> Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, ‘Mid-term Development Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2012-2014’, Decree #239, April 12, 2012.



Human development literacy in the region has been improved, demonstrated by a better quality and reflection of MDGs in NHDRs (e.g. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Montenegro, Kosovo), but also in several national strategies, as mentioned above. The contributing factors were the intensive investment in training and lifelong learning, especially by the regional project Improving Human Development, partnership with a highly respected university i.e. Central European University (CEU), multi-disciplinary expertise involving advisers from various practices and mutually reinforcing, multiple-service delivery modalities: advisory services, CoP meetings, knowledge products on sustainable human development, social exclusion and gender inequality, exchange of experience in local development planning and localizing MDGs. Around 200 people from country offices, government, academia and CSOs are trained each year in the multidimensional areas of human development and social inclusion. These are also part of the regular curriculum in several universities (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan and the Russian Federation).

The regional programme advanced the understanding of the relationship between trade policy, human development and poverty reduction. This was achieved through a needs assessment which informed the national and regional policies and a combination of initiatives spanning from training to provision of microfinance and market information to small farmers as well as cross-practice work involving the practice teams of poverty reduction (trade, private sector, rural development, social enterprises), energy and environment (green housing) and democratic governance (local development). In Georgia, the results of the needs assessment done in the first phase of AfT were adopted by the Government of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara: trade facilitation is now part of Ajara Development Strategy<sup>124</sup>, trade promotion and

agriservice centres were set up and a special unit has been established in the Ministry of Economy and Finance. The poorest regions in Tajikistan are now served by professional finance institutions, drawing from experience with small loans provision to poor farmers. Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz farmers are currently benefiting from 12 market information systems and a Network of Fairtrade producers in Central Asia, set up with the support of the regional project and complementary BRC advisory services. Increased trade intensity in the targeted regions is, however, far from being achieved, as it is too much dependent on various factors and measurement of changes goes way beyond the influence that UNDP can reasonably exert.

Midway through the regional programme implementation, around 20 percent of the target was accomplished in terms of private-sector-based initiatives explicitly addressing poverty or inequality. The main contribution was brought by the GIM project, active in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, which strived to engage the poor in the growth-oriented sectors of the economy using integrated value chain development and brokering investments in pro-poor goods and service delivery. Job creation for vulnerable population in the private sector and a new platform for private business incentives were particularly appreciated in BiH, while Uzbek national partners appreciated the 'toolbox' that the project provided, e.g. inclusive business models made accessible to entrepreneurs in more than 2,000 'infokiosks' of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and of commercial banks across the country. Still, there is slow progress against the set target, mainly caused by the difficulties in moving forward the concept of inclusive markets during a period of economic crisis as well as some shortfalls in the management of the GIM project.

<sup>124</sup> Government of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara, 'Regional Development Strategy of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara', January 18, 2011.

An enabling environment for the engagement of civil society in the fight against poverty and social exclusion was developed with regional programme support. Main contributing factors were the promotion of the social economy concept followed by capacity development of CSOs in addressing poverty reduction and social inclusion and piloting the approach through partnership initiatives (regional projects on social economy). Poland, Serbia and Romania amended or enacted legislation on social economy. In Ukraine, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Kosovo, there is a better understanding of the social enterprises concept and its potential for employment generation, social inclusion and ensuring financial sustainability of CSOs. The recent 'Handbook on Non-State Social Service Delivery Models'<sup>125</sup> is hoped to spearhead social services delivery to the poor and the socially excluded through CSOs with public funding support.

Insufficient progress was registered in the reduction of gender-based segregation in the labour market, as also acknowledged by RBEC ROAR 2011. It might be due to the fact that the regional programme focused its work mainly on the development of women's entrepreneurship which is certainly an important contributing factor, e.g. gender was a selection criterion for the support of inclusive business models (GIM project); microfinance for women's cooperatives, support for women entrepreneurs associations (AfT project); business trainings and events addressing women entrepreneurs (Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion project). However, insufficient attention may have been paid to developing the capacity of public and private institutions to ensure gender equality in economic activities, equal pay, gender-sensitive work environments and balanced work and family life. The

RBEC ROAR 2011 indicates progress achieved in FYR of Macedonia and Kosovo; still, recent EC reports<sup>126</sup> signal deficiencies in the realization of economic rights for women in these countries.

Capacity to monitor rights violations of people living with HIV (PLHIV) has been strengthened in Belarus, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine. A gender perspective has been integrated in the HIV/AIDS work due to the joint contribution of HIV and gender advisers of BRC. HIV-related legislation was amended in Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine to increase access to affordable treatment. There has been an increased engagement of PLHIV and CSOs in the implementation of HIV responses. Because of the Regional HIVAIDS Project and the more recent HIV, Rights & Universal Access Project as well as BRC advisory services, two organizations of women living with HIV were set up in the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan to engage in decision-making processes and HIV-related activities, following the Leadership Development Programme. It improved the capacity of sex workers' networks to ensure access to HIV prevention and care services (Ukraine, Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, FYR of Macedonia, and Serbia) and it strengthened the capacity of men having sex with men to coordinate their needs and advocacy through the newly set up Eurasian Coalition on Male Health (ECOM).

According to the country office survey, the work done by the three practice teams which contributed to the development results under outcome 3 were scored high, i.e. 'very satisfied' and 'satisfied' – 100 percent for HIV/AIDS, health and development team, 94.5 percent for poverty reduction practice<sup>127</sup> and 84 percent for

<sup>125</sup> ECNL, UNDP, 'Handbook on Non-State Social Service Delivery Models: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners in the CIS Region', UNDP Bratislava, 2012.

<sup>126</sup> European Commission, 'Commission Staff Working Paper: Kosovo 2011 Progress Report', SEC(2011) 1207 final, Brussels, 12 October 2011. European Commission, 'Commission Staff Working Paper: The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia 2011 Progress Report', SEC(2011) 1203 final, Brussels, 12 October 2011.

<sup>127</sup> To allow an accurate assessment of the performance of each practice which contributed to outcome 3, responses to Question 14 in the survey have been 'corrected' in the sense of taking out from the overall assessment the responses 'no support' and 'don't know'.

the gender team<sup>128</sup>. As far as the gender team is concerned, there is a variation of perceptions on the relevance and quality of advisory services. Noteworthy is the fact that, according to the records in the BRC Service Tracker for 2011, around 43 percent of advisory days were dedicated to BDP, in an attempt to keep the headquarters abreast of progress and major challenges faced by women in the ECIS region, even if this region is more developed than the others.

The factors contributing to increased effectiveness in the area of social inclusion were: a) technical knowledge and expertise of BRC advisers, especially in social inclusion, welfare economics, private sector development, strategic planning, HIV; b) development of partnerships with influential development partners; c) multipractice work (in some areas) which brought together expertise and experience and facilitated portfolio development; d) linking of

conceptualization with capacity-building and pilot/testing activities; e) intensive dissemination campaign for maximizing impact, as the example presented in Box 4.

At the same time, some critical factors slowed down the implementation and achievement of results: staff turnover, management and communication flaws with the donor (GIM project); lack of government commitment to implement pro-poor approaches in public finance (Serbia, Ukraine); lack of funding (80 percent of already confirmed funding not released for Support to MDG-Oriented Policy); insufficient coherence and streamlining of regional projects to realize the overall results of the regional programme in the outcome 3 area (project portfolio includes projects which are not linked to any of outcome 3 indicators or outputs, e.g. Contemporary India Centre, Rural Schools, Sport Voluntary). In general, measuring the results achieved under

#### Box 4. Measuring Social Exclusion – A Popular Subject

During 2009-2010, BRC developed and ground-tested an innovative methodology for measuring social exclusion in the ECIS region, based on an index that reflects the complex and multidimensional nature of social exclusion. Year 2011 was used for finalizing the analysis and writing of the Regional Human Development Report 'Beyond Transition, Towards Inclusive Societies' as well as for a massive dissemination campaign of the poverty reduction practice supported by the creative and enthusiastic knowledge and innovation practice. It included a devoted section of BRC website to social inclusion, blog posts, a pilot Google Ads campaign, infographics and online social exclusion calculator<sup>129</sup>, multimedia launch of the report at Oxford University and launches across the region with national partners. The report was viewed 6,200 times on the UNDP online publication channel and 59,872 times (May 2011-7 October 2012) on ISSUU<sup>130</sup>.

The dissemination campaign has been associated with training sessions on the subject of social exclusion taught at the Central European University and which are live streamed. Several countries in Central Asia and Western CIS as well as Poland and Slovakia have requested BRC to support them in incorporating the methodology into their policies.

Sources: Project Document 69251 'Regional Human Development Report on Social Inclusion', ROAR 2011, IWP Monitoring 2012, CEU website <http://www.summer.ceu.hu/sustainable-2012> accessed 25 August 2012, social media (RBEC website and blog, ISSUU, Google Ads).

<sup>128</sup> Also, comparing with the five regions which were surveyed, all these three practice teams scored the highest appreciation in the ECIS region. See UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Country Office Survey', Global and Regional Programme Evaluations, 2012.

<sup>129</sup> UNDP, Online social exclusion calculator, available at <<http://www.undp.sk/secalc/>>.

<sup>130</sup> ISSUU, <[http://issuu.com/undp\\_in\\_europe\\_cis](http://issuu.com/undp_in_europe_cis)>, accessed 7 October 2012.

outcome 3 was a challenge because of several flaws in the selection and formulation of indicators in the RRF, as detailed in Annex 13 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation-admin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

### Efficiency

**In most cases, activities in the area of social inclusion have progressed as planned and resources have been used in an efficient manner. The use of mutually reinforcing combination of regional projects, advisory services and knowledge products, partnerships with development partners and use of modern technology were the main factors that increased efficiency of the regional programme. Efficiency has been affected at the same time by some funding gaps, staff turnover and some communication problems.**

The budget allocated to the project portfolio and advisory services related to the achievement of outcome 3 in 2011 and 2012 amounted to USD 18,517,441.<sup>131</sup> In 2011, only 74.1 percent of the allocated budget was spent, due to very low delivery rates of several projects.<sup>132</sup> Between January 2011 and July 2012, the overall delivery performance was 61.9 percent. Although there were some funding gaps between the initially estimated amount and the money available during implementation, the activities in the area of social inclusion progressed well, without major difficulties. The yearly targets were achieved in most cases. The low delivery rates of some projects in 2011 improved in the first half of 2012. Most regional projects were implemented according to set schedules. With few exceptions<sup>133</sup>, the overall opinion of 90 percent of country offices is that the advisory services were always or generally provided ‘in a timely fashion

after a request or before a deadline’. BRC has usually taken prompt actions to solve arising implementation issues. The response in the GIM project, however, appeared to have been protracted. The delays in the implementation of the project in 2011, caused by staff turnover, management and communication flaws between BRC, country offices, regional brokers and the donor have been meanwhile discussed with the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) and a solution is currently being worked out to enable overall targets (though not the country-specific targets) to be achieved by the end of the project. The lack of BDP release of already confirmed funding for Support for MDG-oriented Policies (80 percent of funds) was likely mitigated by massive mobilization of advisory services, which apparently led to the overachievement of corresponding outcome indicator at the end of 2011. As far as the Public Finance for Development project is concerned, delays are expected to be recovered once agreement with the new Government in Serbia is reached and the Ministry of Finance in Ukraine approves the revised implementation plan.

In general, the regional programme has made good use of its financial and human resources. Efficiency has been improved by the use of modern technology, such as Skype, videoconference facilities and webinars for CoP meetings, training, brainstorming, interviews, and on-the-spot advisory support. Office-to-office expert exchange also saved time and money. There is, however, room for improvement. For instance, in the case of testing the new measurement methodology of social exclusion, a sample of 2,700 households was interviewed in each of the six test countries. Given the large amount of money needed for field interviews, it would have been far more efficient to calibre

<sup>131</sup> Data are retrieved from IWP Monitoring 2012 (July 2012). They do not include the projects in the area of knowledge management and gender (contributing to all outcomes, but recorded under outcome 3) and projects 70576, 71793 and 71795 whose implementation ended in 2010.

<sup>132</sup> People with Hearing Impairment (79784): 12 percent, AfT TA (77203): 40 percent, GIM REG (71979): 43 percent, AfT Economic Development (77202): 55 percent (source: IWP 2010-2011 Monitoring).

<sup>133</sup> For example, one-year delay of follow-up services for institutionalization of social inclusion indicators in Ukraine.



representative samples according to the size of population in each country.<sup>134</sup> More efficient would have also been to use national statistics offices and research institutes for data collection rather than a private company for all countries.<sup>135</sup>

Efficient delivery of projects resulted when economies of scale were achieved within a sub-region, such as in the Western Balkans in case of the Decreasing Roma Vulnerability project. With little extra cost, supplementary questions were included in the data-collection questionnaire on Roma early childhood education and microfinance which provided a clearer, more expansive and updated picture of the Roma segregation in health, education and employment. Efficiency was also better when activities of regional projects were complemented by advisory services and knowledge products, such as the RHDR project, and when they were well integrated or complementing the country programmes, thus amplifying the effect of both, such as AfT in Georgia or Roma and social inclusion projects. “The support of the Bratislava Regional Centre and of UNDP Croatia has been invaluable and UNDP Montenegro’s Social Inclusion programme has both benefited and been able to share resources through this form of regional cooperation. This stands as a model of effective cooperation in a post-conflict society and region”.<sup>136</sup>

According to the BRC Service Tracker, most advisory services related to outcome 3 in 2011 were provided by the poverty reduction practice

(981 person-days, with increased focus on policy advice)<sup>137</sup>, followed by the HIV, health and development team (75 person-days). The advisory services of the gender team (95 person-days) and knowledge and innovation practice (245 person-days) served all outcomes of the regional programme, including outcome 3. The interviews carried out during the country visits and the response to the country office survey indicate high appreciation for the BRC advisory services which: a) helped the national partners to use resources more efficiently (e.g. private sector advice to the Uzbek Chamber of Industry and Trade); b) were complementary to local actions, thus increasing the efficiency of both operations (e.g. Roma work in Croatia, Ukraine); and c) supported the resource mobilization<sup>138</sup>.

Particularly useful were those knowledge products which were practical and ready to be used, generating immediate dialogue and debate on social inclusion, social cohesion and more general development challenges in the country, informing policy decisions or engaging local partners in social services provision. The country offices and national partners which responded to the survey or were interviewed on the ground indicated the RHDR 2011, Roma analyses, publications and reports, vulnerability databases, studies on the impact of economic crisis and handbook on social contracting. Appreciated were also the CoP meetings on poverty, people with disabilities, gender and private sector, considered to be a good source of advice, ideas and exchange of experience.

<sup>134</sup> FYR of Macedonia: 2,063,893 inhabitants, Ukraine: 45,706,100 inhabitants (source: World Bank website: <<http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL>>, accessed 30 September 2012).

<sup>135</sup> A national survey based on a sample of 3,000 people would cost USD 20,000 in Ukraine if done by a state institute (only field data collection), according to people interviewed during the country visit. The expenditures for the surveys indicated by IWP Monitoring 2012 in the executive snapshot of project RHDR (ACTIVITY2 Description: Social Inclusion Survey) amounted to around USD 328,935, i.e. USD 55,000 per country.

<sup>136</sup> UNDP Montenegro, ‘Evaluation of Social Inclusion and Gender Equality Outcomes within UNDP Montenegro Country Programme ‘2005-2011’.

<sup>137</sup> These numbers also include person-days for services delivered to UNDP headquarters and country offices in the Arab States.

<sup>138</sup> For example, Poverty and Environment Initiative in Kyrgyzstan; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; European Social Fund in Romania, with the support of the Polish Office of BRC; UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in Serbia.

Efficiency has been also enhanced by balancing upstream with downstream activities, development of interrelated programme activities and use of partnerships with external and internal partners. The regional projects on Roma were considered by the survey respondents to be flexible enough to respond to country needs, yet with a governing structure which opened possibilities for regional exchange and cooperation. Cost-effectiveness has been increased by the interrelated activities between the Black Sea Trade and Investment Promotion project, AfT project (training course on food security, packaging and labelling) and GIM project (matchmaking directory, inclusive business training). Partnerships with strong development partners were also used to increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness. An excellent example is the one between BRC, EC, FRA and World Bank for a large-scale survey on the socio-economic situation of Roma in 16 countries. According to the FRA director, this was “a unique example of international multi-agency cooperation”.<sup>139</sup>

The factors that increased the level of regional programme efficiency in the area of social inclusion were the following: a) integration of work under the regional programme into the country programmes; b) mutually reinforcing combination of regional projects, advisory services and knowledge products; c) development of interrelated programme activities; d) use of partnerships with strong development partners; e) use of modern communication technology to save time and money. Efficiency was negatively affected by funding gaps, non-release of confirmed funding, staff turnover, work overload of some BRC advisers within the poverty reduction practice and some communication problems between BRC, national implementation teams and the donor.

### **Sustainability**

**The results in the area of social inclusion contributed by the regional programme, at the**

**mid-point of its implementation, have high sustainability prospects, due to the embedment of capacity development in all regional efforts, engagement of country offices and partnerships with relevant and strong development partners.**

The RPD includes a number of important sustainability features in the formulation of outcome 3 such as “increased capacity of public, private and civil society actors”, “sustainable policies” and, more generally, in its guiding principles and management arrangements, i.e. capacity development of stakeholders, ownership of national and regional counterparts, exchange of experience and good practices, development of partnerships and promotion of networks and alliances. At the same time, most of the regional projects and advisory services addressing poverty and social exclusion embed in their design such elements in various degrees.

Capacity development is an omnipresent sustainability ingredient. It targets the staff of the country offices and a large range of key stakeholders – public and private, international, national and local which are active in various sectors (education and training, health, employment creation, social protection, energy, environment) – reflecting the multidimensional nature of social inclusion and human development generally, which requires policy commitments and practical action at various levels as well as responses going beyond sector-specific ones. A notable example, presented in Box 5, is the work in the area of strengthening the human development literacy in the region, under the coordination of the poverty reduction practice and involving BRC advisers from various other practices.

National and local ownership is enhanced when the regional projects are based on inclusive consultations, include decentralized operations with locally allocated and managed budgets and are well integrated in the current programmes

<sup>139</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, UNDP, ‘The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States. Survey Results at a Glance’, 2012.



and activities of country offices or of national counterparts. While there is no sufficient evidence that consultations were always sufficiently inclusive (apart from the HIV area), involving all relevant stakeholders, there are a few examples of projects that met the other two conditions.

- The AfT project management at country level has been entrusted to a national implementation team, reporting to UNDP country office. Several country offices (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan) appreciate that the project is designed in a way that gives them more responsibility, is decentralized in its implementation and engage national partners in a sustainable way<sup>140</sup>.

Integration of AfT with relevant country projects is also appreciated (e.g. in Armenia).

- The Country Support Facility of the Regional HIV/AIDS Project is appreciated as it provides direct support to country programmes (Serbia, Ukraine, etc.)
- Another good example of integration of a regional project and advisory services in a country programme is the Strengthening of Social Inclusion Policies project in Croatia, which incorporates in its 2011 annual work plan a research component on Roma socio-economic position, with direct responsibility of BRC<sup>141</sup>.

#### Box 5. Improving Human Development Literacy in the ECIS Region

The main objective of the regional project is to improve human development literacy and to strengthen capacities for MDGs implementation in the region. It started in 2007 and will end in December 2012.

One of the activities of the project is the delivery of a yearly summer training course on human development, in partnership with the Central European University (CEU) based in Budapest. It is addressed to mid-level civil servants/decision makers and graduate students, junior faculty and researchers from the ECIS region willing to develop their understanding of sustainable human development (SHD), MDGs and their policy relevance in respective countries. The course, delivered since 2006, continues to be the most popular summer course of the CEU. In 2012, 204 applications were received for 27 places. In comparison, for a similar summer course on Roma issues delivered by the Council of Europe at CEU, the application rate was three times lower.

The constant success of the course over the last seven years is due to a combination of factors, most notably the following: topicality, practicality, reputation through partnership with a reputed academic institution, multidisciplinary and highly qualified lecturers, modern and diverse teaching methods and course delivery, free and easy accessible course materials, follow-up contacts with participants for further support and orientation at workplace, scholarships and affordable tuition costs for paying participants. The course will be integrated from 2012 in the regular curriculum of the CEU, at MA level, as 2-credits course on sustainable human development.

Results of the summer course are further amplified by complementary activities implemented by BRC within the framework of the regional programme, for instance lectures on SHD measurement and human development generally (Kosovo, Tajikistan), human development teaching manual, training of professors and integration of course in regular academic curriculum (Turkmenistan), winter school on human development (Uzbekistan), workshops on SHD and social exclusion (Moldova), etc.

Sources: Project Document 56887 'Improving Human Literacy', CEU website <http://www.summer.ceu.hu/sustainable-2012> accessed 25 August 2012, interview with Executive Director of Summer University at CEU, upstream TV, Twitter

<sup>140</sup> For example, Armenian Small and Medium Entrepreneurship Development National Centre, Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations, Investments and Trade in Uzbekistan, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade in Ukraine, Akimat of East-Kazakhstan.

<sup>141</sup> Website of UNDP Croatia, <<http://www.undp.hr/show.jsp?page=57934>>, accessed 23 August 2012.

Continuous engagement of the regional programme with the country offices is essential as results obtained in a regional project have higher probability of being adapted to the local context, further developed and replicated. This engagement has not been always optimal. There were areas where several follow-up advisory missions took place (e.g. regional development planning in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, rural development in Georgia, social enterprises in Kosovo, social card in Montenegro, sustainable development in Armenia, Roma inclusion in Croatia) and others when substantial delays in follow-ups put under risk the enrichment and sustainability of excellent results obtained to date (e.g. the follow-up concept 'Introduction of regular social exclusion monitoring into statistical system of Ukraine' provided one year after the public presentation of results of the social exclusion survey to national stakeholders).

The work done within the framework of the regional programme has frequently developed or was done in partnership with other United Nations agencies, such as UNICEF (e.g. social assistance, social transfers), UNAIDS, ILO (e.g. gender and maternity protection) and UNFPA (gender). It also engaged major donors, most notably the EC (Roma, gender equality, social economy, HIV), Finnish Government (trade), TIKa (inclusive business models), World Bank and OSI (Roma), Slovak Aid (public finance, social economy), and ADB (trade and private development). These partnerships have been useful in increasing synergy and efficiency of interventions as well as in embedding UNDP values, methodologies and approaches in partners' policies, programmes and practices for further development work in the region. An example is the integrated human development approach to Roma issues, linking development opportunities to the realization of human rights. They also prepared the ground for triggering new initiatives for the development of the region:

- There is current dialogue between BRC and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG Regio) of the EC for the development and testing of local-level social inclusion and social cohesion indicators, in line with the priorities of the EU cohesion policy 2014-2020 in the area of monitorable results and based on the BRC work on social exclusion index and localization of human development indicators.
- A large two-year Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) project Trade Policies and Practices in Ukraine, launched in 2011, has been informed by the needs assessment done under the AfT project; there are discussions with ADB for financing a project on women entrepreneurship based on the good results of AfT project in Armenia.

The regional programme has also promoted networks and alliances with CSOs, private sector (e.g. in the area of fair trade) and academia (e.g. with Oxford University on social exclusion, with CEU on human development education), in order to increase the knowledge transfer, replication of good practices and advocacy for major development or sensitive issues. For instance, a Regional HIV Legal Network was set up within the project HIV, Rights and Universal Access that supported strategic litigation cases. Advisory services were also provided for the establishment of ECOM to enable sustainable response to the HIV epidemic among men who have sex with men (MSM), and transgender people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

### 3.3 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The UNDP goal in local development is encompassed in its Strategic Plan within the focus area of democratic governance.<sup>142</sup> The initiatives aim at fostering inclusive participation, strengthening accountable and responsive governing institutions, and grounding democratic governance in international principles. The

<sup>142</sup> UNDP, 'UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Geneva, June 2008.

RBEC Rolling Strategy indicates two priorities, i.e. subnational governance and development, and good and effective governance, which are consistently addressed in the regional programme under focus areas 3 and 4.<sup>143</sup> This section addresses key findings in the area of local development, addressing outcomes 4, 5 and 6 of the regional programme.

## OUTCOME 4

Outcome 4 focuses on enhancing the capacity of national and subnational institutions to implement sustainable and integrated development activities reflecting good governance and climate change.

### Relevance

**The individual interventions implemented under this outcome are highly relevant to the development needs. The combination of effects produced by envisaged projects is coherent with the associated outcome.**

The overall relevance of the portfolio is ensured through various factors, with the main two being: a) correspondence to regional/subregional needs; and b) tailored support provided to various groups of beneficiaries (direct stakeholders as national local authorities and end beneficiaries/population) but integrating UN core values (introducing gender-related elements in the support, emphasis on equity and human security). The regional dimension of the interventions, and their correspondence to needs, is significant.

The portfolio includes the project Human Security for Individuals and Communities in Chernobyl-Affected Areas through Local Information Provision which has established

the International Chernobyl Research and Information Network (ICRIN) and the project Advocacy and Outreach in Central Asia which has a strong thematic focus directly connected with a precisely defined geographic area on which activities insist<sup>144</sup>. It also includes the project Think Globally Develop Locally (TGDL)<sup>145</sup>, focused on the highly relevant theme of administrative reforms/local development and particularly important for Balkans/Western CIS context where decentralization processes are undertaken by local governments. In this project the focus is thematic and activities are implemented across ECIS divisions.

An important element that contributed to the relevance of the portfolio under outcome 4 is the significant contribution of demand-driven advisory on capacity development. This advisory was provided by the capacity development team either funded from BRC Advisory Service/Capacity Development or through the project Capacity Development for Effective Public Institutions. This advisory assistance sustains the development of public institutions capacity and it is fully aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan which emphasizes capacity development. The data collected from field visits and the information captured in the Service Tracker provide strong evidence of how such support fully corresponds to the needs conveyed by UNDP country offices. The inherent flexibility and adaptability of such support enabled BRC to concretely help country offices, contributing to their positioning vis-à-vis counterparts and donors.

The process of building results under this outcome has been accompanied with attempts to maximize the use of UNDP expertise available in

<sup>143</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013', February 2011.

<sup>144</sup> The project Human Security for Individuals and Communities in Chernobyl-Affected Areas through Local Information Provision aims at developing human security in the territory affected by the Chernobyl disaster. The project Advocacy and Outreach in Central Asia is the framework for undertaking the Central Asian Regional Risk Assessment (CARRA) process. This process, launched following the natural crisis which affected Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan in 2007-2008, evolved into coordination mechanism among relevant stakeholders – primarily United Nations agencies and other members of the international community and focused on disaster risks and other development challenges.

<sup>145</sup> The project TGDL aims to stimulate actions that will help mitigate or adapt climate change at the subnational level by supporting inter-municipal interventions with the participation of national local institutions.

the region, The example of TGDG is illustrative in that the know-how developed at UNDP country office level in the field of decentralization, empowerment of national local institutions, inter-municipal cooperation (for example, by UNDP Macedonia) has been used as starting point for the TGDG project.

### **Effectiveness**

**Notable results have been achieved in enhancing the capacity of national and subnational institutions, for example, through a pilot test initiative in Macedonia, setting up information and communication technology centres in Chernobyl area, and ensuring ownership of results delivered.**

Of the results achieved, those reached under the TGDG have a particular significance as the project is striving to integrate elements reflecting good governance and relevant to local development with climate change considerations. The initial results include the enhanced capacity of three municipalities built up by implementing a pilot initiative of inter-municipal cooperation for energy management. This pilot initiative is important as it is focused on an issue of particular interest for national local authorities, generating ideas and practices that could be replicated by other users. Other important outputs are the training on inter-municipal cooperation and the first international round table of the Local Integrated Response Network – a knowledge platform established with the project partner Network of Associations of Local Authorities of South-East Europe (NALAS).

Although national local authorities are more geared towards addressing governance aspects, the awareness of the need of formulating policies to address climate change is still low and, as highlighted in the RBEC ROAR 2011, the resources (human, technical and financial) of national local authorities for further advancing adequate policies are still scarce.

Results of the country office survey, interviews with country offices and the analysis of Service Tracker indicate the effectiveness of the support provided by regional projects and advisory services, especially seen from the governance standpoint. Examples acknowledged include the ICRIN project, which developed human security in the area affected by Chernobyl disaster assisting the vulnerable population of the area. Support provided by the capacity development team has also been effective. This is evidenced by the adoption/implementation by TIKa and by the Ministry of Finance of Moldova of the capacity development plans formulated by the capacity development team in BRC.

The main risk factor that affected the effectiveness of the tasks implemented is associated with the project funding. Although the underfunding of TGDG has not severely reduced the degree of effectiveness of the project, it has introduced some uncertainties about long-term perspectives. A scenario with increased commitment/expectations from local governments and lack of funds for piloting initiatives could be very negative.

The last element to be noted is that the indicators as formulated in the RRF attached to the regional programme, are not fully adequate to thoroughly measure the effectiveness of outcome 4.<sup>146</sup> BRC indicated that, as indicators were defined prior to the conceptualization of TGDG (the pivotal project of the outcome) their possible revision is under consideration.

### **Efficiency**

**The outcome 4 portfolio has progressed efficiently. The envisaged outputs are delivered as planned, albeit partially constrained by underfunding.**

In terms of managerial efficiency, there is no evidence pointing to major problems affecting the portfolio's implementation. The portfolio directly related to this outcome is composed

<sup>146</sup> See Table 4, Annex 12 Outcome Indicators and Status available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.



of 10 projects, with a combined 2011/2012 budget of USD 2.7 million.<sup>147</sup> These projects can be divided according to their focus in three groups. The first one is represented by the project Strengthening Capacities of Local Governments and its follow-up TGDG, which are combining activities focused on inter-municipal cooperation. It accounts for about one third of the outcome's combined 2011/2012 budget.<sup>148</sup> The second group is composed of the projects BRC ICRIN and Regional ICRIN, which accounts for another third of the budget. The last group includes BRC Advisory Service/Capacity Development (budget line 69307) and the regional project Capacity Development for Effective Public Institutions. These two projects are grouped together being both demand-driven and serving as umbrella support to the outcome. They account for about 24 percent of the outcome's 2011/2012 budget.<sup>149</sup>

Data collected as well as BRC self-assessment<sup>150</sup> indicates as narrative and in colours<sup>151</sup> that projects are generally progressing adequately – with yearly targets achieved in most cases – even though the financial expenditure rate appears to be low. Data retrieved from BRC IWP 2012<sup>152</sup> indicate that the percentage of expenditure rate for projects implemented in 2011 was 52 percent. For the first two quarters of 2012, the percentage was 32 percent.

In some cases funding-related issues resulted in some delay in the start of the project and difficulties in implementing activities as planned. This occurred with the TGDG project, where the implementation of some key activities – focused

on Training on Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Local Development and on Local Environmental Governance Initiatives – have been postponed due to funding below the estimated budget. Apart from the TGDG project, funded with some 20 percent of the amount initially envisaged<sup>153</sup>, there are no indications that projects have been severely underfunded.

From a programmatic perspective, the delivery of the portfolio's activities is proceeding as planned. Interventions have been implemented using synergies between different modalities – regional projects, advisory services – and tailored to answer to country offices' needs.

The composition of the portfolio has been designed well: matching the needs to be addressed, sufficiently robust to withstand the implementation challenges (including the financial constraints mentioned) and complementing projects implemented at the country level. The case of TGDG is a good example, with activities concretely addressing the demand from local authorities, complementing UNDP national projects in Macedonia (on energy efficiency and inter-municipal cooperation) and Moldova (on renewable energy, on promoting integrated local development and on integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR)/climate change with local development).

The use of partnerships, especially with UN agencies, has been a factor that contributed to the efficiency of the outcome. For example, UNDP has partnered with International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), WHO, and UNICEF

<sup>147</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Results-Oriented Annual Report 2011'.

<sup>148</sup> The combined budget of the projects is USD 0.49 million for 2011 and USD 0.41 million for 2012, data from BRC IWP 2012.

<sup>149</sup> The combined budget of the projects is USD 0.42 million for 2011 and USD 0.48 million for 2012, data from BRC IWP 2012.

<sup>150</sup> RBEC ROAR 2011 and BRC IWP 2012.

<sup>151</sup> Output target off track – blue, output target achieved – green, output target on track – yellow. None of the statuses is further specified.

<sup>152</sup> IWP accessed on 10 September 2012.

<sup>153</sup> The project document shows that the project should have been financed with some USD 4 million, but it has been financed only for less than 20 percent.



in the implementation of the ICRIN project. Tasks foreseen have been rationally distributed to take into account the specificities of the agencies involved, with UNDP taking the lead in human security monitoring/project proposals. The partnership with NALAS in the TGDL project is facilitating the realization of activities and reaching more potential beneficiaries, with further effects in terms of widespread ownership.

### **Sustainability**

**The outcome 4 portfolio has enjoyed a high level of ownership of the results achieved so far with the active involvement of numerous counterparts that benefited from the support provided by the regional programme to enhance their capacity.**

Three key factors have contributed to the sustainability of this particular outcome: a) strong end-user orientation of the interventions; b) emphasis on fostering project ownership among national/subnational counterparts; and c) focus on capacity-building activities.

All projects included in the portfolio of outcome 4 have, to a different extent, elements reflecting these factors. Most of the support from the capacity development team and from the advisory services has been provided in response to specific requests usually from institutions that are generally well embedded in the countries' administration.

The TGDL project is highly sustainable. It interacts with a well-established counterpart – NALAS – and, with its partnership, it advocates for new approaches in inter-municipal cooperation among the local authorities in NALAS network. TGDL promoted solutions for inter-municipal service delivery that are sustainable thanks to possible savings achievable combining municipalities together. Synergies among TGDL activities and other UNDP-run interventions,

such as Moldova's Integrated Local Development Project and the project Community Based Approach to Local Development in Ukraine, should enhance sustainability prospects. However, upscaling the project by extending activities to Central Asian countries<sup>154</sup> is unfeasible given funding gaps and the absence of a supportive context.

A factor limiting the opportunity for local development initiatives, as well as capacity development initiatives, to make advancement is that, contrary to what is experienced in other fields (for example, anti-corruption), BRC has no proven competitive advantage in these fields. BRC has to compete for resources of active donors (in particular EU) with other implementers (including UNDP country offices having usually good in-house local development capacity).

### **OUTCOME 5**

The projects under this outcome primarily support governing institutions, aiming at strengthening of governance and institutional capacities to ensure a more equitable delivery of public services, with improved transparency and accountability.

#### **Relevance**

**The objectives of the portfolio are highly relevant to the region, as many ECIS countries still require strengthening of governance in their institutional structures, and implementation of international conventions, such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).**

Despite much improvements made in the ECIS region, governance is a programmatic area still widely acknowledged as a major priority, and more so by countries embarked on the European integration process. The importance of the issue is clearly reflected in the key documents of UNDP (e.g. country programmes, strategic notes,

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<sup>154</sup> See Minutes of the Policy and Programming Coordination Meeting, Bratislava, 9 September 2010.

RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013) and in those orienting the activities of other actors<sup>155</sup>. In addition, relevance of anti-corruption initiatives is directly linked with the Global Anti-corruption Programme and its priorities, considering that all ECIS countries are parties to UNCAC. The relevance of the regional programme should be also seen in the context of a region with the majority of country offices increasingly undertaking interventions on public administration reforms and anti-corruption.

The relevance of outcome 5 is influenced to a large extent by the factors similar to those indicated under outcome 3, i.e. regional dimension and capacity-building, but for this outcome the two factors are more intertwined.

The regional dimension is more evident considering the examples of the project Regional Cooperation for Public Administration Reforms (RCPAR) and of the anti-corruption interventions. For the former, the regional dimension has been targeted through its ECIS-wide network of focal points, with a strong emphasis on the Western Balkans through the Western Balkans Human Resources Management Community of Practitioners. For the latter, the focus on Western Balkans was accompanied by interventions mainly in Ukraine, Turkey and Central Asia in support of country offices or national institutions.

In terms of capacity-building, all projects in the portfolio use standard capacity-building tools (e.g. workshops, CoP), as well as other tools for exchanging expertise, such as Teamworks and platforms like the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (iKNOW Politics<sup>156</sup>).

## Effectiveness

**Through advisory services and the regional projects under the outcome, the counterparts have received targeted support to achieve concrete changes primarily on anti-corruption.**

Among others, these changes include enhanced capacity of beneficiaries (also of UNDP country offices) gained through trainings, assistance in transferring relevant methodologies (for example, related to UNCAC review process, for corruption measurement and corruption risk assessment). Romania and Macedonia have been assisted in initiating UNCAC self-assessment, and integrity assessments in different sectors were conducted in Montenegro and Tajikistan. Furthermore, FYR of Macedonia and Serbia were supported in the development of the national anti-corruption strategies. Evidences of these results include the feedback from country offices and beneficiaries. The Montenegro Directorate for Anti-Corruption Initiative (DACI) acknowledged that through its participation to the Network of Experts against Corruption (ACPN) and its cooperation with UNDP country office and BRC, the DACI assessment has been conducted, and it serves as baseline for future institutional capacity enhancement. The Serbian National Agency for Anti-corruption appreciated BRC support, which was qualified as flexible, prompt, and tailored to needs (guiding local counterparts by comparing practices used in different yet relevant contexts).

Assessing the progress under outcome 5 towards achieving the set targets has been hampered by issues related to the indicators identified.<sup>157</sup> As two of the four indicators defined for the

<sup>155</sup> See for example Stability and Association Agreements between the EU and Serbia, Albania and other countries in the Balkans (available online on the European Commission website, Enlargement. Stabilization and Association Process at <[http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/sap\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/sap_en.htm)> and UNDP Serbia's 'Country Programme Document for the Republic of Serbia (2011-2015)', Belgrade, 25 August 2010, available at <<http://www.undp.org.rs/index.cfm?event=public.cpm#cpap>>; UNDP Tajikistan's 'Country Programme Document (2010-2015)' and other country programmes available on the respective UNDP country offices' websites.

<sup>156</sup> See International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics website, <[www.iknowpolitics.org](http://www.iknowpolitics.org)>.

<sup>157</sup> See Table 5, Annex 12 – Outcome indicators available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

outcome are not suitable to contrast against the achievements, the assessment has been based mostly on the remaining most significant one, i.e. indicator 3, the 'level of compliance with obligations under the UNCAC'. Indicator 1, Government Accountability Score (taken from the Global Integrity Report), has been discontinued by Global Integrity, an NGO responsible for maintaining the indicator.<sup>158</sup> Indicator 2, Government Effectiveness Index, maintained by the World Bank, is acknowledged by the Bank itself as inadequate for measuring changes over short periods of time<sup>159</sup> (such as the period covered by the regional programme).

## Efficiency

**The portfolio provides efficient support by integrating inputs from regional projects, advisory services and knowledge products, despite the constraints posed by limited funding.**

The portfolio directly related to this outcome<sup>160</sup> is rather compact and composed of eight projects, with a 2011/2012 combined budget of USD 3.3 million. Most of the outcome's resources have been allocated to advisory services that provide ad hoc support to the outcome (approximately USD 1.6 million, i.e. 49 percent of the 2011/2012 combined budgets). The portfolio includes the project Regional Cooperation on Public Administration Reform (RCPAR) with a USD 640,000 budget in 2011/2012. Main interventions included the National Human Rights Protection Project (USD 600,000), and two projects in the field of anti-corruption (USD 350,000).

Noteworthy in terms of managerial efficiency is the portfolio's gap between funds requested and those available at project start. Generally, the projects in this outcome are not funded to the extent originally estimated for the set of activities envisaged in the respective project documents. The funding allocated to regional projects included in the portfolio is covering some 60 percent of the resources deemed required (and indicated in the project documents), with no evidence of the shortfall being met in succeeding years.<sup>161</sup>

Another issue that has affected efficiency is the Greek Government's decision to withdraw its financial support to the RCPAR project, a large initiative (USD 7 million for five years) that ensured good visibility and positioning to UNDP and BRC vis-à-vis public institutions from the ECIS region. The decision taken in 2010<sup>162</sup> led to the suspension of the activities and in 2011/2012 only USD 640,000 has been spent. To ensure the sustainability of some project components such as the Western Balkans Human Resources Management CoP, the activities continued under the auspices of the EU-funded Regional School of Public Administration (ReSPA), including the transfer of website and knowledge products.

According to data available, projects started in a timely manner and there are no indications of specific delays/issues (apart from those with RCPAR) hindering the portfolio's implementation. This aspect was reflected in the RBEC ROAR and the 2012 BRC IWP, recording all projects as on track or achieved. At mid-September 2012, the average rate of financial disbursement

<sup>158</sup> Global Integrity decided to discontinue with the indicator <<http://www.globalintegrity.org/blog/future-gir>>. It changed the methodology and the sample of countries, after which the baseline data for the ECIS countries considered by BRC could not be matched with the new data at the end of the regional programme in 2013.

<sup>159</sup> Worldwide Governance Indicators, <<http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/resources.htm>>.

<sup>160</sup> See UNDP RBEC, 'Results-Oriented Annual Report 2011'.

<sup>161</sup> For example, the project Strengthening Corruption Prevention Capacities in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, with an estimated budget of USD 1.3 million, has been funded with only USD 0.8 million, but the 2011/2012 IWP/RBEC ROAR data indicate a combined budget of USD 0.28 million. For the project Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice for Social Inclusion and Legal Empowerment, USD 0.5 million was allocated out of USD 0.85 million required.

<sup>162</sup> See Regional Centre for Public Administration Reform in Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States website <[http://www.rcpar.org/contents\\_en.asp?id=8](http://www.rcpar.org/contents_en.asp?id=8)>.

for 2011 was 75 percent, whereas the average rate for January–August 2012 was 38 percent<sup>163</sup>. The lowest delivery rate was 33 percent in 2011<sup>164</sup> and 12 percent in 2012.<sup>165</sup>

From a programmatic perspective, efficiency of the outcome can be assessed as high because of the provision of advisory services that strengthened activities conducted under regional projects.

The process of designing and delivering the portfolio was conducted well. To ensure the adequacy of the interventions and promote local ownership, close dialogue with country offices was maintained. Experiences and lessons from previous interventions have been taken into account to shape objectives and methodologies. Partnerships at the country level and with other institutions have been instrumental to the success of the interventions and actively pursued.

The intervention on anti-corruption is a good example of how support to country offices should be provided. The organization of the activities is appropriate and logically structured. The focus of this support was diverse and operated at different levels. It consisted of: a) tackling capacity lacking in anti-corruption and other integrity institution at the country level; b) supporting UNCAC implementation reviews by assisting country institutions in the UNCAC self-assessment; and c) supporting anti-corruption initiatives in public services. The support included advisory services/training support on the methodological approach, the implementation practicalities and the coordination with other agencies such as United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC). To facilitate multiplier effects and sustainability of the interventions, ACPN, set up by a previous initiative, was further supported. The support included assistance in conceptualizing new project ideas, and assisting in sourcing

some funds (e.g. a Social Innovation Camp on anti-corruption in Macedonia).

### **Sustainability**

**The portfolio has achieved a large base of lasting effects, for example, as observed in the widespread increase of capacity among institutions in Montenegro and Serbia, the vertical and horizontal of transfer of knowledge mainly in the Balkans, and the strengthening of active practitioners' networks.**

The main element contributing to the outcome's sustainability is the high level of local ownership built through the combination of different positive aspects. They entail: 1) a strong interest by national institutions and country offices in undertaking projects in the spheres covered by the portfolio; 2) appropriate design of projects by using different entry points/targeting diversified groups of beneficiaries; 3) concretely supporting beneficiaries in enhancing their capacities also on long term/strategic aspects (focus of the support on transfer of programmatic tools/action plans, etc.) and filling gaps in country offices' capacity to serve local institutions in fulfilling national obligations in international mechanisms.

The priority attributed by many governments in tackling governance aspects, particularly corruption, empowered national institutions responsible for implementing the reforms in public administrations. As a result, the effects achieved with regional programme support, for example, the enhanced capacity of institutions mentioned, are more sustainable being introduced in more supportive contexts, beyond the direct context of the institution assisted. The portfolio of outcome 5, with its mix of projects and advisory, has allowed a good flexibility in its approach towards countries and tasks. Diversifying the entry points, i.e. working with various institutions in each country

<sup>163</sup> The 2011 budget for outcome 5 was USD 1,937,266 and the expenditure was USD 1,449,158. In 2012 the figures were respectively USD 1,872,417 and USD 712,967, data retrieved from IWP 2012.

<sup>164</sup> For project RCPAR, data retrieved from IWP 2012.

<sup>165</sup> For project Strengthening Corruption Prevention, data retrieved from IWP 2012.



(e.g. anti-corruption agencies and line ministries), enabled operation on different aspects, increasing the overall sustainability of the activities in a country.

The ACPN and the community of practice have proven sound tools for facilitating know-how transfer and East-East exchanges. National institutions are finding extremely useful the opportunity to be exposed to the experience and receive very practical advices from those who have been very recently facing similar requirements.

## OUTCOME 6

In alignment with the RPD, projects under outcome 6 support the process of capacitating selected institutions in the ECIS region to build peaceful and tolerant societies.

### Relevance

**The portfolio is highly relevant as it strengthens the capacity of human rights and justice institutions and UNDP country offices improving the regime of rule of law, human rights, and justice programming in support of country-level engagements with national and international principles and mechanisms.**

The goal of the outcome is aligned with the 2011 UNDP ‘Strategic Notes’ in which country offices identified the need for support in the area. The outcome’s goals respond to those of the vulnerable groups and marginalized communities that the project intends to empower. These groups have been indirectly assisted through the support that has been extended: to 1) national partners active in the rule of law and access to justice service delivery; and to 2) national institutions responsible for the engagements with international human rights and justice principles and mechanisms. Specifically, the regional programme has assisted the follow-up of the UPR, preparing countries for the second review (started in 2012).

A factor that has strengthened the outcome’s relevance is that the support to national partners and institutions is delivered through UNDP country offices. This approach led to several positive effects: enhancement of country office capacity and synergies with BRC, and increased promotion of the role of UNDP in each country. Specific positive feedback in this regard has been obtained during field visits.<sup>166</sup>

### Effectiveness

**The preliminary results obtained in the implementation of the outcome’s portfolio (it is almost identical with the project Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice for Social Inclusion and Legal Empowerment [PHASE]) indicate a high level of effectiveness, even though activities were initiated recently. The role of UNDP/BRC has been promoted among relevant stakeholders through high-profile events on rule of law, access to justice and on legal empowerment, e.g. in Turkey and Ukraine.**

The perceived effectiveness of the outcome among country offices is high. Numerous feedbacks recorded in the Service Tracker, project reports, specific comments in the survey and interviews during field visits indicated that the support received from the regional programme via BRC is highly beneficial for country offices. In particular, the feedback from some UNDP country offices emphasized the concrete support given them in mobilizing resources from potential donors; the facilitation role BRC played in the conceptualization of project ideas; and in sustaining country offices in implementing national projects.

Some examples can be presented as evidences of such support. BRC assisted UNDP Tajikistan in mobilizing resources from a Swiss donor for initiatives in the rule of law sector. The support from BRC was particularly appreciated in Ukraine because it enhanced UNDP country

<sup>166</sup> National partners in Uzbekistan have been particularly vocal in expressing appreciation of their partnership with UNDP and BRC.



office's relations with the Ministry of Justice – its main partner – and helped them to better position itself among experts and practitioners in the field of legal empowerment of the poor and access to justice. Another notable example presented in Box 6 is the financial support received within the UPR Follow-up Facility that allowed the Serbia country office to finance the development by a local NGO of a web portal to collect citizens' opinions/positions/data in relation to UPR process ('crowdsourcing').

**Box 6. Vox Populi – Rate Your Rights. UPR in Serbia**

Vox Populi is an online questionnaire developed on the basis of the recommendations provided to Serbia as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) by the United Nations Human Rights Council. It has been based on the webportal of B92 - the main media outlet in Serbia – accessible to citizens from July to November 2012.

The Belgrade Centre for Human Rights developed the platform (and moderated the discussions that followed), using seed funding (approximately USD 15,000) that UNDP Serbia received from the UPR Follow-up Facility.

The questionnaire has been very successful: 800 responses were received in the first week of operations and over 3,000 responses (data on the Vox Populi page, 30 September 2012). It has ensured a great impact: high visibility to the review and its data will also be used for UPR reporting (in October 2012, Serbia is expected to submit the State report on the state of human rights in country to the Human Rights Council for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cycle of the UPR). It is an innovative tool and it represents a great example of using the potentiality of Internet to promote human rights instruments and UPR. The conceptualization and realization of the project was a cross-practice exercise, with combined inputs from BRC democratic governance and knowledge and innovation teams.

Source: Interviews with Serbia country office and [www.b92.net/info/un](http://www.b92.net/info/un)

The support has also been instrumental in bridging gaps in the capacity of the country offices vis-à-vis needs arising in the implementation of interventions, including national projects, as in Moldova. As the main donor, SIDA asked the adoption of the human rights based approach (HRBA) in the large UNDP-run Integrated Local Development Project. The involvement of BRC has allowed UNDP Moldova to meet such demand.

The comparative strength of UNDP, identified during field visits, is of impartiality, critical to countries that may have difficulty in addressing certain sensitive issues. Such impartiality, combined with the focus on supporting some governments from a traditionally challenging subregion such as Central Asia in meeting international obligations (e.g. the UPR), represents an excellent entry point for discussing interventions and possibly engaging institutions in other topics of the United Nations development agenda. Moreover, the cooperation of UNDP BRC with local CSOs on these conventions serves the dual function of enhancing the relevance of the interventions and strengthening the standing of the partners.

### Efficiency

**Programme activities under the outcome have been delivered as planned and included visible initiatives (for example, the events mentioned under effectiveness) and intense cooperation with country offices in preparation of the UPRs.**

Of the different outcomes included in the regional programme, outcome 6 is the smallest in terms of budget volume and portfolio. In the period of observation of this evaluation, the portfolio includes two projects, one focused on Rule of Law and the other on the UPR. These two projects, with a third included under outcome 3, belong to the regional project Promoting Human Rights and Access to Justice for Social Inclusion and Legal Empowerment (PHASE). The last project of the portfolio is a three-year intervention on HRBA and Access to Justice that ended in March 2011. The overall 2011/2012 combined budget is USD 210,000.

The amount of data related to managerial efficiency collected during the evaluation is insufficient to assess precisely this aspect. Among relevant information available, the data on funding of the projects started in 2011 shows a rather significant gap – 40 percent – between the total amount of resources required and those allocated. No qualified details on cost-efficiency of services provided can be provided. Nevertheless, considering the highly specialized topics treated in the outcome and the high level of knowledge maintained in BRC on such topics, BRC resources have a convenient quality/cost ratio.

As successor to the Strengthening Regional Capacity for Human Rights and Justice Project (2008-2010), PHASE had the advantage of operating in a context already prepared. However, to define more precisely the content of the project, extensive consultations between BRC, country offices and other stakeholders have been conducted.

The work done under the previous project and the preparation of counterparts at the country level allowed PHASE to follow the approach defined in the design stage, promoting cross-practice work and introducing innovation. The experience with Vox Populi is a clear example.

To enhance efficiency the project has involved partners that contribute specific expertise in human rights, justice, and legal empowerment. For example, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) brings technical expertise and normative United Nations' mandate for human rights monitoring and protection. At the country level, PHASE has involved country offices and national institutions, but more importantly has engaged CSOs.

Evidences of the good work done with country offices and of their appreciation can be retrieved from Service Tracker's feedback, and from specific comments in the survey.

## **Sustainability**

**During the period under review, an increased level of ownership among stakeholders, complemented by an enhanced capacity level and partnerships, has been established. The examples of relevant institutions now partnering with BRC/democratic governance practice are the Open Society Institute and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.**

Sustainability elements are well embedded in the design of PHASE and include key ones such as a focus on ownership, capacity development and partnerships. Instrumental to develop ownership was designing the project so as to reach three groups of outcome's beneficiaries (selected institutions and organizations of the national human rights protection systems, UNDP's country offices and other national partners) and fostering national ownership among them. As each group has different prospects of institutional and financial sustainability, the possibility of maintaining results is somewhat higher.

Connected with sustainability elements mentioned, the first and foremost key preliminary achievement is that PHASE ensured a high level of ownership at national level, for example in Uzbekistan and in the Balkans. From this perspective, the response from country offices and national partners has been very favourable, which augurs well for the sustainability of results. There are numerous elements confirming the level of ownership among country offices. The involvement of country offices is evidenced from the quality and extent of their participation to the project (e.g. their contributions to the CoP and other events organized to promote exchanges) as well as the numerous requests for advisory support from BRC (as proxy indicators, internal documentation records request from nine different countries in the period January-May 2012). The role of UNDP country offices as resource of the expertise linked to PHASE has also been correctly emphasized. As confirmed in the 2011 RBEC ROAR, having country offices' staff members (from Croatia, Georgia,

and Armenia) trained as HRBA trainers at the United Nations Staff College is an important element of the process of building capacity (and it has also a potential East-East dimension). Equally important is the level of interest and involvement expressed by national partners such as CSOs, bar associations and legal aid providers whose interest was captured in the baseline data of the PHASE project and is reflected in their active involvement in key PHASE-supported initiatives such as the Kiev 2011 Regional Policy Dialogue on Legal Empowerment.

The capacity-development aspect has been properly tackled, with initial results. Apart from the mentioned provision of training to selected UNDP staff, this aspect included forming a specialized CoP focused on UPR follow-up and targeting the development of UNDP in-house capacity and other initiatives. The degree of sustainability of these initiatives is assessed as high.

As for partnerships, the main result refers to a good cooperation base established with OSI Budapest (partner in the Regional Policy Dialogue), with the intention of jointly organizing regional events on legal empowerment. Reportedly, some cooperation took place and further is planned specifically between PHASE and the OHCHR, and with the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR). For the latter, UNDP BRC contributed to the ODIHR Handbook on Gender Mainstreaming and National Human Rights Institutions. No other solid evidences have been retrieved showing a similar extent of progress in relations with other potential partners identified in project design document (such as donors, the European Agency for Fundamental Rights as well as other United Nations agencies) and this aspect should be strengthened in the remaining project time to enhance sustainability of PHASE effects.

### 3.4 PARTNERSHIPS

#### OUTCOME 7

Outcome 7 aims at promoting East-East cooperation and effective aid management. The objective says that by 2013 governments in the region, including countries building a new partnership

after ‘graduating’ from the support of UNDP, will expand their capacities to manage development cooperation and coordination of development activities more effectively, as well as to have better access to relevant experience and expertise.

#### Relevance

**Outcome 7 touches on a subject of high importance to UNDP: partnership building with emerging donors. The intervention logic of this outcome portfolio, however, is not conducive to fully realizing its objectives.**

The Emerging Donor Initiative, started in 2004, aims to: (1) promote development cooperation between emerging donor countries and recipient countries; (2) strengthen capacities in emerging donor countries; and (3) enhance the role of UNDP in East-East and East-South cooperation. It was formulated as an outcome under the RPD for the first time for the programming period 2011-2013. The outcome is linked to focus area 5 in the RPD/RRF, i.e. “Promotion of new partnerships in development cooperation”. While the other six outcomes in the RPD concern the thematic priorities of the region, outcome 7 is more of a general cross-cutting nature.

As the countries graduate from the support of UNDP programmes, the establishment of an effective partnership with them is of great interest to UNDP. UNDP’s continuous effort in resource mobilization to support regional development is also a critical agenda. While the outcome 7 portfolio was established to meet those goals, it has a number of challenges in its intervention logic that have prevented the programme to fully exploit its potential. They include: i) weaknesses in the selection of programme indicators and setting of targets (Annex 12 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>); ii) limited focus on targeting policy and decision-makers in its outreach strategy; and iii) modest human resources available for the team.

#### Effectiveness

**The portfolio has engaged with a number of emerging donors in the process of their**

**becoming effective donors. While several specific activities have been implemented, the extent to which the portfolio has contributed to building their capacity is yet to be fully measured.**

Through the implementation of regional projects under the portfolio, BRC manages Official Development Assistance (ODA) in a trust-fund-like modality on behalf of emerging donors (Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) and engages in a number of country-specific partnerships, such as the one in Slovakia through a regional project on public finance management (targeting Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova) or in Kazakhstan as an emerging provider of development cooperation, focused on Central Asia. For the Emerging Donor Initiative, a regional project ending in December 2012, the current achievements as reported are as follows:<sup>167</sup>

- Support to ODA capacity-building in terms of programming and evaluations, in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan.
- Czech, Slovak and Hungarian trust funds delivered over USD 1.5 million in ODA in close cooperation with country offices and regional programme. In the course of the trust fund initiatives, exchange of experts has been fostered, working either in BRC or visits to UNDP country offices. Slovak development and evaluation training was organized in 2010. A study tour was organized for professionals from Montenegro and Moldova for a regional climate change meeting in Bratislava.
- Resource mobilization USD 700,000. For the year 2012, about USD 190,000 has been additionally budgeted for new initiatives,

such as Partnership with Russia and Turkey, East-East Cooperation, ODA Mechanism and Triangular Cooperation.

The two indicators chosen for the outcome are: (1) the number of development cooperation partnerships capacity development initiatives with non-OEDC/DAC donors facilitated; and (2) the number of countries supported with knowledge-sharing initiatives. Both indicators are considered rather modest for the objectives envisaged.

Indicator 1 notes, as its baseline, that three trust funds are operational. All three trust funds, i.e. Slovak, Czech and the Hungarian trust funds were in the BRC portfolio before the current programming period and have remained operational. The target is to maintain these funds and explore two additional new partnership initiatives.<sup>168</sup>

For indicator 2, the outcome does not have concrete numerical figures defined for the baseline and the target.<sup>169</sup> The target of the indicator is that 'all' countries in the region would be supported with knowledge-sharing initiatives. At the time of evaluation, there were 15 countries reporting support by at least one of such initiatives, the 'Kapuscinski Lectures'.<sup>170</sup> The series of high-profile lectures on development issues are given at universities and institutions throughout Western and Eastern European countries, supported by UNDP and the EC. The lectures are, unfortunately, of a 'one-off' nature, and are mostly participated in by students rather than policy and decision makers. Specific, desired results from such events are not clearly defined, and it is not known what concrete results have been generated.

<sup>167</sup> IWP 2011.

<sup>168</sup> At present, the Hungarian trust fund is operational with remaining budget of just slightly beyond USD 50,000 (from an original budget of almost USD 2 million) for the year 2012. The future of this trust fund beyond 2012 has not been reported, whether it will be continued with additional funds or come to an end. The Czech-UNDP trust fund has been replenished by the Czech Government with a contribution of USD 602,674.18, increasing the preliminary budget for 2011 to USD 888,597.12. The Slovak fund is also phasing out with a minimum budget. Information provided by the IWP, BRC work plan monitoring 2012.

<sup>169</sup> For example, the baseline is defined as 'most' countries supported by the regional programme on an on-demand basis.

<sup>170</sup> IWP 2012.



## Efficiency

**The breadth of provision of services remains limited. More attention should be paid to intensify the provision of policy services aiming at building emerging donor capacity.**

The emerging donor team is composed of two international (P4) and two national staff. One of the international staff joined the team only in November 2011. National staff primarily manage the Czech and Slovak trust funds that are operational since 2004 and 2009, respectively. The available budget is USD 1,591,934 (USD 116,500 in core and USD 1,475,434 in non-core funding) in 2011 and USD 2,290,477 (USD 460,000 in core resources and USD 1,830,477 in noncore resources) in 2012.<sup>171</sup> The implementation rate was 91 percent in 2011 and 52 percent in 2012 at the time of the evaluation.<sup>172</sup> The availability of information on the portfolio activities was rather limited for the evaluation, and the assessment was based predominantly on field visits, the survey and modest data captured in the tracker analysis.

The provision of policy advice is a critical part of the portfolio, supporting the target countries to become efficient and effective partners. Positive feedback was provided on the efforts made by BRC staff during the country visits, for example, on the seminars on how to work with Russia as a donor, as well as advisory services related to the emerging donor initiative with TIKa, which was reported as 'short but effective' in bringing a global perspective to Turkey in the area of development cooperation. The survey results indicated that the support to development of project concepts according to requirements of various donors was much appreciated.

The amount of time spent on advisory services under the portfolio, between January 2011 and

2012 (at the time of the evaluation) was recorded as 297.5 person days in the Service Tracker. Much of the work was registered by the national staff who work outside the BRC office. The head of the practice recorded only 19.5 person days (12 days in countries and 7.5 desk work) and the other international staff who joined the team only in 2011 recorded 76 person days (43 in countries and 33 desk work) for the provision of advisory services during the period. Considering that most of the heads of other BRC practices have spent much longer times for their advisory activities and they are in high demand, this portfolio needs to be more proactive at the country level.

## Sustainability

**The sustainability of the portfolio depends on the timeliness and intensity with which critical distinct services are provided, i.e. knowledge transfer through advisory services and regional projects, and fund-raising activities.**

Under the outcome portfolio, various initiatives have been taken to transfer knowledge (e.g. in support to grant proposals in Central Asia by the Czech trust fund), and to build emerging donor capacity (through staff exchange and positioning of staff of new donors in UNDP country and regional offices within the trust fund initiatives). However, efforts in these areas need to be further intensified in a timely manner, in order to ensure the sustainability of the portfolio. Advisory services need to be further strengthened to meet the needs of the country offices. Currently, the feedback recorded on the quality of advisory services provided is limited, and this also needs to be rectified. The benefits of the Emerging Donor Initiative, which ends in December 2012, should be carefully assessed, based on which its successor, the New Partnership Development project, should be planned.

<sup>171</sup> Data provided by BRC management, as of April 2012.

<sup>172</sup> IWP 2012.





## CHAPTER 4.

# STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP IN THE REGION

This chapter presents the main findings related to UNDP's positioning in the region, i.e. UNDP's strategic relevance and responsiveness to development priorities, and how it has promoted UN values and made use of partnerships, and its comparative strengths. Business development and resource mobilization, a challenge faced by the region, has also been addressed.

## 4.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

### RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

BRC, through its E&E practice, has positioned itself as a broker of environmental finance in the region, helping countries to access resources that are available externally (e.g. global and regional trust funds such as GEF or Clima East). Country offices have often struggled to access financial resources to address challenges in environment at the national level, particularly on their own, since it is technically challenging to prepare appropriate project proposals. In response to their requests, which have come from the countries throughout the ECIS region and its subregions, the BRC E&E practice team has provided technical expertise, as well as additional complementary services (e.g. lateral services such as technical backstopping, support in quality control and implementation) as part of its work.

### SOCIAL INCLUSION

BRC has moved strategically to be one of the key actors supporting the countries in the

Western Balkans, through UNDP country offices, to advance the agenda for EU integration. Outstanding work and results obtained in the field of disaggregated data collection and analysis in support of evidence-based inclusive policies for Roma and other socially excluded groups, a top EU priority, has given BRC a seat at the table in representative European forums. The strong technical capacity of BRC in this area has been internationally acknowledged since 2003 and amplified in the last couple of years, getting the recognition of governments, major donors and development partners, and reputable academia.

The new methodology for measuring social exclusion has been the subject of presentations and debate in high-level international congresses and events, such as the Congress of the European Society of Rural Sociology 'Inequality and Diversity in European Rural Areas' (Chania, Greece, August 2011).<sup>173</sup> Several countries have expressed interest in institutionalizing social inclusion indicators and BRC advisers are now working to support this process.<sup>174</sup>

In the area of social inclusion, there has been a continuous dynamic positioning effort of BRC, especially in identifying 'market' niches in relation to the European integration agenda. An example is the excellent internal paper by BRC, which provides important insights in the business of a major donor and identifies specific areas where BRC could play a strategic and useful role in the Western Balkans and EU Member States.<sup>175</sup>

<sup>173</sup> See keynote speech of Professor Max Spoor from the Hague Erasmus University, available at <[http://esrs2011.maich.gr/docs/plenaries/SPOOR\\_paper.pdf](http://esrs2011.maich.gr/docs/plenaries/SPOOR_paper.pdf)>.

<sup>174</sup> Tajikistan, Ukraine, Moldova, and Armenia.

<sup>175</sup> Ivanov, Andrey, 'Getting Involved with the EC: Possible Thematic Areas, Modalities of Cooperation and Territorial Scope', BRC internal document dated 17 November 2011, retrieved from the Service Tracker.

The MDG-related activities implemented within the regional programme had a high strategic relevance especially in Caucasus and Central Asia countries. The newly published MDG report 2012<sup>176</sup>, which presents the status of these countries on the achievement of various MDGs as well as the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (known also as Busan Partnership<sup>177</sup>), demonstrates this reality. Within the regional programme, the work aimed to support the countries to advance the achievement of MDGs and development goals, has brought together almost all BRC practices.

BRC has strived to position itself as an influential knowledge source and broker in the ECIS region on poverty, inequality and social inclusion topics. It did so through intensive human development training initiatives and production of a large range of knowledge products (Refer to Annex 11 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?valid=6676>) as well as extensive use of social media. The knowledge and innovation practice, a creative, enthusiastic and highly regarded team by the country offices, has actively promoted social media and interactive platforms to enable regional dialogue and debate on social inclusion. It should be noted that, at the same time, only a few number of knowledge products produced since 2011 in the area of social inclusion were indicated by the

country office survey respondents as being particularly useful (e.g. RHDR<sup>178</sup>; Development and Transition newsletter; 'Handbook on Social Contracting'<sup>179</sup>; 'Development Stories from Europe and Central Asia'<sup>180</sup>). On ISSUU, a web-based information-sharing platform, most viewed of those produced in 2011 were the RHDR and 'Development Stories' (volume one)<sup>181</sup>. Of those produced in 2012, the most viewed on SlideShare and ISSUU respectively were 'The Situation of Roma in 11 EU Member States'<sup>182</sup> and 'Development Stories from Europe and Central Asia' (volume two)<sup>183</sup>. The reason may be the high level of ownership, since these three knowledge products involved the direct participation of country offices. There was not always clear evidence of the use of knowledge products, hence the suggestions of country offices to establish research topics and analytical avenues based on consultations with them.

It would have thus been useful if BRC developed from start a strategy to ensure ownership of the end users and carefully monitored usage, from a strategic perspective. In cases when the encumbered investment in the production of a knowledge product was particularly high, i.e. exceeding a certain financial threshold, it would have been useful for BRC to carry out at least a basic ex-ante assessment of its strategic impact before mobilizing required resources.

<sup>176</sup> United Nations, 'The Millennium Development Goals Report 2012', New York, 2012.

<sup>177</sup> Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, December 2011, available at <<http://www.aideffectiveness.org/busanhl4/about/about-busan.html>>, accessed 15 August 2012.

<sup>178</sup> UNDP, RBEC, 'Beyond Transition. Towards Inclusive Societies', Regional Human Development Report, Bratislava, 2011.

<sup>179</sup> ECNL, UNDP, 'Handbook on Non-State Social Service Delivery Models: A Guide for Policy Makers and Practitioners in the CIS Region', UNDP Bratislava, 2012.

<sup>180</sup> UNDP RBEC, 'Empowering Lives, Building Resilience: Development Stories from Europe and Central Asia', 2011 (vol. I), 2012 (vol. II).

<sup>181</sup> 60,489 views, respectively 219, 584 views (Source: ISSUU accessed 7 October 2012).

<sup>182</sup> This publication has been referenced mainly by intergovernmental organizations that are not part of the UN or financial institutions, compared to other knowledge products in the area of social inclusion that were referenced only by UN agencies or UNDP country offices, e.g. CESTIM Immigration Studies Centre, Child Protection in Europe, European Public Health Alliance, Institute for Rights Equality & Diversity, International Federation of Social Workers, Roma Health Network, RED (Rights, Equality, Diversity) European Network, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, TANDIS (Tolerance and Non Discrimination Information System) of OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (Source: UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Cybermetric Analysis of UNDP Knowledge Products and Platforms – ECIS (draft)', New York, November 2012).

<sup>183</sup> 13,384 views (Source: SlideShare accessed 18 October 2012) and 28,374 views (Source: ISSUU accessed 7 October 2012), respectively.

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Through its regional programme, BRC has enhanced its standing and role in supporting the countries in the ECIS region, in coordination with the country offices, to further progress in the area of local development and governance. The overall strategic relevance of the interventions financed under outcomes 4, 5 and 6 has been assured through a good combination of focused regional projects, accompanied by targeted advisory support and complemented by extensive capacity development assistance.

The role of BRC has been generally acknowledged as instrumental to opening new opportunities for the country offices in their approaches to various national counterparts, ensuring promptly needed expertise, with reported very positive outcomes in terms of visibility of UNDP and its recognition as an important player among national counterparts.

UNDP has been actively involved in various initiatives in the region focused on local development and it has developed a good knowledge base.<sup>184</sup> This expertise has enabled UNDP, through some of its country offices, to successfully position itself among the relevant actors, establishing partnerships with the EU and other donors. In the current programming phase, BRC has built on the results achieved by country offices and fostered synergies with them, strengthening the cooperation with local stakeholders and expanding the focus of its inter-municipal initiatives by introducing climate considerations.

BRC has expanded the rather comprehensive work initiated in FYR of Macedonia in the area of inter-municipal development, and extended this experience to other Western Balkans countries and seeding it in Moldova and Ukraine. A key element in the results achieved is linked to the involvement of a local/regional counterpart, NALAS. The good cooperation with NALAS,

UNDP country offices and national counterparts has been crucial to allow BRC to ensure a good balance between upstream interventions and downstream initiatives, and to reach out to new counterparts in other relevant countries, such as Turkey. However, as pursuing these opportunities further could be hampered by uncertainties in the medium to long-term financing perspectives, future scenario of the interventions will have to be carefully defined.

In the field of anti-corruption BRC has been particularly effective in supporting UNDP country offices, especially in Western Balkans, Ukraine and Central Asia, aligning its interventions to national priorities and policies. The existence of a consistent support from governments in the region towards addressing corruption has provided the needed political support to match the resources allocated effectively. The combination of advisory services with the assistance under the regional anti-corruption project, funded by the Global Thematic Programme on Anti-Corruption for Development Effectiveness (PACDE), enhanced the relevance of these interventions vis-à-vis the contexts in the country offices and regionally.

BRC has progressively shifted emphasis from anti-corruption agencies towards extending capacity development support to other type of agencies forming the national integrity systems in the different countries in the region. The range of approaches adopted by the BRC team in working at the country level balances well upstream and downstream interventions.

Consistent with UNDP's Strategic Plan, BRC has supported the implementation of human rights recommendations emanated from UPR, treaty bodies, and other mechanisms. Such support is strengthening the national human rights systems, fostering the engagements of governments, NHRIs, and CSOs with international human

<sup>184</sup> A recent assessment looked into more than 120 projects on local development implemented in the ECIS region. See UNDP, Development & Transition Newsletter, July 2011.

rights mechanisms. The relevance of the interventions implemented is very high as they fully correspond to UNDP's mandate and complement interventions undertaken at the country office level and in some cases bridging existing capacity gaps. The UPR Follow-up Facility has provided an excellent opportunity for dialogue with governments and for strengthening national human rights systems.

The regional programme has been highly responsive in supporting some country offices to undertake initiatives on legal empowerment, resulting in new opportunities for cross-practice partnership especially with the gender, capacity development, HIV/AIDS team (e.g. in Kyrgyzstan, Ukraine, Turkey, etc.). Such momentum has been coagulated in the PHASE project, the new regional initiative on human rights, justice and legal empowerment. BRC support delivered through its highly valued advisers ensured a good mix of policy advice, knowledge sharing and policy leadership answering to the needs arising from the region.

## MODALITIES OF REGIONAL PROGRAMME DELIVERY

As BRC increasingly orients itself towards operating as a 'consulting company'<sup>185</sup> – an efficient and demand-driven entity – a detailed analysis of how efficiently the three modalities of the regional programme (i.e. advisory services, knowledge products and regional projects) have been in delivering the programme and on how such efficiency has been measured is important.

### Advisory Services

Advisory services represent an operational modality that is generally appreciated by country offices. However, the extent to which they meet the recipients' demand appears to vary among individual assignments.

The feedback from country visits and the survey indicated that flexibility, specificity and relevance are the most valued characteristics of BRC advisory services. Advisers' in-depth knowledge of UNDP approaches and procedures is particularly appreciated. At the same time, results showed that advisers' have not always delivered the required technical competence when this was unavailable locally.<sup>186</sup> In some cases the know-how presented by the advisers were viewed as outdated. Since the survey did not cover a question of the cost of services – a critical element to assess the reasoning behind relying on BRC advisory services – it is difficult to draw conclusions on the cost as determinant in selecting the source of expertise. However, some anecdotal views expressed during field visits indicate that, if provided at the market prices, the demand of country offices for BRC services would be low.

Advisers from BRC are often considered as the third option of support when country offices need expertise, after national and international consultants.<sup>187</sup> National consultants seem to be preferred because of their knowledge of local context, skills in languages, costs, and the ease of administrative management by the country offices. Country offices' preference for international consultants can be partly explained by the nature of assignments. BRC advisers appear to be favoured when an in-depth knowledge and experience of UNDP is required, although their limited availability for a longer term assignment and the ease of consultant contract management by the country offices seem to favour the use of international consultants.

BRC has identified a series of indicators and introduced them in its integrated work plan (IWP) to control the efficiency in delivering advisory services: i) Percentage of service requests

<sup>185</sup> Such orientation/change of paradigm was repeatedly underlined by BRC management and highlighted also in the previous regional programme evaluation.

<sup>186</sup> See answers to Question 15, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>187</sup> See answers to Question 13, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.



fulfilled by core advisors; and ii) Quality of services provided: Rating of service quality measured through surveys and users' feedback, i.e. product survey. These indicators are relevant from the BRC standpoint, as they measure the efficiency/effectiveness of BRC advisers/management, allowing a good control on the use of resources allocated for advisory services. However, they are not sufficient from the standpoint of the recipients of the services. For example, the country offices are requested to provide feedback in the Service Tracker, after the services have been rendered, on the quality of each service provided. However, data are not reliable because only a small portion of the advisory services are rated, as anonymity is not ensured in the system.<sup>188</sup> Also, no in-depth assessment on cost efficiency is currently possible for a single advisory service, since the necessary data are not fully registered.<sup>189</sup>

### Knowledge Products

During the period under evaluation, BRC tried to enhance its standing as centre of knowledge and as agent in transferring it. In the country office survey, 35 percent of the respondents were 'very satisfied' and 65 percent were 'satisfied' with the support in the area of knowledge management.<sup>190</sup> Only a limited percentage of country offices, 10 percent, reported that they have not received knowledge products.<sup>191</sup>

Survey results also indicated that UNDP knowledge products are almost unanimously appreciated as being credible and reliable.<sup>192</sup> In terms of their relevance, the opinions are divided, with 55 percent of the country offices reporting that the products have 'always' or 'generally' addressed pertinent issues to them, whereas for 40 percent reporting this happens 'sometimes' and one office responding 'never'.

The position of country offices is less positive when considering other defining features of knowledge products. According to the survey, UNDP knowledge products do not always have recognized impact in the countries.<sup>193</sup> An indicated constraint is that knowledge products are not sufficiently practical for use at the country level.<sup>194</sup>

Field visits and responses to the open-ended questions in the survey yielded two findings: a) BRC knowledge products or BRC contribution in adapting global knowledge products to the region have not always matched thoroughly with the country offices' needs<sup>195</sup>; and b) they have not achieved their full potential, as country offices are not always aware of their availability. As a result, only a few products had an impact being viewed or used by a wide number of users.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>188</sup> As shown in the Service Tracker analysis, in 2011, feedback was given for only 14 percent of the assignments. Reportedly, the service recipients are not fully inclined to provide their objective feedback, since there is no mechanism to provide comments on specific services and advisers without their identity revealed.

<sup>189</sup> Currently, details on each assignment (e.g. daily cost) are registered ex post in the Service Tracker, without establishing the initial estimates, preventing one from conducting a before and after comparison. Also, the selection of staff for a particular assignment does not seem to be guided by the adviser's daily cost or the need to balance the use of resources within a practice.

<sup>190</sup> See answers to Question 14, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>191</sup> See answers to Question 19, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>192</sup> Question 20, Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>.

<sup>193</sup> Five percent of the respondents indicated that the products have 'always' an impact, whereas 25 percent indicated 'generally' and 60 percent indicated only 'sometime'.

<sup>194</sup> 30 percent indicated that the products are 'sometimes' of practical use, and 15 percent 'rarely' or 'never'.

<sup>195</sup> Some products were acknowledged as useful though outdated; others should have been adapted to the regional specificities including translation into Russian.

<sup>196</sup> See UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Cybermetric Analysis of UNDP Knowledge Products and Platforms', New York, November 2012.

In this context, it appears that BRC has not identified strong efficiency indicators, contrasting the estimated outreach with the costs for developing the products. Considering that some knowledge products were developed for a limited number of end users, indicators of use should have been also defined, especially for products made available on the Internet.

### **Regional Projects**

The regional projects are generally implemented well and are achieving their targets. Those projects that are decentralized in management and finance, and have addressed subregional and/or national priorities, generally appeared to have been efficient and with higher ownership by country offices and national stakeholders. During the field visits, the country offices mentioned that the consultation process for the design of regional projects was often more formality than a constructive dialogue. In other cases, project documents were shared with the countries which were simply asked to check if they could fit into the respective regional project, rather than involving them in a proper consultation process. As for the indicators defined for the regional projects, as discussed in Chapter 3, there are significant weaknesses in many of the indicators set for the outcomes.

## **4.2 PROMOTION OF UN VALUES**

### **GENDER MAINSTREAMING**

BRC has undertaken a number of strategic actions to advance gender equality at the country and regional levels, within the framework of RBEC Gender Equality Strategy 2008-2011 project. The analytical work on key gender issues in the region and the provision of gender disaggregated data to policy makers and practitioners<sup>197</sup>, highlighting gender dimensions in

economy, poverty, health, education, decision making etc., have all contributed to informed legal reforms, policy developments and measures. In Uzbekistan, a gender perspective was incorporated in the draft law on social partnership. New or reformed laws on gender-based violence have been adopted in Ukraine, Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. Business training and mentoring for women entrepreneurs was provided in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan together with microfinance support in Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and Tajikistan to increase the economic empowerment of women. The regional programme has also supported the strengthening of gender-mainstreaming capacity among gender practitioners in the region.

The regional programme, however, has only partially mainstreamed a gender perspective. According to the RPD, the programme aims to address gender inequality in the region and to support gender-sensitive programming of development activities. It also specifies that the gender component results of the programme will be monitored through the use of the gender marker and gender outcome indicators. However, evaluability of gender mainstreaming is rather low. In the RRF, two of the outcomes are gender-blind (outcomes 2 and 7). Most of the outcome indicators are not gender disaggregated. Gender is absent at the output level. The regional programme has not served as a guiding framework for fostering gender equality in the region and gender-sensitive programming.

As far as regional projects are concerned, 2011 ATLAS gender marker exercise indicates that 27 percent of them are scored '0', indicating that they contribute nothing to gender equality and women's empowerment in the region.<sup>198</sup> There are at present 78 percent of regional projects

<sup>197</sup> Such as the online diagnostic study 'Data on Women in Socio-economic Governance'.

<sup>198</sup> For a definition of scoring, see UNDP Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Gender Mainstreaming Strategy 2011-2013.' Most of these projects are in the energy and environment area: 43 percent of projects in this area are scored '0', compared to 24 percent in the case of democratic governance and 14 percent in the case of poverty reduction.

which contribute nothing (score '0') or little (score '1') to gender equality in the region.<sup>199</sup> Emphasis on gender mainstreaming and gender-responsive approaches is uneven across practices. There seems to be a lack of ownership for the delivery of gender equality results beyond the gender team.

## EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The regional programme incorporates human rights aspects and identifies several vulnerable groups whose rights are violated and need to be addressed by the various activities of the programme. It also identifies a range of key duty-bearers: central and local governments, national human rights institutions, public services, CSOs, private sector. The regional programme aims to promote tolerance, security and rule of law, by developing the capacity of national human rights institutions and bar associations to protect and promote human rights and support legal aid system for the poor. The major shortcoming is that the regional programme has not fully employed a human rights based approach<sup>200</sup>, particularly in the sense of engaging the rights-holders in the consultation, analysis and review processes, as required by POPP.

Human rights are hardly embedded in the formulation of the regional programme outcomes. Indicators do not allow a proper monitoring and evaluation of the contribution made by the programme to the realization of human rights in the region: they are either rights blind or not disaggregated (e.g. per gender, ethnicity, disability, age, etc.). As in the case of gender, the RRF of the RPD has not provided a guiding framework for the monitoring and evaluation of human rights mainstreaming.

Applying HRBA to the programming of a regional programme requires time and considerable efforts, e.g. connecting with the people from the ground, identifying representative organizations of rights-holders in various subregions and mobilizing important resources. There are, however, ways in which this process of engaging various stakeholders could be better organized and lessons could be drawn from internal experience. They include: i) partnering with regional organizations that share common interests in a particular key area (e.g. minorities, anti-corruption) and sharing expenses linked to the consultation of ultimate beneficiaries;<sup>201</sup> and ii) partnering with the country offices that carry out consultation processes for the development of UNDAF and CPDs and add an extrasession relevant to regional challenges. The direct engagement with rights holders could be also done using the powerful potential of social media, as it was successfully done in Serbia<sup>202</sup>.

Although the RPD did not fully embed HRBA, the regional projects and advisory services provided an opportunity for RBEC and BRC advisers to work with national partners in order to develop the legal and institutional framework needed for the protection of human rights, increase of citizen access to justice, information, basic services and public decision-making. There have been some notable results achieved, such as:

- Implementation of several UPR recommendations due to UPR follow-up support in various countries and also via a regional workshop in Central Asia together with OHCHR (first ever joint partnership UNDP-OHCHR in Central Asia);

<sup>199</sup> "2010 vs 2011 ATLAS Gender Marker Results" by the gender team. Sixty-six out of 84 projects in 2011 are marked GEN0 and GEN1.

<sup>200</sup> 'UN Common Understanding on Human Rights-Based Approaches to Development Cooperation and Programming', 2003.

<sup>201</sup> A successful case was seen in 2011 with the Open Society Justice Initiative within the framework of regional policy dialogue on legal empowerment. 'Regional Policy Dialogue on Legal Empowerment. Policy Options, Programming Challenges and Opportunities for the ECIS Region', 2011.

<sup>202</sup> As previously discussed in Chapter 3. See Box 6.

- Development of national policies, action plans and measures to advance the rights of people with disabilities (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Croatia, Poland);
- Establishment of a national human rights monitoring system for HIV/AIDS (Ukraine).

## HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND MDGS

BRC advisers have actively promoted human development and MDGs in the region, a difficult job since poverty is not referred to in official policies of several countries and MDGs are not a reference for policy-making in others. To this end, they employed a variety of means, such as: production of analyses and reports on various human development themes; development of new measurement methodologies of human development achievements; educational initiatives to improve human development literacy in the region; embedment of a human development perspective in trade and economic planning processes; development of a common understanding in the region as to the linkages between human development, human rights, social inclusion, sustainable development, social and economic determinants of HIV and broader links with stigma, discrimination and social inclusion; engagement with key stakeholders (donors, academia, rights holders' networks, other UN agencies) for advancing the knowledge and promoting human development; extensive use of the social media.

The support has mainly taken the form of advisory services provided with a view to supporting the improvement of MDG indicators and their monitoring (Moldova), embedment of MDGs in the national and local development action plans (Kosovo, Uzbekistan), raise awareness and support

governments to set targets for Roma communities in the MDG agenda within the Decade of Roma Inclusion (Western Balkans).

Regretfully, the already confirmed funding of BDP for the Support to MDG-Oriented Policies project has not been released (80 percent of total budget) and the project had no resources in 2012. Although the region is composed mostly of middle-income countries, except Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, recent reports on MDGs highlight "large and persistent disparities between (...) geographical areas and population groups within countries" and express concern as to the likelihood of MDGs full achievement by 2015,<sup>203</sup> especially in Caucasus and Central Asia countries<sup>204</sup>. Continuous donor support as well as improved donor coordination to foster aid efficiency is needed.

## CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

National capacity development has been given a prominent presence in the regional programme. Its guiding principles refer to the strengthening of national capacity for policy analysis and development programming as well as for advocacy in issues deriving from United Nations intergovernmental policy process and conventions. Capacity development is incorporated in the formulation of all seven outcomes of the RPD. In the particular case of HIV, it is worth mentioning that activities are envisaged to increase the capacity of PLHIV, as rights holders, to understand and claim their rights, a crucial HRBA dimension which is missing or not explicitly targeted in other regional programme areas.

Capacity development is well addressed in the formulation of project documents and built in project activities in different practices. It sits high on BRC advisers' agenda, as shown by data recorded in the BRC Service Tracker.<sup>205</sup>

<sup>203</sup> UNECE, UNDP, 2011.

<sup>204</sup> United Nations, 2012.

<sup>205</sup> A query of the word 'training' in the BRC Service Tracker brings a result of 792 days and a query of the word 'capacity' brings a result of 729 days, out of a total of 3,884 advisory days provided by BRC in 2011 (20.4 percent, and 18.7 percent of the total, respectively). The capacity development team alone delivered 255 days of advisory services in 2011 and one should also consider the investment of the other BRC teams and practices on the matter within their broader advisory activity. Although these figures do not precisely measure the capacity development effort of BRC, they are indicative of major attention given by the advisers to this crucial element of their work.



Problematic is to assess the actual contribution of capacity development work as it is not systematically measured or reported in outputs and indicators. Nevertheless, the country office survey and interviews during field visits acknowledged the considerable efforts made by BRC in the capacity development of country office staff and national counterparts. For example:

- improvement of governments, capacity to design and implement evidence-based policies aimed at poverty reduction and social inclusion;
- strengthening of the capacity of PLHIV and CSOs to better engage in decision-making and communicate with governments and international organizations;
- improvement of the business knowledge and abilities of small entrepreneurs, business women, farmers, etc. to run their own business;
- training of potential users in the use of various tools and methodologies, such as capacity assessment methodology for anti-corruption agencies, social exclusion measurement, contracting out of social services, etc.;
- integration of CRM in the disaster risk curriculum at universities.

## REGIONAL (EAST-EAST) COOPERATION

RBEC and its regional centre have actively facilitated horizontal knowledge-based partnerships which took the form of East-East and triangular cooperation initiatives. In some cases, these initiatives have been made with countries outside the region.

BRC has been active in the capacity development of emerging donors in development cooperation, managing ODA in a trust-fund-like

modality on behalf of emerging donors (Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary) and engaging in a number of country-specific partnerships, such as that in Slovakia through a regional project on public finance management (targeting Serbia, Montenegro and Moldova) and in Kazakhstan as an emerging provider of development cooperation for Central Asia. In Poland, triangular partnership projects have been developed with Georgia (people with hearing impairment, social economy), Iraq (development of SMEs, social mitigation and restructuring of state-owned enterprises and industrial zones development), Afghanistan (public capacity-building), and India (Contemporary India Centre).<sup>206</sup> These initiatives helped to apply successful approaches in countries undergoing rapid social and economic transformation, provided access to expertise and good practices in human development, tested solutions and made available lessons learned. Countries selected for cooperation have included those located outside the ECIS region, going beyond what has been included in the current regional programme.

BRC has been instrumental in facilitating the exchange of information and know-how which led to the establishment of ECOM in HIV/AIDS prevention, an organization representing MSM in the region (e.g. Russia and Ukraine) that collaborates with a sister organization in the Asia and the Pacific region (Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health). Other significant examples of East-East exchanges include the inter-municipal cooperation, where the experience of UNDP in FYR of Macedonia in this area has been extended to other countries in South Eastern Europe, Moldova and Kosovo in particular; as well as the Armenian capacity in the field of DRR, whose expertise has been presented to various countries in the region, especially in the Balkans.

<sup>206</sup> Triangular cooperation involves a traditional donor from the ranks of the OECD/DAC, an emerging donor in the South, and a beneficiary country in the South. Triangular partnerships by the Project Office in Poland is articulated in ROAR 2011 as well as the Project Progress Report, 'Social Innovation in Europe and CIS' by UNDP BRC Project Office Poland, May 2012.



## 4.3 PARTNERSHIPS AND COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

### CLIMATE CHANGE, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, of particular importance to this portfolio are strategic partnerships with international funds, first and foremost GEF. Today GEF is the largest public funder of projects to improve the global environment. An independently operating financial organization, GEF provides grants for projects related to biodiversity, climate change, international waters, land degradation, the ozone layer, and persistent organic pollutants.<sup>207</sup> All these topics are of high relevance for the Environment and Energy Strategy for UNDP with its goal of “supporting countries’ transition to low emission and climate resilient development” at institutional level, but also for the ECIS region. At a wider scope GEF is also serving as source of funds for several UN conventions, for example for the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The GEF partnership has enabled the E&E practice of BRC to act as an engine of business development, not only to provide high-level advisory services, but to link them with practical know-how transfer and support of project proposals.<sup>208</sup> This partnership is at the same time a successful business model: fees received as a percentage of approved GEF projects are utilized to pay the salaries of 11 international experts and 7 national staff members.

An interesting and more recent initiative of the EU, administered by the EC, is the Clima East Fund, aiming at supporting climate change mitigation and adaptation in the European Neighbourhood Policy-East countries.<sup>209</sup> The

overall objective of Clima East is to support partner countries to be better equipped for greenhouse gas emission reductions and better prepared to deal with climate change impacts. BRC’s E&E team supports country offices in preparing applications for Clima East grants. BRC, through its E&E practice, have so far supported the submission of proposals to most of the countries.

An example of a private-public partnership is Every Drop Matters, a partnership between The Coca Cola Company and UNDP. It started as a regional programme managed by BRC, but has graduated to be a global programme.<sup>210</sup> This centre is co-funded by the Government of Turkey and UNDP. Every Drop Matters is in line with UNDP’s agenda to unleash the potential of the private sector in development. The partnership, originally established by RBEC to include countries in the ECIS region, has now expanded to countries in the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS) as well as Asia and the Pacific (RBAP).

The Poverty and Environment Initiative of UNDP and UNEP is a global UN-led programme that supports countries’ efforts to mainstream poverty-environment linkages into their national development planning. The PEI provides financial/technical assistance to government partners to set up institutional and capacity-building programmes and conduct activities to address the poverty-environment context.<sup>211</sup> BRC has contributed senior advisers’ time through cross practice work between the poverty and the E&E practices.

### Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion

UNDP has developed successful partnerships with several regional institutions and development partners active in the area of poverty reduction and social inclusion. Cooperation of BRC with

<sup>207</sup> See <<http://www.thegef.org/gef/whatisgef>>.

<sup>208</sup> At present, 143 GEF projects are under implementation (project documents signed), i.e. ongoing; numerous additional projects are in the pipeline, i.e. at proposal stage.

<sup>209</sup> Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

<sup>210</sup> The manager was first relocated from Bratislava to the Stockholm Institute for Water Resources, and in its current third phase, has been relocated again to the newly established International Centre for Private Sector in Development in Istanbul. <[iicpsd.org](http://iicpsd.org)>.

<sup>211</sup> <<http://www.unpei.org/>>.

the EC has been steadily improving in recent years, mainly in relation to the European agenda for the advancement of human rights, rule of law and social inclusion (Western Balkans), but also in relation to the promotion of an enhanced European Neighbourhood Policy (Western CIS, Caucasus) and inclusive, pro-poor trade and economic growth (Central Asia).

In the area of Roma inclusion, the strong comparative strengths of UNDP stayed at the heart of partnership between BRC and other important regional institutions and forums, including FRA, Roma Decade, Roma Education Fund, EU Platform for Roma Inclusion. The most important UNDP comparative strengths have been the expertise and results in the area of disaggregated, robust, longitudinal and contextualized Roma data at regional, national and subnational levels as well as tested analytical tools and methods. There is still room to develop cooperation with other EU bodies and platforms, such as the European Ombudsman, Eurostat, European Economic and Social Committee, European Platform Against Poverty and Social Exclusion, but also with the Council of Europe and OSCE which demonstrated strong commitment in addressing Roma issues for a long time. Influential European non-governmental organizations, such as European Roma Policy Coalition, European Roma Information Office and European Roma Rights Centre, should be also considered in the future as potential partners.

Promotion of education in sustainable human development has been the subject of another long-lasting partnership of BRC with a regional higher education institution, namely the CEU. There are also examples of productive cooperation in the area of HIV/AIDS, where the regional partners of BRC are the Eurasian Economic Community, the CIS Coordination Council on HIV/AIDS, and international institutions, i.e. UNAIDS, UNICEF, ADB, UNODC.

In the area of trade, UNDP has strived to cooperate with regional institutions and programmes that set the agenda on the matter, while promoting its own mandate. The reference is made to the UNECE and ESCAP within the United Nations Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia. Another example is the cooperation with the group of multilateral donors like ADB and EBRD within CAREC.

In the Black Sea region, BRC has worked with BSEC and the other two donors (Governments of Turkey and of Greece) within the framework of the regional project on trade and investment promotion. Stronger relationships with the EU could be also developed based on its 'Black Sea Synergy' framework.

The partnership with TIKA, the donor of the GIM regional project, has not always been efficient, given some project management, staff turnover and communication flaws between BRC, regional brokers and donor.<sup>212</sup> As TIKA is a very important regional development partner of BRC in the private sector, systematic efforts should be made to develop further cooperation avenues, based on the lessons learned in GIM.

## **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT/ DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

All interventions under the portfolio, especially anti-corruption, human rights and justice, have been conducted with an extensive involvement of and partnership with counterparts – both local and international. The engagement of national counterparts included not only the different bodies from national public administrations of the countries assisted, but also and more importantly institutions representing local authorities and civil society.

The two comparative strengths of UNDP in the area of democratic governance are: a) widely perceived independence of the organization/ neutrality of the UNDP agenda; and b) a specific

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<sup>212</sup> Based on interviews with TIKA managers, with the project manager and with the BRC team.

expertise/mandate connected with international conventions. Given the specificity of some parts of the ECIS regions (e.g. Central Asia), the manoeuvring space for UNDP ensured by these levers has helped to achieve successful results.

In the field of anti-corruption, UNDP has continued its work started in 2005, supporting a number of anti-corruption agencies and partnering with various international agencies, ensuring synergies and reducing possible overlaps in activities. Having focused on the Balkans initially, an increasing number of initiatives are now delivered in Central Asia. Throughout the region, UNDP has used its strengths, particularly the perceived neutrality of its agenda. This has facilitated UNDP's approach of establishing communication channels between citizens and state institutions, engaging NGOs and CSOs. Another important factor contributing to results is that BRC is perceived as 'external' (compared to the country offices which are in a daily dialogue with the respective governments), better positioned to tackle and bypass possible constraints.

Examples of partnerships include the work with Oslo Governance Centre, in the context of the Global Programme on Governance Assessments and of PACDE. Activities included the development of a toolkit for capacity development of anti-corruption agencies, and a path-breaking governance assessment of local action on climate change. Another important partner is UNODC in the framework of the corporate cooperation agreement – relevant for UNDP involvement in the UNCAC implementation activities in the region. BRC also has collaborated with regional initiatives such as Regional Anti-corruption Initiative in the Western Balkans. Lastly, a very useful instrument developed through different projects is ACPN, which allowed BRC to get in contact with many institutions at the national level and provide useful trainings and also to organize East-East cooperation and technical assistance.

The human rights and justice sub-practice has implemented activities following an approach similar to that of the anti-corruption team and has achieved a similar degree of success in maximizing the use of expertise, networks and resources. The sub-practice fostered the development of two internal CoPs: i) human rights and UPR; and ii) rule of law, access to justice and legal empowerment. The UPR Follow-up Facility directly contributed to UNDP's leadership role through the stewardship of the Resident Coordinator system in the promotion and protection of human rights in the region. Robust partnership has been forged with UNDP human rights and access to justice global programmes, and one global cross-practice initiative on legal empowerment. BRC established good collaboration with international agencies and major CSOs, e.g. with OHCHR and ODIHR, with ombudspersons' offices and NHRIs from the region.

The interventions in support of subnational governance have also been implemented benefiting from the partnership with NALAS, which has also facilitated the participation of other national associations, with a significant outreach in the Balkans, Turkey and Moldova.

#### **4.4 BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION**

Resource mobilization is a major consideration in implementing the regional programme, as also acknowledged by RBEC management. The challenge is not only pertinent for the region, but also at the country level, as indicated by survey results and field visits where strong expectations in receiving support from BRC for resource mobilization were expressed.

BRC has attempted to address the resource mobilization issue in its Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy,<sup>213</sup> which took

<sup>213</sup> UNDP BRC, 'Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy for the RBEC Regional Programme 2010-2013', May 2010.

stock of the situation, analysis of the lessons learned and perceived strengths and objectives, and has an inventory of partners annexed. The target to mobilize non-core funding has been set at USD 29.3 million for 2011-2013, while the TRAC funding amounts to USD 14.4 million (total USD 43.7 million). However, survey results show limited levels of support to country offices.<sup>214</sup> There is a cluster of Western Balkan countries reported having received less support.<sup>215</sup> Considering the role and importance of the EC in the subregion, the limited assistance from BRC could lead countries to look individually at the EU for extra resources. Some country offices are making their own effort to develop their partnership strategy. The 2012 Strategic Note of Tajikistan country office is a good example for new partnerships generating funding.<sup>216</sup> Negotiations have been initiated with the Government of Spain on disaster risk reduction, with the Government of the Russian Federation on sustainable economic development of rural Tajikistan, and with other emerging donors such as Turkey (TIKA) through the newly established UNDP-TIKA International Centre for Private Sector in Development.<sup>217</sup>

Within BRC, two practice teams efficient in acquiring resources from international funds on behalf of country offices are: (1) the E&E practice brokering energy financial services, mainly with GEF; and (2) the HIV/AIDS, health and development practice supporting country

teams to access funds through the GFATM<sup>218</sup> and other partners. This resulted in support to programming in the range of USD 60 million within the observation period of the evaluation. In the area of social inclusion, as discussed in Section 3.2, the partnership on Roma among UNDP, FRA, and World Bank, financed by DG Regio is an example for other subject areas and practices.

BRC and countries in the region have acknowledged the importance of the EU as a funding partner. During the period 2005-2009, however, EU ranked 9<sup>th</sup> out of the top 10 major donors for BRC with an amount of USD 1.4 million.<sup>219</sup> Between 2010 and 2012, the contribution of EU was about USD 4 million, averaging USD 1.3 million per year.<sup>220</sup> Given its strategic importance, partnerships with EU should be further explored. Within the ECIS region, there is evidence of joint work between UNDP country offices and the EU.<sup>221</sup> These projects have been successfully implemented by meeting requests expressed by country offices and other partners at the country level. They also demonstrate how country offices have proactively addressed their need for resource mobilization.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the requirements in term of legalities of contracting were described by various interviewees as very demanding, and are viewed rigid by potential partners and donors. This includes lack of alignment of standardized

<sup>214</sup> Question 3 of the survey on the degree of support delivered to country offices show that 48 percent of the country and project offices reported 'Little or no' support received with partnerships and resource mobilization. (Annex 7 available online: <http://erc.undp.org/evaluationadmin/manageevaluation/viewevaluationdetail.html?evalid=6676>).

<sup>215</sup> In subdivision 1, seven out of nine country offices indicated that they received little or no support. The remaining four respondents with the same response belong to other subdivisions and project offices.

<sup>216</sup> UNDP Tajikistan, 'Strategic Note 2012' (copy received from UNDP country office). It emphasizes the importance for "impact and results to continue expanding the cooperation and partnership with key donors and development partners and efforts to build cooperation and partnerships with non-traditional donors."

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> A complete list of support to programming and grant implementation support was provided by respective practice leaders.

<sup>219</sup> Section 1.2.4 'BRC Main Donors', Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy for the RBEC Regional Programme 2010-2013, p.6.

<sup>220</sup> Data, 'Updates on Expenditures and Donors', provided by BRC in October 2012. Major donors included GEF, Government of Finland, EU, UN Fund for International Partnerships (UNFIP), among others.

<sup>221</sup> For example, the EU Advisory Group in Armenia, Community Based Local Development in Ukraine, and Confidence Building in Moldova, all EU financed and implemented by UNDP.

templates and centralized and lengthy decision-making processes (the system of financial management in UNDP and some other agencies requires all agreements to go through a global centre). Even successful efforts in finding interested donors can fail in terms of concluding contract with UNDP.

The experiences of country offices suggest that administrative and contractual procedures can be a major bottleneck in the formulation of partnerships and in resources mobilization. The UNDP administrative procedures should be revisited, demonstrating their flexibility while remaining full accountability. In future, while developing

a resource mobilization strategy, the respective procedures of potential partners should be analysed and taken duly into account. Such strategy should not only provide an inventory of potential partners, but also prioritize a set of clear goals and specify means in business development. BRC should also reflect the fact that over the last few years the composition of donors has changed whereas the number of donors remained fairly constant (many of which have had a contribution of less than USD 100,000)<sup>222</sup>. A future strategy should take into account the new donor landscape, setting targets in mobilization with time and resources how to achieving them.

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<sup>222</sup> Partnership and Resource Mobilization Strategy for the RBEC Regional Programme 2010-2013, BRC, May 2010; correspondence with BRC, 25 October 2012.



# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations provided below are based on the findings from the previous chapters, while taking into account the overall goal of the evaluation to contribute to the development of the next regional programme. The conclusions should be seen as mutually reinforcing and conveying key UNDP strengths and challenges. The recommendations highlight areas in which UNDP could strengthen its strategic decision-making and operational modalities to further ensure that the regional programme continues to contribute to meeting regional development challenges.

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. While the programme is at its midpoint and full results are yet to be seen, the regional programme is making important progress within its framework. The selection of the three themes – response to climate change, social inclusion and local development – as emerging priorities for the programme has been appropriate for the region, given the needs and challenges faced by the countries in the region. Tangible results have been observed in each of the areas.**

With regard to the response to climate change, UNDP has positioned itself as a broker of environmental finance in the region, helping countries to access funds available in global and regional trust funds. It has also successfully set the standards in climate risk management. Using cross-practices as the foundation of the programme implementation, e.g. collaboration among the energy and environment, crisis prevention and recovery, poverty reduction, and governance teams, the programme has provided high-level advisory services and engaged in capacity-building efforts to achieve the objectives under environment and energy.

Placing social inclusion and equity-related interventions at the heart of the regional programme has been a big step forward in the work of BRC. Regional projects were particularly relevant when they focused on specific subregions with shared concerns and common development challenges, and when they had a flexible design at the country level. The programme has helped strengthen national partners' capacity to address social exclusion, and human development challenges generally, through evidence-based policies and measures. Progress has been made in the provision of reliable and contextualized data (e.g. on Roma, social exclusion, vulnerability, and gender), facilitation of pro-poor trade initiatives, engagement of civil society in social economy and in the monitoring and advocacy platforms for the promotion of the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS. The expertise of BRC advisers, partnerships with reputable and influential partners and the creative use of social media have facilitated the achievement of results in the social inclusion programme.

Similarly, in the local development and governance portfolio, the combination of regional projects, advisory services and knowledge products have contributed to programme effectiveness. Most notable achievements were made in the areas related to public administration reforms and human rights and justice. The initiatives supporting national and subnational institutions in local development are in their early stage of implementation and the progress to date is limited. Factors instrumental for the success achieved to date include the tailored, high-level expertise provided and high level of local ownership. The main factor hampering further progress in this programmatic area has been the lack of or delays in funding.

**Conclusion 2. Regional projects have often lacked explicit regional dimensions and objectives that could contribute to results at the regional level.**

Many of the current regional projects provide support to multiple countries (i.e. so-called multi-country and cross-border projects) but often without the clear goals set as regional effects. The projects have produced results at the individual participating country level, but have not necessarily brought about the development changes at the regional or subregional level. The regional efforts as defined in the UNDP guidelines seem to discourage the formulation of joint projects across various regional bureaux, limiting the opportunities for countries to seek support from any geographical region.

**Conclusion 3. While the three subregions vary in their development challenges, a specific strategy for each of them is not clear. There is subregional variation in the degree to which regional support has been valued among the country offices.**

The ECIS region is represented by three distinct subregions with varying challenges and needs. In the Western Balkans and Turkey, the main challenges relate to meeting the European Union accession criteria. In the Western Commonwealth of Independent States and Caucasus, the challenges derive from the European Neighbourhood Policy requiring adoption of policies conducive to sustainable growth, regional development, and strengthening of the small and medium-sized enterprises. In Central Asia, countries are faced by challenges related to climate change, poverty, human rights and weak civil society. While efforts to tailor the subregional needs are made at the individual portfolio level, a specific strategy for tackling each of the three distinct subregions is not clearly defined in the current regional programme.

Responses from country offices revealed that services provided by Bratislava advisers have been generally more appreciated in Central Asia

than in other subregions. The Western Balkan countries had the lowest level of demand for such services. One reason may be that the regional centre does not have a strong focus on and sufficient expertise with European Union accession-related topics, particularly in the negotiation chapters and related *acquis communautaire*, i.e. the cumulative body of European Commission laws, comprising the Commission's objectives, substantive rules, policies and, in particular, the primary and secondary legislation and case law.

**Conclusion 4. The consultation process in shaping the overall regional programme and regional projects was not always sufficiently inclusive. Regional projects and knowledge products that are designed and implemented by close engagement with country offices are likely to be successful in enhancing the relevance and ownership at the country level.**

The regional programme as defined in its programme document was developed based on a large consultation process of country offices. However, there was a general lack of ownership of the programme among the country offices, possibly due to perceived insufficient subregional programmatic focus and incentives for formal endorsement by the countries. Engagement of national and regional partners (governments, civil society, and major donors) in the design and appraisal of the programme document was limited. The lack of national ownership has serious drawbacks as it weakens the sustainability of the policy advice generated within the regional programme.

The inclusiveness of the consultation process to ensure country offices and government ownership in regional projects varied across the practice areas and project portfolios. When properly done (e.g. climate risk management, Roma, social inclusion, HIV/AIDS), the end results were rewarding, i.e. upscaling of pilot projects, complementary funding, embedding of results (methodologies, tools, data) in policies and practices. The national ownership and efficiency increased when the management of regional

projects was decentralized to the country level and flexible implementation arrangements were put in place according to local circumstances. Knowledge products that had engaged the country offices in their development and were contextualized for country use were reported to be particularly useful (e.g. Regional Human Development Report and RBEC Development Stories).

**Conclusion 5. The regional programme has promoted human rights and gender equality in the region. The integration of a more thorough human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming in the design of the regional programme document and its results and resources framework would further strengthen UNDP efforts, by particularly facilitating the monitoring and evaluation of results and better accountability for their achievement.**

The regional programme has promoted human rights in the ECIS region, providing opportunities for regional centre advisers to work with national partners to develop the relevant legal and institutional framework and to increase citizen access to justice, information, basic services and public decision-making. At the same time, there is insufficient reflection of the use of a human-rights-based approach to programming, the critical gaps being the lack of engagement of rights-holders in the consultation, analysis and review processes of the programme document and the lack of disaggregated data in its results framework. The programme document has thus been partially instrumental for assessing its contribution to the realization of human rights in the region and for accountability purposes.

The work carried out within the framework of the regional programme has contributed to the strengthening of the gender mainstreaming capacity of gender practitioners in the region. It also informed legal reforms, policy developments and measures through the provision of gender-disaggregated data to policy makers and practitioners. The programme document has, however, only partially mainstreamed gender equality in its results framework. It has thus not fully served as a

guiding framework for the monitoring, evaluation and accountability for gender equality results.

**Conclusion 6. There is ample room for improvement in orienting technical services towards meeting the needs of regional development and the recipients of such services.**

The regional centre provides country offices with its technical expertise through the use of three operational modalities of support, i.e. the implementation of regional projects, development of knowledge products and the provision of advisory services. Each of those modalities can be further strengthened by taking a standpoint of meeting regional development challenges as well as of the direct recipients of such expertise and services. In many regional projects, for example, successful results through cross-practices have been reported in some areas, e.g. climate change, HIV/AIDS, and human rights. Not all project designs, however, necessarily articulate the rationale or means of how cross-fertilization of efforts will be created, other than organizing a set of ad hoc joint activities, involving all relevant practice areas.

Advisory services provided by the regional centre staff were viewed, in several instances, as not having met the expected international standards. In particular, in the middle-income countries of the region, the availability of qualified local expertise has allowed some country offices and partners to benchmark the quality of advisory services prior to committing for regional centre expertise. While the feedback on the quality of services is sought from country offices, only limited comments have actually been collected. The mechanism of systematically soliciting unbiased country office feedback on the quality of services provided has not yet been fully established. Knowledge products have not always reflected the needs of countries in the region as demonstrated by limited reference made by the country offices except for large publications. A follow-up assessment of the utility of these products has not been systematically done.

**Conclusion 7. Insufficient funding and often-reduced size of funds have posed a threat to successful implementation of regional projects.**

Funding gaps in regional projects can be observed in the majority of portfolio areas. There are either gaps between the requested funds and available funds as stated in the project document or, in some cases, gaps between the available funds still to be confirmed and their actual availability at project start. Under the current circumstances, project managers need to acquire funds during the project implementation. If the funding gaps are not sufficiently addressed, the projects are unlikely to be implemented as anticipated in the project documents.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Recommendation 1. The regional programme should focus on a limited number of targeted thematic areas and on holistic sustainable human development. A clear strategy for each of the three subregions should also be developed.**

Sustainable human development should be clearly elaborated in the new regional programme as the goal of UNDP work in the region, which would be in line with the post-Rio+20 agenda, Europe 2020, and the Busan Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation and with the UNDP Agenda for Organizational Change. The concept would facilitate the streamlining of the project portfolio and more focused use of resources, as well as cross-practice programming and delivery. The regional programme should also acknowledge the diversity within the ECIS region by providing targeted subregional responses.

Partnerships with major international financing institutions (e.g. the European Union, the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank) and funds (e.g. GEF and GFATM) would be instrumental in supporting UNDP to advocate for macroeconomic policies in the region, which set employment objectives, promote sustainable growth, control inflation and expand the fiscal

space for social protection policies. Advisory services on social security, fiscal issues and budget allocations to reduce inequality would be of highest priority.

**Recommendation 2. The regional programme and the regional projects within, reflecting the outcome and the output levels, should be developed to ensure that they address the regional dimension of development challenges.**

Currently, the primary characteristic of many of the regional projects is that they are implemented among several countries, rather than being focused on generating results at the regional level. Results may have been achieved at the country level, but mutual collaboration is required by all participating countries to bring about the results at the regional level. The critical opportunity is missed unless a common strategy or thread of efforts exists. In future, guidelines on the classification and typology of regional projects should be established. In the process of designing a project, the desired effects at the regional and country levels should be clearly defined.

The current geographical focus of the regional projects may be substituted or supplemented by a more issue-focused approach, so as to allow regional projects to involve countries from other regions, as appropriate. This has also been recommended by the previous RBEC regional programme (2006–2010) evaluation. Regionality criteria for regional programming should also be established to determine when a regional approach is appropriate, as recommended in the evaluation of the UNDP contribution at the regional level to development and corporate results (2010).

**Recommendation 3. A cross-practice approach should be firmly embedded in the regional programme practice architecture to foster greater cross-fertilization of programme results and to support the sustainable development goal of the regional programme.**



There is evidence of ‘multi-practice work in the form of ad hoc joint activities, but often without the formulation of a well-conceived programme/project framework, from the conceptualization and design stage, developed by the direct participation of all relevant practice teams. The integration of the human rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming in the design and implementation of the regional programme document and its results framework should be ensured. A new regional centre cross-cutting practice may be created by merging the existing gender team with the team of human rights advisers in the democratic governance practice, which would be mandated to support all regional centre practices.

The BRC management should further promote a cross-practice culture in the organization and in the region at large. The provision of appropriate advice and monitoring the cross-practice activities for the ultimate goal of sustainable development would be important to this function. Cross-practice work should be formally brought into the programme document. The promotion of communities of cross-practices may also be considered. Regional projects should start with the joint conceptualization and planning of activities by all relevant practices, which should be clearly reflected in the project documents and their joint accountability firmly agreed to for results. The same applies to advisory services and knowledge products.

**Recommendation 4. Given the fact that the fully required funds for regional projects are not often available at the critical start of the projects, the regional centre should continue to explore an efficient resource mobilization strategy.**

BRC should explore options to strengthen its resource mobilization and partnership strategy, including, for example, the establishment of a dedicated business development function within the centre. In all three thematic areas, i.e. response to climate change, social inclusion and local development, the challenges of not having full funding already available at the start of the regional projects

were raised. Programme managers have often been forced to acquire funds in the middle of their project implementation. While some practices (e.g. energy and environment and HIV/AIDS, health and development) have been more successful than others in fund-raising, all projects should be able to begin their intended activities from their start without concerns for insufficient funds. Projects and their outputs, at the same time, should be realistically designed based on available resources. A concerted effort at the regional centre should be made in order to comprehensively plan its funding requirements for all of its activities envisaged for the programme defined in its programme document, in close consultation with other offices within UNDP, including the Partnership Bureau, the Bureau for Development Policy/Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and the regional bureau.

**Recommendation 5. Staff development should be a strategic priority for the regional centre, given the significant role its staff members are expected to play in providing technical expertise and knowledge to country offices.**

BRC should encourage staff learning, providing access of its staff to top-level, up-to-date learning opportunities for personal and professional development. Monitoring of learning outcomes and continuous improvement of knowledge and skills should be a priority. The regional centre should carry out a regular skills profiling to check gaps between the existing expertise and demand from country offices and to inform the staff development policy of the centre. A clear distinction between advisers, project managers and business development staff should be introduced, as they need different knowledge and skill sets. For the energy and environment practice, the GEF portfolio managers could also contribute to advisory services. It is also recommended that the regional centre introduce an institutional memory system to address high staff turnover issues, in order to ensure that knowledge and expertise is capitalized and not lost with the leaving of staff from the regional centre.



**Recommendation 6. The regional programme should be developed on the basis of more inclusive consultations with relevant partners to ensure its full alignment with regional and subregional needs and challenges. Incentives for the ownership and formal endorsement of the regional programme by the country offices, national partners and relevant regional institutions should be introduced to enhance joint accountability for results.**

The regional programme should be considered as a programme for the region and of the region. Currently, it is considered more like a programme of the regional centre, which has solely been kept accountable for its implementation and results. Such perception should be reversed by more systematic and more inclusive consultations, at very early stages, with the country offices and regional institutions, with the participation of governments and civil society organizations to the extent possible. As strongly requested by the country offices, inclusive consultations should also apply, as a rule, to all regional projects, pipeline projects, and to the selection of themes for knowledge products. Advisory services should be based on terms of reference developed by the country offices, as is now the case. In addition to ensuring more inclusive consultations, subregional focus and decentralized management at the country level should be increasingly used as crucial incentives for accountability and ownership.

**Recommendation 7. The regional programme should be designed in such a way that the three thematic issues of importance to UNDP in the region are effectively translated into**

**the outcomes of the regional programme. Indicators and outputs should be clearly linked to the envisaged outcomes.**

The current outcomes 1 and 2 of the environment and energy portfolio should be integrated as one outcome, incorporating all climate and energy and environment-related aspects. This would end an ongoing distinction between support required in climate change and in biodiversity and ecosystems and would further foster the energy and environment cross-practice work. Under poverty and social inclusion, an outcome on inclusive growth should be formulated, focusing on private sector development, pro-poor trade, rural development and employment creation. The introduction of an outcome on equity and social inclusion should also be considered, addressing social equity, fiscal issues and social inclusion. In democratic governance, two outcomes should be considered, i.e. one outcome on local development and subnational governance (current outcome 4) and the other on integrating governance interventions at the national level, anti-corruption and rule of law initiatives (merger of current outcomes 5 and 6). The new structure will facilitate the combination of different advisory services with regional projects and measurement of the results achieved. Human rights and gender should be mainstreamed in all outcomes. In the new regional programme document and its resources and results framework, the formulation of indicators should clearly support the outcomes. Each outcome should have clearly assigned outputs to be measured against a set of output indicators. Reporting on regional projects and advisory services should be done against those indicators.

# TERMS OF REFERENCE

## 1. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

The 2012 programme of work approved by the Executive Board indicates that the Evaluation Office should conduct independent evaluations of regional programmes implemented under the responsibility of UNDP's five regional bureaux.<sup>223</sup>

The objectives of a regional programme evaluation are to:

- Provide substantive support to the Administrator's accountability function in reporting to the Executive Board;
- Facilitate learning to inform current and future programming at the regional and corporate levels, particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programme to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014; and
- Provide stakeholders in regional programme countries and among development partners with an objective assessment of the development contributions that have been achieved through UNDP support and partnerships with other key players through the regional programme during a given multi-year period.

The Evaluation Office will conduct a programme evaluation for the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) in 2012. The evaluation will analyse the contributions made by the regional programme during the current programme period 2011-2013 and UNDP's strategic position within the region. A set of appropriate and forward-looking recommendations will be drawn at the end of the evaluation. It is expected that evaluation results will be used in the formulation of the next

regional programme document. Results should also feed into other relevant evaluations planned by the Evaluation Office in 2012, such as the Global Programme Evaluation.

## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 UNDP PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

UNDP delivers support to its programme countries through the following three programme frameworks:

- Global programmes run by two global sectoral policy bureaux, the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery (BCPR);
- Regional programmes run by five regional bureaux (respectively for Africa, Arab States, Asia and Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and Caribbean) mainly through its regional centres; and
- Country programmes and multi-country programmes run by country and multi-country offices under each regional bureau.

Each of these programmes is defined by a programme document approved by UNDP's Executive Board, which allocates core funding for the delivery of the programme. In addition, activities in each programme are financed by funds from external sources, usually provided to achieve specific objectives within each programme.

### 2.2 UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMMES

Since its inception, UNDP has been extending support to groups of countries at regional and

<sup>223</sup> DP/2011/24, Programme of Work for the Evaluation Office for 2011-2012, 'Annual Report on Evaluation in UNDP 2010', Executive Board of the UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 6-17 June 2011.

subregional levels in addition to its global and country-level operations. Most recently, with the introduction of UNDP's corporate Strategic Plan 2008-2011, the current regional programmes were introduced, replacing the former regional cooperation frameworks. These regional programmes, as compared to the former cooperation frameworks, have a clearer programme structure with a more explicit results-framework, and their programme cycle was aligned to that of the Strategic Plan 2008-2011. In 2010, the Strategic Plan was extended to complete in 2013. Accordingly, the regional programmes were also extended to 2013.

Since their establishment in 1970, regional bureaux have been managing regional programmes and projects in addition to providing oversight to country offices in their respective region. In the mid-1990s, UNDP introduced a subregional resource facility (SURF) system to provide technical support to the country offices and linkage to the sectoral expertise in the two policy bureaux and beyond. In the mid-2000s, UNDP developed the regional service centres in each region, building on the SURF system while adding new functions and management arrangements, including the responsibility to implement regional programmes.

The regional programmes are designed around UNDP's four focus areas, namely: poverty reduction; democratic governance; environment and energy; and crisis prevention and recovery. Within this structure, the regional programmes also address such cross-cutting issues as gender equality and South-South cooperation.

Typically, a regional programme involves the following types of activities.

- a) Regional public goods, such as advocacy materials or tools that can be used by any party concerned in the region.
- b) Subregional or cross-border activities that are delivered in multiple countries, addressing an issue of the cross-border nature, such as illegal drug trafficking.

- c) Multi-country activities that are put together for the purpose of achieving cost-efficiency by organizing a group event (e.g. organizing a seminar of interest to multiple countries), for the purpose of addressing politically sensitive issues (e.g. gender equality and human rights), or for any other purposes where participation of multiple countries would be deemed more appropriate.

At the same time, since UNDP is an organization that provides assistance predominantly through its country programmes, the regional programmes often provide:

- a) Technical support to country programme activities to leverage country programme activities. Such a support could range from assistance in designing projects or providing experts for training.
- b) Country-level activities that are implemented at the country level, and could appear as de facto country programme activities. An example would be pilot projects in selected countries, financed by the regional programme under an umbrella regional project.

In terms of funding, in addition to core resources and other resources raised to finance specific regional programme activities, a regional programme activity could be financed partly by global or country programme resources. Global programmes typically fund positions in the regional centres to provide specific expertise. The experts in these positions normally work together with experts funded by regional programme to implement the regional programme. Similarly, activities undertaken at the country level could involve use of resources from both country and regional programmes.

These intermingling of programme activities, funding and implementation among country, regional and global programmes occur because of the general overlap of programme objectives – an activity to reduce poverty in a country also contributes to poverty reduction in the region and globally.

## 2.3 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT – EUROPE AND THE CIS

The region covered by the RBEC regional programme – a total of 32 countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) – represents a diverse group of countries, including the members of the European Union (and countries seeking integration) and those marking the 20th anniversary of independence from the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia. The region mainly comprises middle-income countries with relatively high levels of human development, except for two low-income countries (Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan). The 2011 Human Development Report (HDR) indicates that the region's EU member countries all rank in the 'very high' category of the Human Development Index, and most other countries in the region rank in the 'high human development' category.<sup>224</sup> The remaining countries are classified at least at the 'medium human development' level, including Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the region's two poorest countries in terms of GDP per capita.<sup>225</sup>

Although fluctuation exists, the region has enjoyed broad-based economic improvement since the fall of the former Soviet Union. While human development continues to rise in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, particularly in the areas of public health and education, growing concerns are also reported in the HDR, which could undermine the progress made in the region in recent years. They include widening income gaps, as well as increasing environmental challenges such as industrial pollution (e.g. air and water) and other environmental degradation.

Another area of concern is that development progress in the region has not spread equally among the disadvantaged and marginalized social groups, such as the Roma. The collapse of the social system has redefined people's lives, values and behaviours in much of the region. The importance of understanding the concept of social exclusion that deprives people of the opportunity to participate in economic, social and civic processes, and recognizing that social inclusion as a critical means for achieving human development, are particularly highlighted in the region.<sup>226</sup>

## 2.4 THE RBEC REGIONAL PROGRAMME 2011-2013

UNDP in Europe and the CIS works from its headquarters in New York and the Regional Centre in Bratislava, Slovakia. The primary role of the headquarters office is to set up UNDP's strategic direction in the region. It liaises with UNDP leadership and the other offices within the organization, as well as other UN agencies, to ensure that lessons from the regions are reflected in the global development agenda. The Bratislava Regional Centre provides advisory services and technical support to programme countries in the region, through the country offices, by using in-house policy experts and expertise. It manages regional projects and facilitates the dissemination of knowledge throughout the region.

RBEC has identified several development challenges faced by the region, including the following:<sup>227</sup> i) rising inequality between the rich and poor, urban and rural areas, and particularly

<sup>224</sup> Press Release, UNDP Human Development Report (HDR): 'Sustainability and Equity: A Better Future for All', UNDP, 2011 <<http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/PR6-EuropeCIS-2011HDR-English.pdf>>. The 'very high human development' category includes six countries of the region, i.e. the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, Lithuania and Croatia; the 'high human development' group includes 15 countries, i.e. Romania, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Serbia, Belarus, Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Ukraine, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Turkey; and the 'medium' category (5) includes Turkmenistan, Republic of Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

<sup>225</sup> 2011 HDR, UNDP. The GDP per capita in the region ranges from the highest group of USD 30,848 (Cyprus) and USD 25,581 (Czech Republic) to the lowest group, USD 2,283 (Kyrgyzstan) and USD 1,972 (Tajikistan).

<sup>226</sup> RBEC Regional HDR, 'Beyond Transition: Towards Inclusive Societies', Bratislava, 2011.

<sup>227</sup> RBEC Rolling Strategy 2011-2013 (Feb 2011) and RBEC Regional Programme Document for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States 2011-2013 (August 2011), UNDP RBEC.

among vulnerable groups; ii) deteriorating human capital due to a lagging quality in education and brain drain; iii) migration; iv) demographic challenges represented by a low life expectancy in some countries; v) uneven governance and policy implementation capacity; and v) lack of access to sustainable energy. Among these, RBEC raises three particular areas as of its emerging priorities, i.e. local development, climate change and social inclusion.<sup>228</sup>

Specifically, RBEC has set out the following five specific programme areas of interventions for the current programme cycle 2011-2013:<sup>229</sup>

#### 1. Environment and energy

- Outcome 1: By 2013, national and subnational levels in the region have improved capacity to support the transition to low-emission and climate-resilient economies.
- Outcome 2: By 2013, regional, national and subnational levels have improved capacity for sustainable conservation and management of ecosystems and natural resources.

#### 2. Poverty, inequality and social inclusion

- Outcome 3: By 2013, Governments and policy makers have improved capacities to address human development issues in Europe and the CIS, especially the inclusion of vulnerable groups, supported by a statistically enabled monitoring framework, private sector engagement, and gender-sensitive programming.

#### 3. Regional support to subnational governance and development

- Outcome 4: By 2013, national and subnational institutions capacitated to deliver sustainable and integrated

subnational development activities, reflecting good governance and climate change considerations.

#### 4. Good and effective governance and social cohesion

- Outcome 5: By 2013, governance structures and institutional capacities in the region are strengthened for more equitable public service delivery, improved transparency and accountability.
- Outcome 6: By 2013, capacities of selected institutions Europe and the CIS are strengthened to contribute to peaceful and tolerant societies.

#### 5. Promotion of new partnerships in development cooperation

- Outcome 7: By 2013, Governments in the region, including countries building new partnerships after graduating from UNDP programmes, expand their capacities to more effectively manage development cooperation and mutual coordination of development activities, as well as have better access to relevant experience and expertise.

### 3. SCOPE, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 THE SCOPE OF EVALUATION

For the purpose of this evaluation, the 'regional programme' will be defined as a set of programme activities designed to implement the programme as set out in the regional programme document approved by UNDP's Executive Board. These activities are largely implemented by the regional centre but in some cases by the regional bureau at the headquarters or by the country offices. Furthermore, they could include activities that use resources provided by global or country programmes.

<sup>228</sup> Based on a meeting with RBEC management (28 October 2011).

<sup>229</sup> Regional Programme Document 2011-2013.



The Evaluation Office conducted its last regional programme evaluation for RBEC in 2009, covering the period 2006-2010.<sup>230</sup> RBEC also conducted in 2011 an evaluation of its four outcome areas for the same period.<sup>231</sup> The present RBEC regional programme evaluation will, therefore, focus on the current regional programme cycle, 2011-2013, which has the five programme intervention areas as noted in Section 2.4. In particular, the evaluation will closely examine three areas recently highlighted by RBEC management as being critically important to the region, i.e. i) local development (e.g. governance and decentralization); ii) response to climate change; and iii) social inclusion.

### 3.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The regional programme evaluation assesses performance against a given programme framework that specifies the strategic intent of the implementer and the precise objectives to which the programme is intended to contribute. Given that outcomes are, by definition, the work of a number of partners, *attribution* of development change to the regional programme (in the sense of establishing a causal linkage between a development intervention and an observed result) will be extremely difficult and in most cases impossible. The evaluation will therefore consider *contribution* of the regional programme to the intended change stated in the programme document and the evaluators will need to explain how the regional programme contributed to the observed results.

To make the assessment, first, the evaluation team will examine the stated outcomes; identify the change over the period being evaluated and the national strategy and actions in support of that change. Second, they will examine the regional

programme's strategy and the implemented actions in support of national/regional efforts. The contribution of the programme to the development outcomes will be assessed according to a standard set of evaluation criteria to be used across all regional programme evaluations:

- **Relevance:** How relevant is the regional programme to (a) the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region; (b) promotion of UN values and UNDP mandate; and (c) its comparative strengths?
- **Effectiveness:** To what extent has the regional programme contributed to the realization of the intended outcomes as outlined in the regional programme document?
- **Efficiency:** Has the regional programme made good use of its financial and human resources?
- **Sustainability:** To what extent are the results that UNDP contributed to through the regional programme sustainable?

While assessing performance using the above criteria, the evaluation team will identify the various factors that can explain the performance. Even though the regional programme is implemented in a wide range of contexts, the evaluation is looking at a standard programming framework. As a result there are some standard explanatory factors that can be assumed to affect performance, for example covering:

- **Partnerships:** How well did the regional programme use its partnerships (e.g. with civil society, private sector, local government, donors, regional organizations and international development partners) to improve its performance?
- **Gender and human rights:** Did the regional programme incorporate gender equality and human rights aspects into its programme?

<sup>230</sup> UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of the Regional Programme for Europe and the CIS 2006-2010', New York, December 2009.

<sup>231</sup> UNDP RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre, 'Combined Evaluation of 4 Outcomes of the ECIS Regional Programme (2006-2010)', April 2011.

- **Capacity development:** Did the regional programme adequately invest in, and focus on, national capacity development to ensure sustainability and promote efficiency?
- **Project/programme design:** Did the projects and programmes have a well-established design and strategy to ensure their performance (e.g. an appropriate mix of modalities, i.e. regional public goods, sub-regional activities, multi-country interventions, technical support to country offices, and country-level activities) to maximize performance in view of regional needs?
- **Knowledge management:** Are the knowledge products (reports, studies, etc.) delivered by the regional programme and regional service centre adapted to country needs?

The evaluation criteria and explanatory factors will be further developed in a standard evaluation matrix to be prepared by the Evaluation Office. The evaluation team will adapt this matrix to the specific regional context by identifying and incorporating additional issues and questions.

### 3.3 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data will be collected through various means, including the following:

- **Desk reviews:** The evaluation team will collect and review all relevant documentation, including the following: i) regional programme documents; ii) project documents and activity reports; iii) past evaluation/self-assessment reports; iv) deliverables from the regional programme activities, e.g. published reports and training materials; v) client surveys on support services provided to country offices; vi) country office reports; vii) UNDP's corporate strategies and reports; and viii) government, media, academic publications.
- **Stakeholder interviews and focus groups:** The evaluation team will conduct face-to-face and/or telephone interviews with relevant stakeholders, including: i) UNDP staff (managers and programme/project

officers) at headquarters, the regional centre and country offices; and ii) policy makers, beneficiary groups and donors in the countries visited. Focus groups may be organized as appropriate.

- **Field visits:** The evaluation team will visit select countries and/or programme sites to observe first-hand progress and achievements made to date and to collect best practices/lessons learned. A case-study approach will be used to identify and highlight issues that can be further investigated across the regional programme. The selection of countries for field visits will cover all three geographical subregions ('divisions') of the Europe and the CIS region. The three countries represented in the 'advisory board' of the regional centre (currently represented are Montenegro for Division 1, Moldova for Division 2 and Uzbekistan for Division 3) play an important strategic role in the implementation of the regional programme, and thus will be consulted when designing the team's specific field visit plan.
- **Survey:** A general survey will be conducted, with support of the regional centre, to collect data and information widely from all programme countries in the region. A common survey form may be prepared by the Evaluation Office, which can be used for other regional programme evaluations planned in 2012.

During the preparatory work, a comprehensive list of regional projects, activities and services that are delivered under the regional programme will be developed with the support of the regional centre. This list should reflect all programme focus areas and different types of activities that are intended to contribute to the achievement of the regional programme.

## 4. EVALUATION PROCESS

- (a) **Preparatory phase:** The Evaluation Office task manager will hold consultations with the regional bureau and the regional centre to define the evaluation purpose and scope,

and develop the terms of reference. The task manager may visit the regional centre, as appropriate, to prepare a detailed evaluation design to be contained in the terms of reference. The Evaluation Office will identify and recruit external consultants to form an evaluation team, consisting of a team leader and team specialists.

- (b) Inception phase:** Once the team leader has been selected, he/she will receive an orientation and briefing by headquarters staff.

Each evaluation team member will first conduct a desk review of relevant materials. The Evaluation Office will provide a set of key UNDP documents and programme information for this purpose.

The evaluation team, as well as the Evaluation Office task manager, will travel to the regional centre for two weeks to launch the inception phase. During this period, the evaluation team will: i) receive a briefing from the task manager on the general evaluation process and methodology; ii) conduct consultations with regional centre staff; iii) collect any relevant programme/project/activity related information, iv) prepare a draft inception report that contains the final evaluation design, with any additional methodological and process-related decisions made during the inception mission that may not have been addressed in the original terms of reference; and v) develop any data collection instruments required prior to the main data collection phase.

The task manager will circulate the draft inception report for comments by a relevant group of stakeholders, including the regional bureau. The team leader will finalize the inception report by taking into account feedback received and submit it to the Evaluation Office.

- (c) Main evaluation phase:** Once the inception report is approved, the team will begin data collection activities, including country/field visits, in accordance with the evaluation design and process set forth in the inception report. Once the team members have completed their data collection, the team (as

well as the EO task manager) will reconvene in the regional centre for a joint analysis of data/information collected by all team members and validation. The data analysis session by the team should clearly identify the following:

- Findings: Corroborated facts and statements
- Assessments: Examination of the findings by using the evaluation criteria
- Analysis: Identification of factors behind the assessments made
- Conclusions: General statements about the value and performance of the programme, and common factors and features of the programme that affected its value and performance
- Preliminary recommendations: Recommendations to address each of the conclusions

A debriefing session by the evaluation team on a preliminary set of conclusions and recommendations will be organized for the regional centre staff at the end of the main evaluation phase, as an additional opportunity for validating the team's assessments.

- (d) Report preparation phase:** Once departing from the regional centre, the evaluation team will prepare a draft report based on the analysis conducted and the feedback received in the debriefing session. This draft (so-called 'zero' draft) will be reviewed by the Evaluation Office, and the team will revise it if there are any comments. Once the Evaluation Office has cleared the report, the draft ('first draft') will be shared with the regional bureau and the regional centre for comments. Based on the comments received, the team will revise the report, while recoding any changes made in an audit trail. Once the report has been further revised in a final draft ('second draft'), a stakeholder workshop may be organized, if appropriate, for the presentation of evaluation results and general discussions. Results of the final evaluation report will be presented to the Executive Board, and will be made available in public.

## 5. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

### UNDP Evaluation Office

The Evaluation Office task manager will manage the overall evaluation and ensure coordination and liaison with the regional bureau, the regional centre and other offices at headquarters. The task manager will provide reference materials and methodological guidance to the evaluation team, and ensure that an appropriate quality assurance mechanism exists during the evaluation. Given that there are five regional programme evaluations planned in 2012, the Evaluation Office will facilitate the standardization of data collection methods across regions as much as possible.

### The Evaluation Team

A team of independent external consultants will be established to carry out the evaluation. The team will consist of: i) team leader – a regional or international evaluation consultant, with the overall responsibility for providing guidance and leadership to team members, and coordinating the drafting and finalization of the report; and ii) team specialists (2-4 experts) – a group of thematic experts, either regional or international, who will support the team leader and provide the expertise in the subject areas of the evaluation. The team specialists will undertake data collection and analysis activities, and prepare designated parts of the evaluation report.

All members of the team should have substantive experience and in-depth knowledge of development in the region under evaluation (Europe and the CIS). Gender and regional balance will be ensured in the evaluation team. The evaluation team, collectively, is responsible for developing an evaluation design, undertaking data collection activities, and preparing the draft and final reports for submission to the Evaluation Office, as well as any supporting documents prepared during the evaluation.

### The Regional Centre

The regional centre will take a lead role in supporting the evaluation team in liaising with the key partners and make available to the

team all necessary information regarding UNDP activities in the region. A focal point will be identified to liaise with the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team. The regional centre is requested to provide any logistical and administrative support necessary to the evaluation team during the evaluation.

### The Regional Bureau and Country Offices

The regional bureau and country offices will facilitate the evaluation by providing necessary information and documents as requested by the Evaluation Office and the evaluation team.

## 6. TEAM QUALIFICATIONS

The evaluation will be carried out by a group of independent external consultants. The evaluation team will comprise a team leader and two team specialists.

- The team leader is expected to be an experienced evaluation expert, selected either from the Europe and CIS region or internationally. He/she should have substantive knowledge of one or more areas of the UNDP programme, and work experience in the region under evaluation. The team leader should have a demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice, and the ability to lead a group of multicultural and multidisciplinary experts for an evaluation of complex development programmes. He/she should also have proven drafting skills, excellent communication skills, and familiarity with UN/UNDP operations. The team leader will be responsible for reviewing at least one thematic programme area during the evaluation.
- The team specialists, either regional or international, are expected to have substantive technical expertise and knowledge in the areas of poverty/social inclusion and governance/local development, respectively, within the context of Europe and the CIS region. They should have experience conducting evaluations in the region, demonstrated capacity in strategic thinking and policy advice, excellent report writing and communication skills, as well as familiarity with the



UN system/UNDP. As members of the multi-cultural and multidisciplinary evaluation team, the specialists should be excellent team players, substantively contributing to the team's discussions throughout the evaluation process.

## 7. DELIVERABLES

The evaluation team will collectively produce the following deliverables:

- Inception report: An inception report will be prepared by the team leader, containing: i) a detailed evaluation design (e.g. an appropriate set of data collection and analysis methods, including the selection of countries/interventions for case studies and identification of stakeholder groups); ii) a list of programme activities; iii) a mapping of the country programmes; iv) any logistical and administrative issues foreseen for data collection activities and preparation of a report; v) management issues related to data collection and overall evaluation activities (e.g. division of labour in covering case study countries and in preparing a draft report).
- Draft evaluation report and revisions: The evaluation team will prepare a draft report for review by the Evaluation Office and make appropriate revisions to the report. The revised report will then be submitted to the regional bureau and regional centre for comments. The team will make any factual corrections as required and revise the draft based on comments provided.
- Final evaluation report: The evaluation team will submit to the Evaluation Office its final report, after reflecting all comments provided by internal and external reviewers.
- An evaluation brief, to be used for reporting to the Executive Board and for publicity materials.
- Presentations to the regional bureau, the regional centre, and to the Executive Board members, as required.

- Information relevant to the global programme evaluation, as requested by the Evaluation Office.

The main text of the evaluation report will be maximum 50-80 pages, organized into the chapters and annexes tentatively shown as follows. It should follow the report style format and guidelines to be provided by the Evaluation Office.

Chapter 1: Introduction, presenting the report and the methodology used

Chapter 2: Regional context and UNDP's regional programme

Chapter 3: Contributions of UNDP's regional programme (by programme outcome)

Chapter 4: Strategic positioning of UNDP's regional programme

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Annex 2: List of people consulted

Annex 3: List of documents consulted

Annex 4: List of regional programme projects and activities studied

## 8. EVALUATION TIME-FRAME

A tentative schedule of activities and travel plans are provided below. It will be finalized by the Evaluation Office in consultation with the regional bureau and the regional centre.

- Identification of potential consultants and general preparatory work – Oct/Dec 2011
- Selection and recruitment of the evaluation team members – Jan/Mar 2012
- Inception phase – April/May 2012



- Orientation of the team members – April
- Inception mission by evaluation team to the regional centre (2 weeks) – April/May
- Submission of the draft inception report Immediately after the inception mission
- Main evaluation phase – May/June 2012
  - Country/field visits for data collection (2-3 weeks) – May/June 2012
- Evaluation team's joint data analysis/validation meeting at the regional centre (one week) – Immediately following the data collection work
- Report preparation phase – July/Sept 2012
  - Submission of the first draft to the Evaluation Office ('zero' draft) – End July 2012
  - Submission of the report to the RBEC/BRC ('first' draft) – Sept 2012
  - Internal and external reviews of the draft report – Sept/Oct 2012
- Submission of the final draft to the RBEC/BRC ('second' draft) – Nov/Dec 2012
- Editing and design – Jan/Feb 2013
- Preparation of the Management Response by RBEC – March 2013
- Preparation for the Executive Board
  - Deadline for Board paper submission – May 2013
  - Reporting of results at the Executive Board meeting – September 2013

## TOR ANNEX 1. UNDP OFFICES IN THE RBEC REGION

RBEC serves 32 countries (through 20 country offices) in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. UNDP began the process of establishing offices and programmes in the region in 1992.

| RBEC  | Country Offices  | Project Offices                             |
|---|--|---|
| Division 1  | (9) Albania; Bosnia Herzegovina; Croatia; Kosovo; Macedonia; Montenegro; Romania; Serbia; and Turkey | (4) Bulgaria; Cyprus; Greece; and Lithuania |
| Division 2  | (5) Armenia, Belarus; Georgia; Moldova; and Ukraine  | (1) Russia                                  |
| Division 3  | (6) Azerbaijan; Kazakhstan; Kyrgyzstan; Tajikistan; Turkmenistan; Uzbekistan                         |   |
| UNDP also has projects in 7 other countries, which are managed by the Bratislava Regional Centre: Czech Republic; Hungary; Malta; Poland; Slovak Republic; Slovenia; and St. Helena |  |   |

\* The three countries represented in the current advisory board of the regional centre are Montenegro (Division 1), Moldova (Division 2) and Uzbekistan (Division 3). The advisory board is chaired by the RBEC Director and coordinated by the Director of the Regional Centre.

## ANNEX 2.

# PEOPLE CONSULTED

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## ANNEX 3.

# DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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## ANNEX 4.

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

## TO THE EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR EUROPE AND THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES, 2011-2013

### CONTEXT, BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

The regional programme for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, 2011-2013 was approved by the Executive Board at its annual session in 2010. It is an instrument for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It provides a framework for strengthening UNDP's impact at the country level by promoting development cooperation in the region across countries, supporting the diagnosis of shared challenges, catalysing development solutions, and supporting investment in knowledge and expertise for the benefit of more than a single country.

The evaluation report presents findings, conclusions and recommendations resulting from the assessment of UNDP performance and its strategic positioning in the region. The aim of the evaluation is to provide accountability for the achievement of results and resources used, identify successful approaches and challenges,

and learn lessons from implementation in a regional setting. Most importantly, the evaluation is intended to feed directly into the development of the new Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC) regional programme to start in 2014. The evaluation was carried out in 2012 and included a comprehensive desk review supplemented with six detailed country studies and a country office survey, conducted by the Evaluation Office.

The evaluation concluded that the RBEC regional programme in general and the RBEC Bratislava Regional Centre in particular are making important contributions to development in the region and that selection of the three themes – response to climate change, social inclusion and local development – as emerging priorities for the regional programme has been appropriate for the region, given the needs and challenges faced by the countries in the region. Tangible results have been observed in each of the areas.

## ANNEX. Key recommendations and management response

| <b>Evaluation recommendation 1.</b> The regional programme should focus on a limited number of targeted thematic areas and on holistic sustainable human development. A clear strategy for each of the three sub-regions should also be developed.  |            |                     |          |        |
|---|------------|---------------------|----------|--------|
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be aligned to the new UNDP Strategic Plan. It will focus on a limited number of thematic areas to strategically address the issue of sustainable development and will be tailored to the needs of each of the three sub-regions through close consultation between Bratislava Regional Centre (BRC) and RBEC headquarters Divisions, country offices and other stakeholders. |            |                     |          |        |
| Key action(s)   | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking |        |
|   |            |                     | Comments | Status |
| 1.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2014-2017 and subsequent programming, by further focusing on sustainable development, in line with post-RIO+20 and post-2015 development agenda  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| 1.2 Increase synergies between the regional and country office programmes to ensure more targeted sub-regional responses, in particular through more regular consultations with the BRC Advisory Board  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 2.</b> The regional programme and the regional projects within, reflecting the outcome and the output levels, should be developed to ensure that they address the regional dimension of development challenges.  |            |                     |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable. Response already initiated. Project design under the new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be tailored to the regional development context to further bring added value to the country offices programmes.   |            |                     |          |        |
| 2.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2014-2017 and subsequent programming   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| 2.2 Project formulation process to be reviewed and improved to promote a more issue-focused approach aiming aimed at addressing regional challenges   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 3.</b> A cross-practice approach should be firmly embedded in the regional programme practice architecture to foster greater cross-fertilization of programme results and to support the sustainable development goal of the regional programme.   |            |                     |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable. BRC will further promote a cross-practice approach in planning and implementation of regional projects and advisory services to support more coherent and effective interventions  |            |                     |          |        |
| 3.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2014-2017 and subsequent programming   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| 3.2 Increase emphasis on cross-practice approach in developing regional projects and service lines to maximize the impact of sustainable development  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |

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| Key action(s)   | Time frame | Responsible unit(s)                                  | Tracking |        |
|---|------------|--|----------|--------|
|   |            |  | Comments | Status |
| 3.3 RBEC/BRC Practice architecture to be adjusted, in line with the new Global Programme, to better promote cross-cutting issues  | 2014       | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| 3.4 BRC Service Tracker to be enhanced to better reflect cross-practice advisory services   | 2014       | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 4:</b> Given the fact that the fully required funds for regional projects are not often available at the critical start of the projects, BRC should continue to explore an efficient resource mobilization strategy.   |            |  |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Partially relevant and acceptable, since the resource mobilization targets for the current regional programme document were exceeded. Response already initiated. The Regional Centre has been and will continue to pursue a resource mobilization strategy to attract additional resources for implementation of the regional programme 2014-2017. |            |  |          |        |
| 4.1 Formulation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy for the new regional programme document with stronger donors' intelligence and concrete actions to improve BRC's capacity in mobilizing resources   | 2013       | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| 4.2 Monitor programming pipeline of resources to ensure efficient response to the specific priorities of the region as defined in the new regional programme document   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| 4.3 Further pursue funding opportunities with emerging donors.  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC/ Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy |          |        |
| 4.4 Reflect evaluation recommendations in developing regional projects  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| 4.5 Ensure that clear and realistic resource mobilization strategy is in place in case of funding gaps  | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 5:</b> Staff development should be a strategic priority for BRC, given the significant role its staff members are expected to play in providing technical expertise and knowledge to country offices.  |            |  |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The Regional Centre has been and will continue to strengthen investment in the professional development of staff and improve its capacity to provide high-level advisory services to country offices.  |            |  |          |        |
| 5.1 Adjust current business model for the Regional Centre to strengthen internal capacities and ensure efficient and focused support in priority areas to country offices   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |
| 5.2 Develop innovative ways to support knowledge exchange and advisory functions between country offices, and between BRC and country offices   | 2014-2017  | RBEC/BRC   |          |        |

(cont'd) >

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| Key action(s)   | Time frame | Responsible unit(s) | Tracking |        |
|---|------------|---------------------|----------|--------|
|   |            |                     | Comments | Status |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 6:</b> The regional programme should be developed on the basis of more inclusive consultations with relevant partners to ensure its full alignment with regional and sub-regional needs and challenges. Incentives for the ownership and formal endorsement of the regional programme by the country offices, national partners and relevant regional institutions should be introduced to enhance joint accountability for results. |            |                     |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be developed in close consultation with country offices, national partners and other relevant partners to strengthen ownership of regional programme by the country offices.   |            |                     |          |        |
| 6.1 More systematic and more inclusive consultations to be introduced at the early stage of the new regional programme document formulation   | 2013       | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| 6.2 Project formulation process to be adjusted to ensure stronger participation of stakeholders during conceptual and design phase  | 2014       | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| <b>Evaluation recommendation 7:</b> The regional programme should be designed in such a way that the three thematic issues of importance to UNDP in the region are effectively translated into the outcomes of the regional programme. Indicators and outputs should be clearly linked to the envisaged outcomes.   |            |                     |          |        |
| <b>Management response:</b> Relevant and acceptable, response already initiated. The new regional programme for 2014-2017 will be developed based on reduced and more focused thematic areas prioritized in the region and translated into the outcomes with clear indicators and targets.  |            |                     |          |        |
| 7.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Europe and the CIS, 2014-2017 to develop more targeted outcomes  | 2013       | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |
| 7.2 United Nations programming principles (including HRBA and Gender) will be mainstreamed during the regional programme document and project formulation process   | 2013       | RBEC/BRC            |          |        |

\* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).







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