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Resilient nations.*



EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (2008-2013)

Evaluation Office

United Nations Development Programme



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FOREWORD

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in addition to assisting development in 177 countries and territories with its country and multi-country programmes, runs global and regional programmes to address issues of global and regional nature and to 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 Asia and the Pacific 2008-2013, implemented by the UNDP Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, through its Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok and the Pacific Centre in Suva. It examined the results achieved by the 14 thematic programmes established to implement the regional programme and the complementary technical support services that the two regional centres provided to country offices and other national or regional partners.

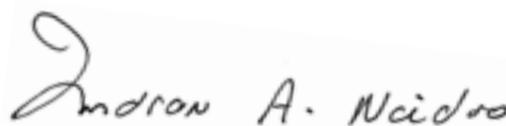
The evaluation found that despite the constraints of operating in an extremely diverse region the regional programme was highly relevant, had addressed critical regional development challenges and operated efficiently. The programme implementation was guided by the 'regionality' principle that required the programme to focus on issues of regional or cross-border nature, and activities with which a regional approach would make sense, allowing the sharing of knowledge and experience or producing scale economy.

The key message that emerged from the evaluation was that UNDP was most effective when its various components, the global, regional and country programmes, worked together to make the difference on the ground. To attain the maximum development results, the regional

programme initiatives have to be organically linked to country programme operations, leveraging their objectives. The country programme should also need to put regional programme initiatives into action on the ground and ensure the sustainability of their results. If implemented in isolation, the regional programme with its limited size would not make much of an impact in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific context.

The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific was found to have been playing an important leveraging role in this regard, technically backstopping country operations, and facilitating knowledge exchange and promoting the adoption of normative values in the regional context. The regional programme, and the regional centres, can further enhance the values that UNDP brings into the region by playing these roles most effectively. The report's recommendations mainly suggest how UNDP could do this. The shared responsibilities and mutual accountability between the regional and country programmes should be built into the programmes and their implementation modalities. The regional programme could play the role of knowledge manager and innovator in the regional context more effectively.

As UNDP prepares to develop a new 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

CONTENTS

Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Executive Summary	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Purpose of the Evaluation	1
1.2 Scope of the Evaluation	1
1.3 Approach and Methodology	3
1.4 Structure of the Report	6
Chapter 2. The Regional Context and UNDP Response	7
2.1 The Regional Context and Development Challenges	7
2.2 UNDP in the Region	8
2.3 The UNDP Regional Programme	9
Chapter 3. Contribution of the UNDP Regional Programme to Development Results	19
3.1 Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the MDGs	19
3.2 Democratic Governance	28
3.3 Crisis Prevention and Recovery	34
3.4 Environment and Sustainable Development	40
3.5 Efficiency	45
3.6 Sustainability	48
Chapter 4. Strategic Positioning of UNDP in the Region	51
4.1 Strategic Relevance	51
4.2 Comparative Strengths	65
4.3 UNDP Values and Cross-Sectoral Concerns	68
Chapter 5. Conclusions and Recommendations	73
5.1 Conclusions	73
5.2 Recommendations	77
Annexes	
Annex 1. Terms of Reference	89
Annex 2. People Consulted	99
Annex 3. Documents Consulted	109
Annex 4. Management Response	115

BOXES

Box 1.	Snapshot of Technical Support Services to RBAP Country Offices	16
Box 2.	Some Examples of Communities of Practice	17
Box 3.	Examples of South-South Exchange Forums in the DG Focus Area	33
Box 4.	Integrating Disaster Risk Analysis into National Plans and Strategies: Indonesia	39
Box 5.	Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding Project	44
Box 6.	Major Partnerships for the Regional Programme	67
Box 7.	Initiatives on Women Living with HIV	69

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Country Office Views on the Relevance of the Regional Programme	52
Figure 2.	Country Office Views on Technical Support Services Provided by the Regional Centres	55
Figure 3.	Country Office Views on Quality of Technical Support Services by Practice Area	55
Figure 4.	Distribution of Country Offices by Total Satisfaction Scores	56
Figure 5.	Correlation Between Satisfactions with Regional and Global Programmes	57
Figure 6.	Country Office Views on Knowledge Leadership of the Regional Programme	60
Figure 7.	Country Office Views on UNDP's Knowledge Products	61
Figure 8.	Source of Expertise Used by Country Offices	62
Figure 9.	Usage of Regional Programme Knowledge Products by Users in Cyberspace	62

TABLES

Table 1.	Thematic Programmes in the Asia-Pacific Regional Programme 2008-2013	2
Table 2.	Countries Visited	5
Table 3.	Funds Generated and Managed for Country Projects in the Region in ESD	42
Table 4.	Languages Used in Web Pages Referring to Regional Programme's Knowledge Products	63
Table 5.	Estimated Number of Links, Websites and Reposting of Individual Publications	64

REFERENCE TABLES

Table A1.	Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries	81
Table A2.	Regional Programme Budget and Expenditure by Focus Area, 2008-2011	85
Table A3.	Number of Regional Centre Staff and Turnover by Practice Area 2009-2011	86
Table A4.	Number of Publications by Focus Area and Type, 2008-2012	86
Table A5.	Number of Knowledge Networks & Communities of Practice by Focus Area	87
Table A6.	Regional Programme Core/Non-Core Multiplier, 2008-2011	87
Table A7.	Main Contributors to the Regional Programme	88
Table A8.	Expenditures under Regional and Country Programmes, 2004-2012	88

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APGP	Asia Pacific Gender Project
APRC	Asia-Pacific Regional Centre (in Bangkok)
APTII	Asia-Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative
ARGP	Asia Pacific Gender Project
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BCPR	Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery (UNDP)
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy (UNDP)
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CoP	Community of Practice
CPAD	Capacity Building for Peace and Development programme
CPR	Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CROP	Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific
CSO	civil society organization
DG	Democratic Governance
EEG	Energy and Environment Group
ESD	Environment and Sustainable Development
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GOVPAC	Democratic Governance in the Pacific programme
ILO	International Labour Organization
IGPR	Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MDGI	MDGs Initiative
N-PEACE	Engage for Peace, Equality, Access, Community and Empowerment programme
PFIP	Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme
PIF	Pacific Island Forum
PRMDG	Poverty Reduction and achievement of the MDGs
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (UNDP)
RCCEEP	Regional Climate Change, Energy and Eco-system Project
RHDR	Regional Human Development Report
RIIP II	Second Regional Initiative on Indigenous People's Rights and Development
SAARC	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption

UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women (subsumed by UN Women)
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNV	United Nations Volunteers

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as part of its annual work plan 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 Asia and the Pacific.

A 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.

The evaluation covered the current programme period 2008-2013, guided by the regional programme document and its results and resources framework. To do so, it examined the results achieved by the 14 thematic programmes established by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) to implement the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific, and the complementary technical support services provided to country offices and other national or regional partners, as defined in the programme document. The evaluation further took into account changes made over time by RBAP, including the institutional reform of its regional centres undertaken in 2010.

The evaluation assessed performance against the programme framework that specified the strategic intent and the objectives to which the programme intended to contribute. The programme's contribution to the development results was assessed according to a standard set of evaluation criteria used across all regional programme evaluations: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Further, the strategic positioning of the programme in the regional context was assessed in the light of the role the programme played within UNDP delivery architecture in the region, and against UNDP's comparative advantage and its normative mandates.

The evaluation used a combination of desk reviews of material, field visits to nine selected countries and interviews with various stakeholders, including an extensive use of online interviews. 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. Finally, the evaluation used a cyber-metric analysis commissioned by the Evaluation Office to gauge the use of the regional programme's knowledge products on the Internet, which is becoming increasingly important in the region.

II. BACKGROUND

The Asia-Pacific region exhibits enormous social, economic, political, cultural and geographical diversity manifested in diverse development challenges. The human development challenges are also very diverse. The region houses nearly two thirds of the world's poor. At the same time, the region contains the fastest-growing economies of the past few decades. Reducing poverty turned

out to be a huge challenge for many countries due to a variety of factors such as implicit and explicit social class structure, imbalance in economic growth within a country, persistent corruption, and conflicts of varying nature and scales. There are countries that are highly dependent on foreign assistance and those which are not. Gender inequality is highly entrenched in many countries but for different reasons and contexts, and manifests in a variety of ways. With the rapid economic growth, environment degradation has become a huge issue for many countries, while finding a sustainable energy supply to the populace and industry became a difficult pursuit.

With rising incomes and consumption potential, there has been an increasing trend of intra-regional cooperation and economic interactions. A number of regional and subregional trade groupings operate and several subregional groupings, notably the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) have developed into comprehensive cooperation arrangements to deal with a wide range of issues ranging from political to social ones. Some groupings also provide a basis for intraregional or international cooperation on such themes as gender equality, HIV/AIDS, energy and natural resources, and climate change.

Several challenges are transnational in character. Conflicts and natural disasters have transnational implications, particularly through cross-border displacement of persons and threats to stability. The high incidence of HIV/AIDS and prevalence of human trafficking all have cross-border dimensions. Environmental degradation and climate change implications recognize no geographical border. While many of these issues are tackled within the domain and jurisdiction of national governments, by their very nature,

they generate both needs and opportunities for regional or subregional intervention.

UNDP supports 21 programme countries in Asia with the same number of country offices, and 15 countries in the Pacific with the two multi-country offices in Fiji and Samoa, and the country office in Papua New Guinea. The regional programme supports these 36 countries and 24 country/multi-country offices through the Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC) in Bangkok and the Pacific Centre in Suva.¹

The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific as set out in the programme document is structured around the four focus areas, namely, poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Declaration Goals (MDGs), which includes cross-sectoral issues of gender equality and HIV/AIDS; democratic governance; crisis prevention and recovery; and environment and sustainable development. Programme activities designed thereunder include 14 thematic programmes or projects, as shown below, which all together cover over 50 projects.

- (a) Poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs²
 - Regional Initiative on Human Development Reports in Asia and the Pacific
 - MDGs Initiative
 - Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative
 - MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific
 - Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme
 - Asia Pacific Gender Project
 - Regional Joint Programme for the prevention of Gender-Based Violence

¹ There was also the Regional Centre in Colombo, which was merged into APRC in 2010.

² The MDGs Initiative and the Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative were later merged into the new Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction initiative in relation to 2010 reform.

- HIV, Human Development and Mobility in Asia and the Pacific
- (b) Democratic governance
- Asia Regional Governance Programme
 - Democratic Governance in the Pacific
 - Regional Initiative on Indigenous People's Rights and Development
- (c) Crisis prevention and recovery
- Asia - Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery
 - Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Pacific
- (d) Environment and sustainable development
- Regional Climate Change, Energy and Ecosystem Project

The initial budget approved was USD 100 million, proposed to be funded almost equally from regular sources (USD 48.2 million) and other resources (USD 50.8 million). The actual expenditure was USD 75.67 million, indicating a delivery rate of 79 percent. This figure also represents 8 percent of total expenditure spent by RBAP in the region during the programme period, including that of all country programmes.

III. KEY FINDINGS

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

Despite the constraints of operating in a vast and diverse Asia Pacific region, as well as its limited resources, the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific has put together a highly useful programme with useful elements for nearly all the countries in its footprint. The regional programme's relevance also stems from its ability to address issues that country programmes were not able to owing to political or cultural sensitivities.

The regional programme initiatives generally met the three regionality principles, in its

intent, intervention strategy and implementation modalities. This has provided a strong rationale for the regional programme. There were some challenges in pursuing cross-border issues due to the complexity in managing multiple institutional and political contexts and in enlisting country-level engagement on sensitive issues.

The regional programme has made an effort to balance demands at the country level and UNDP corporate priorities, drawing on the UNDP comparative strengths: acknowledged domain leadership, country office network and its neutrality. While it responded well to country office needs and national priorities, the regional programme has not always coordinated well with country programmes to the extent desirable. While the broad development objectives of the regional and country programmes basically converge and a substantial part of regional centres' work has aimed at leveraging country programmes, they were programmed as if they aim for their own objectives through their own activities.

If seen as a standalone development programme, the regional programme was a very small player in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region. Seen as a part of the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture, however, the regional programme played several critical leveraging roles: technical supporter of country programmes; knowledge manager and network facilitator; and knowledge and idea leader. The programme's relevance thus rested on its agility to strategically address key regional issues on the one hand, and its ability to leverage country-level results on the other.

POVERTY REDUCTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGS

The work under the *poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs* focus area has generally been very relevant to the human development challenges of the countries and the needs of country offices in the region. This was amplified

by the strong endorsement of its work by the countries, the alignment with their regional and national plans and the flexibility to adjust the programme to address priority issues in the region.

In general, the MDGs Initiative and the recent rollout of the MDG Acceleration Framework have contributed to raising awareness of MDGs and policies in favour of their achievement. The flexible approach adopted in the current generation of the initiative allowed more effective intervention in support of countries in crisis. At the same time, the success ultimately hinged on whether the countries truly internalized MDGs in their own national planning and budgeting framework. The result in this context has been mixed.

APRC has emphasized building the capacity of ASEAN Member States in the recent project revision, and supported the revitalization of the ASEAN roadmap for the attainment of the MDGs. At same time, the impact of upstream capacity-building and the country-level follow-up have not been very evident yet.

The MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific programme has strengthened national capacity to develop and implement MDG-based National Sustainable Development Strategies, raised awareness of the importance of MDG monitoring and reporting, and built supporting partnerships with national and regional stakeholders with a sector-wide approach, departing from the project-based approach. A challenge in realizing the MDG monitoring was found where national statistical capacity was weak.

The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme was one of the most successful programmes, having been the driving force behind financial inclusion activities in their respective countries, having instigated a marked change in attitudes and behaviour towards savings, insurance and remittances, and having created new partnership

and network opportunities between financial service providers and mobile network operators, or insurance companies and aggregators.

The Asia Pacific Gender Project has produced many important results, often by working with or influencing other partners inside and outside the organization. There was a strategic shift from MDG-focused direct support to national governments and other partners, to working more through ongoing programmes and processes supported by country offices. This shift would enhance effectiveness. However, there was a serious lack in country office capacities and institutional arrangements for effective gender mainstreaming at the country level.

The Regional Human Development Reports have enjoyed a wide range of readership. The reports have been used effectively as a tool for human development dialogue in the countries and supportive engagement with country offices has helped yield positive uptake of its recommendations. The approach to its national dissemination was still event-centred, however, and could be improved. Integrating the dissemination and the use of the reports in the national processes pursued by the country office was an effective way to bring the thrust of the reports into the national policy arena. For this, the capacity development of country office staff was also an important element in enhancing its contribution.

The major contribution of the Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative was to have deepened the understanding of trade and human development impacts through research, advocacy, technical advisory and capacity-building support. It has also informed policy forum of specific options and measures to this end. However, the intended outcome, “to foster regional cooperation and integration for enhanced trade flows leading to increased employment and poverty reduction,” was overly ambitious and turned out to be unrealistic given the programme’s limited scope and resource constraints.

The HIV, Human Development and Mobility in Asia and the Pacific programme addressed the human development, governance, human rights, and transborder challenges of HIV/AIDS. The programme led to a heightened awareness of the issue by policy makers and made significant achievements both nationally and internationally. The HIV project stands out as a truly cross-sector initiative and helped countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies.

The Pacific component of the HIV programme was aligned to the Regional HIV Strategy and Implementation Plan, and resulted in a coordinated regional response to HIV/AIDS in partnerships with regional institutions, other United Nations agencies and civil society organizations. The programme provided region-wide technical assistance and backstopping on gender, human rights, sexual diversity and socio-economic determinants of HIV risk. Significant results at the national and regional levels were achieved with the programme's contribution. Despite this success, several external and internal factors hindered the programme's achievement of maximum impact.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

With regard to *democratic governance*, the regional programme addressed issues relevant to the region, filling crucial governance gaps. Overall, the three governance programmes, the Asia Regional Governance Programme, the Democratic Governance in the Pacific, and the Regional Initiative on Indigenous People's Rights and Development, contributed on the one hand to more inclusive policy making and implementation for equitable development and, on the other, to the anti-corruption and human rights efforts to meet international norms and standards.

In Asia, given the great diversity in socio-economic and political systems, the objectives of the Asia

Regional Governance Programme did not represent an agenda shared by all countries in the region. To create entry points, it adjusted the programme emphasis to fit the needs and demands of the specific context in individual countries. At times, the programme relevance was compromised owing to discrepancies between what the programme could offer and the expectations of the country offices and its partners.

In the Pacific, the relevance of the Democratic Governance in the Pacific programme stemmed from its alignment with the Pacific Plan. The shortage of comparable service providers in the subregion and the capacity constraints of the two UNDP multi-country offices in serving a large number of countries placed the Pacific Centre in a more frontline role as a provider of services and programme delivery. In-country adoption was still affected by national priorities and sensitivities in each country.

In designing programme activities, the Asia Regional Governance Programme and the Democratic Governance in the Pacific have gone beyond the boundaries of programmes and practices so that they were mutually reinforcing and creating cross-practice benefits.

The regional programme organized a number of South-South exchange forums for sharing information and experience on governance reform measures that encouraged the discussion of sensitive issues, as well as interregional exchange of experiences. In some cases, when a global model was imposed in a 'top-down' manner without sufficient contextualization and buy-in, the forum failed to produce policy-level results, especially in Asia, where diverse political and ideological systems exist.

Both the Asia and Pacific programmes well integrated the issue of women's political empowerment into their projects. This was reflected in activities that, for instance, aimed to promote

women's political participation or to advance human rights through family law bills and capacity-building on women's rights.

Although the democratic governance programmes addressed issues that naturally have national implications, few national beneficiaries were aware of the programmes' vision, profile or components. Explicit linkages were rarely drawn between its programme outcomes and partner government concerns. Consideration for national sensitivities on governance issues appeared to have encouraged such a quiet approach.

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

The rich and diverse expertise of UNDP in *crisis prevention and recovery* has been very relevant in the Asia-Pacific region where diverse disaster and conflict challenges exist. The regional modality of the programme found a natural fit with the needs in this area.

The UNDP regional programme is only a small player among several actors in the region addressing conflict and disaster risk reduction needs at the country level. To find its niche and relevance, the scope of the work of the programme in this area was narrowed down from what would have been expected from the original programme document. At the country level, the programme for the most part complemented but at times overlapped with activities of other key actors. Maintaining relevance in this area will continue to require careful strategic positioning, particularly in Asia.

UNDP has established high credibility as a neutral, trusted partner in the Pacific, through the regional programme interventions addressing key capacity needs towards the Regional Human Security Framework and in developing national security policies to strengthen peace-building and human security. The partnership with the PIF Secretariat was central to the design and effectiveness of programme interventions.

In Asia, the regional programme has made specific contributions to strengthening technical capacities of national and regional institutions and communities in respect of tsunami early warning systems and operating procedures for immediate responses. The regional programme has been a consistent factor in these improvements.

Regional centres' technical support has contributed to creating national systems and action plans for strengthening disaster response mechanisms. However, there was a concentration of technical assistance patterns and overdependence on a few key people that limited the possibility of expanding services to all those needed.

The regional programme has enabled significant milestones in the Pacific in raising the profile of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) as a regional priority. Involvement of national counterparts was secured innovatively under the Capacity-Building for Peace and Development project. In Asia, the Engage for Peace, Equality, Access, Community and Empowerment programme made useful contributions in a select number of countries to strengthen the work on Women, Peace and Security concerns mainly by civil society organizations. However, engagement of government counterparts and country offices has been less than optimal in some countries.

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Concerning *environment and sustainable development*, the work of the regional centres' energy and environment group (EEG) included not only the Regional Climate Change, Energy and Eco-system Project but also technical support services to the country offices, as well as the work done by a large number of experts funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF). There was a strong coherence between the regional project and the broader work of EEG,

and the appropriate level of consultations with the country offices. The work of EEG as a whole was also very relevant to the development challenges of the region, responded to the needs of the country offices and was aligned with the corporate strategic plan of UNDP.

Activities implemented directly under the regional project did not really achieve the specific outcomes defined in the original programme document. This was due largely to the fact that the results framework in the programme document was too limiting and badly designed in this focus area. Nevertheless, different elements of the programme document outcomes were achieved instead by country-level projects that were supported by EEG.

The single most important contribution made by EEG was actually the financial leveraging of country programmes that enabled them to tackle a wide range of energy and environment issues, and technical support that ensured greater quality and results. In fact, instead of using the small amount of resources provided to the regional programme in this area in direct project implementation, EEG has used them to leverage country programmes and succeeded in raising about 23 times more than the original resources allocated to the regional programme. Hence, despite the small amount of resources allocated in this area, the regional programme has made significant contributions to the development results through its support to country offices.

The heavy reliance on global funding mechanisms, in particular GEF, has placed some limitation on the scope of work because the GEF global environmental agenda and the UNDP human development agenda did not exactly match although they were reconcilable in each specific context. At the same time, greater attention to climate change adaptation in recent years has contributed to raising awareness and understanding about the importance of addressing

the development-environment nexus coherently in addressing the multidimensional human development challenges.

On the management of cross-border externalities and spillovers, there were not many but important contributions made mainly through country programme support. These initiatives are evidence that EEG also engaged governments successfully in sensitive transnational environmental issues where opportunity existed. These initiatives were generally complex in nature and not without challenges.

Promoting knowledge sharing and learning was the main objective of many activities undertaken directly by the regional project. Overall, these activities produced a large amount of knowledge. The regional project had some success in advocacy and awareness-raising activities. However, the knowledge was not sufficiently codified and analysed for effective learning. The knowledge products did not pay sufficient attention to linking theory and lessons learned from country-level experiences. These initiatives hence were more disjointed than strategic.

EFFICIENCY IN THE USE OF RESOURCES

Given the institutional and resource constraints and other external factors, the regional programme has operated efficiently, achieving a delivery rate of 79 percent against the original target set in the programme document. The programme experienced initial delays in 2008 due to restructuring.

The programme had to adapt to the pressures of corporate budget constraints. Overall resource constraints in UNDP necessitated an across-the-board reduction in programme resources, resulting in a reduction in the total programme size. The 2010 merger of the Regional Centre in Colombo into APRC was a significant step taken in terms of efficiency and cost reductions.

There has also been a significant reduction in the staff strength of the regional centres. While this has not overly affected provision of technical support or programme delivery, the current human resource situation poses a risk of affecting UNDP programme effectiveness not only at the regional level but also at the country level. This is because, if regional centres cannot respond adequately to country offices' support service needs, the negative impact on country programmes would be qualitative rather than financial.

To a large extent, the programmes for Asia and for the Pacific have been implemented independently by APRC and the Pacific Centre, respectively. Given the geographical distance between the subregions and the distinct feature of the Pacific with its regional architecture, this parallel programme arrangement provided more efficiency gains than losses.

Resource mobilization remains a serious challenge for the regional programme with a pessimistic financial prediction for UNDP in the near future. The regional centres need to pursue innovative fund-mobilization strategy with institutional support from headquarters. There is also a mismatch between financial and results accountabilities among the global, regional and country programmes under the current arrangement that is to the disadvantage of the regional programme, affecting its financial health.

SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS ACHIEVED

Engagements with regional institutions and national actors, when successful, enhanced the sustainability of the contributions made by the regional programme. The sustainability of most regional programme contributions critically depended on the follow-up by the national partners and/or the country offices. While there were many cases where individual efforts and interactions ensured such a follow-up, it was not always ensured.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRY OFFICES

A substantial portion of staff resources of the regional centres was devoted to providing technical support to the country offices in the region. In general, appreciation was expressed by those who received such services. Still the assessment was split: there were country offices that were clearly satisfied with the services, and those that were not. Those that were not satisfied considered that the levels of expertise were often not adequate as compared to the needs. In support services, country offices did not distinguish the support provided by the regional and global programmes, indicating that two programmes were well integrated within the work of the regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.

On the quality of technical support in different subject areas, the recipients accorded high degrees of satisfaction in the substantive areas of work, namely, poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs, democratic governance, crisis prevention and recovery, environment and sustainable development, gender equality and HIV/AIDS. The rate of satisfaction drops when it comes to support in other areas, namely, capacity development, knowledge management, partnerships and donor relations, and monitoring and evaluation.

There was no systematic results monitoring of how the support service was used by country offices, and what results it contributed to the country in the end. The 2010 introduction of the annual engagement policy, by linking services to the country programme work plans, provided the basis for the regional centres to make a further move into a result-based provision of services. Introducing results-monitoring would allow the centres to learn from the effect of its support in different country context, adapt the types and contents of support in due course, and further gain knowledge on what works, what does not and why in real time while supporting different countries.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND FACILITATION

With its regular interaction with country offices, the regional programme was ideally placed to generate lessons from the main source of knowledge for UNDP – its country-level experience. The regional programme has been using this unique position to create knowledge products and services and contributed to UNDP global, regional and country-level knowledge. Some knowledge products thus generated were, however, mere collections of case studies with a limited number of samples, limited comparability of cases and without much in-depth analysis. Hence, their ability to be generalized or their applicability to a different context remained questionable.

The use of the programme's knowledge products in cyberspace was biased towards 'internal users' from UNDP and other United Nations agencies, followed by civil society users, with much less usage recorded by governments and other intergovernmental bodies in the region. Outside the sphere of influence of UNDP and the English-speaking world, the outreach was very limited. Within this limit, the Regional Human Development Reports were heavily referred to in cyberspace, as well as those that addressed innovative and cross-sectoral topics.

As a new way of knowledge generation, management and utilization, knowledge networks and 'communities of practices' have started to flourish. Some earlier networks experienced difficulties inherent in such networks to maintain their value and attraction to the participants. There was evidence that, by directly linking experts and practitioners with a focus on a set theme, use of these knowledge networks and the Solutions Exchange model in particular have led to some concrete results. How this form of knowledge generation, management and utilization would further develop and create the depth and breadth of knowledge is to be seen.

CROSS-PRACTICE WORK AND ISSUE-BASED APPROACH

Development issues are inherently multi-dimensional. However, the formal programmatic mechanism to address such multidimensional issues has been inadequate. In the regional centres, cross-practice work has thrived despite the challenges of 'vertical' results reporting, due largely to internal motivations and informal leadership. There must be a mechanism to properly build cross-practice and issue-based work into the programme and to attribute the results achieved across practice areas, and formal recognition of staff contributions through cross-practice work.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships included engagement with regional intergovernmental organizations, joint work with other United Nations agencies although to differing extents across practices; as well as other actors based on thematic relevance. Engagement with regional institutions was much more effective in the Pacific than in Asia owing to the higher degree of regionalism in the Pacific and the strong ownership of the regional programme by Pacific institutions. At the same time, the regional programme has retained its engagement with all the key regional institutions in a form appropriate to each institution's characteristics.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The regional programme has made important strides to incorporate gender equality objectives into their policy, programming and implementation. Evidence abounds that, across focus areas, the programme mainstreamed the gender dimension well in both the design and implementation of its projects, and in its support to country offices. In a number of programme and projects, outputs included the development and use of gender-sensitive assessment tools, and a range of awareness and advocacy interventions for promoting gender equality.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Exploration of South-South cooperation in the regional programme has been opportunistic rather than strategic. There were only a few instances of bona fide South-South cooperation, such as the cooperation on disaster risk management and climate change adaptation between the Pacific and the Caribbean countries, facilitated by the Pacific Centre.

The regional programme had implemented a number of activities, such as exchange of experiences or community of practices that could be claimed as South-South initiatives. The question remains whether the programme should be satisfied with these initiatives as those that pursued South-South cooperation as one of the strategic objectives of the organization. The programme could have used these opportunities as a springboard to further develop more structured South-South cooperation programmes among the countries, involving, for instance, institutional partnerships.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. The regional programme was highly relevant given the external constraints of operating in a vast, diverse region. In all areas of its work, it addressed critical development challenges in the region. It was designed around UNDP corporate priorities and addressing normative values and sensitive issues that were difficult to be addressed nationally. It relied on UNDP corporate strengths, its geographic footprint and neutrality. Its initiatives generally met the three 'regionality' principles.

Despite the constraints of operating in a vast and diverse region, the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific has put together a relevant programme with useful elements involving countries in the region. The programme was designed around UNDP corporate priorities and the concept of human development, addressing

normative values such as gender and human development, provided focus on the challenges faced by a vulnerable and marginalized population, and brought up sensitive issues that were difficult to be addressed at the national level. The programme design has drawn on UNDP comparative strengths: acknowledged domain leadership; country office network; and most importantly its neutrality. Some interventions, such as those in the area of international trade, were not within the core expertise of UNDP.

The regional programme operated in rather contrasting environments in Asia and the Pacific. The programme was able to apply the regional approach much better in the Pacific thanks to the entrenched regionalism and the presence of strong regional institutions. In Asia, given the greater diversity in socio-economic and political systems, the regional initiatives have been largely confined to multi-country initiatives. Having parallel programmes in Asia and the Pacific, operated by APRC and the Pacific Centre respectively, helped address this subregional difference.

Conclusion 2. The regional programme made useful contributions towards the intended programme outcomes. If seen as a standalone development programme, however, the regional programme was a small player in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region. The relevance and contributions of the programme, and by extension the regional centres which implemented it, has drawn on the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture and through multiple leveraging roles that it played.

The regional programme's contributions in poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs were most notable in upstream policy support and advocacy. For democratic governance, the regional programme contributed to the promotion of institutionalized participation mechanisms and adaptation of international norms but was less successful in promoting equitable development

and participation of disadvantaged groups. With regard to crisis prevention and recovery, the regional programme has contributed in strengthening national technical capacities for conflict prevention and disaster risk management in a number of countries and in enhancing regional frameworks in the Pacific. In regard to environment and sustainable development, the regional programme made significant contributions with its support to country programmes by facilitating their access to and in the management of global funds.

The relevance and contributions of the programme, and by extension the regional centres which implemented it, have drawn on the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture and through multiple leveraging roles that it plays. The three most recognized and appreciated roles of the regional programme and the regional centres were: the technical support they provide to the country programmes; the role they play as knowledge promoter, manager and facilitator, where the UNDP country-level experience and organization-wide knowledge converge and were brought to bear in programme planning and implementation; and finally, the role as knowledge leader in advocating, contextualizing and applying new ideas in the region. Balancing and optimizing these roles has not been easy given the pressures and counter pulls on its limited financial and human resources.

Conclusion 3. Cross-practice work has thrived despite the challenges of vertical results reporting, owing largely to internal motivations and informal leadership. The current programming method does not provide appropriate mechanisms to properly programme cross-practice or issue-based work.

The formal mechanism to address multi-dimensional development challenges has been inadequate. The regional programme is in an ideal position to technically support country offices

in pursuing cross-practice work. The regional programme staff has consciously pursued cross-practice work and achieved a number of results. However, the cross-practice achievements have for the most part been attributed to the lead practice area and there was no formal recognition of cross-practice results as such. Further, there was no formal mechanism to programme or projectize cross-practice or issue-based work as such. With the practice-based programming structure with a set results framework, the regional programme could not properly programme issue-based work and be accountable for its results.

Conclusion 4. For a number of regional programme initiatives, an important factor for effectiveness and sustainability was the full engagement of regional or national partners. The involvement of country offices in programme design, delivery and follow-up was another important element. While there were many cases where the regional programme collaborated well with regional or national partners and/or country offices, there were also cases where the regional programme was not so successful in this regard.

The regional programme has produced regional public goods and undertaken other activities that were best delivered regionally or directly to different types of stakeholders. There were also a number of programme activities that would need to have a regional, national or local partner anchor its activities during implementation and take over the ownership when intervention comes to an end. When the programme was able to secure firm engagement of regional institutions, as seen in the number of Pacific initiatives, it created lasting relationships through which UNDP could address regional agendas and channel its support through regional mechanisms effectively. There were also some examples where the programme's contributions were appropriately integrated into national structure. The regional programme was, however, not always able to secure such an

ownership at the regional or country level. This aspect had a bearing on effectiveness and sustainability of those regional programme activities.

Another important element in this was the degree to which the regional programme also involved country offices in the design and delivery of and follow-up to its activities. After all, the direct country-level support through the country programmes remained the principal means of delivery by UNDP, and the regional programme accounted for only about 8 percent of total expenditure by RBAP in the region. It was thus important to involve country offices in programme activities with shared objectives, and to follow up on the progress made towards results at the country level with shared accountability. For many programme initiatives, there has been intensive engagement with country offices to deliver the programme but less so with the follow-up on the results. In some countries with large country programme resources, the regional programme became a marginal play in the overall UNDP activities in the country. This lowered the priority and the profile of the programme, reflected, for instance, in poor selection of participants to attend the regional programme events or insufficient leveraging of the regional programme initiative in the country.

Conclusion 5. The regional programme has responded well to the decline in resources by making efficient use of its human and financial resources. The funding prospect for the regional programme has been limited due to the lack of external funding opportunities and insufficient recognition of the critical role that the regional centres could play in leveraging organizational knowledge and effectiveness.

With the declining resource base and within the institutional and programmatic constraints, the regional programme has operated efficiently, reflected in relatively high delivery rates to budgets. The regional centre staff was highly

responsive to technical assistance requests as assessed by country offices. Limited human resources have often stretched individual capacities in implementation. Due efforts were made to leverage limited funding through partnerships; however, overall, the programme remained highly reliant on regular resources for delivery, particularly in Asia.

Despite the relevance and usefulness of regional interventions and the APRC role within the UNDP overall delivery mechanism, the funding prospect for the regional programme has been limited. The funding framework of most donor agencies lacked a 'regional window'. While the regional centres could explore an innovative fund-raising approach such as through the private sector, there was a lack of well-defined mandate and organizational arrangements for regional resource mobilization. Internally, the insufficient recognition of the critical role that the regional centres could play in leveraging organizational effectiveness has been a constraint, resulting in insufficient channelling of resources from where the contribution was accrued to, such as country programme and global sectoral funding sources.

Conclusion 6. The regional centres provided a substantial number of technical support services to country offices in the region. There was generally an appreciation and satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support provided by the regional centres although some country offices considered the levels of expertise inadequate. The 2010 introduction of annual engagement with country offices has substantially improved the relevance of support. There was, however, no systematic results monitoring of how the technical support was used by country offices, and what results it contributed towards at the end in the country. This prevented an objective assessment of their contribution to results and the learning process on how the technical advice affected the country results in different contexts.

The regional centres have established their position as an anchor for technical expertise in the region and provided a substantial number of support services to country offices, and sometimes to national or regional partners. Many country offices and partners expressed appreciation for and satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support provided by the regional centre staff, particularly in programming support, referral of experts and, to a lesser extent, resource mobilization. There were cases of some country offices which considered the levels of expertise inadequate as compared to the needs.

The introduction in 2010 of annual engagement with the country offices to discuss and jointly prioritize the service requirements in line with the work plans of the country offices and the regional centres has changed the service provision from a demand-based to a needs-based one. This has hence substantially improved the relevance of the service provided. It has also helped rationalize and prioritize service provision to meet the tightening resource constraints.

The real contribution of these services to development results is determined by how the initiatives and programmes supported have yielded results at the country level. However, there was no mechanism to systematically monitor, evaluate and learn from the effect of these services. This lack of result monitoring has prevented an objective assessment of their contribution to national development results and the learning process from observing how the technical advice affected the country results in different contexts.

Conclusion 7. The regional programme has been in a unique position to be the regional knowledge hub, learning from country-level experiences, conduct comparative analysis and feeding it back into the policy advice and technical support. Knowledge networks showed promising signs of being an effective mechanism to generate and deliver the knowledge.

The regional programme's knowledge products were considered reliable and addressing pertinent issues although questions remained in their outreach and the applicability of knowledge presented in case-study materials. The challenge is to make maximum value out of knowledge generated from different sources.

Knowledge networks and communities of practices have started to flourish, as a new way of knowledge generation and management. With the adoption of the Solutions Exchange model, there were signs that these knowledge networks can become an effective mechanism to generate and deliver the knowledge through direct interaction with practitioners, especially when it is used to address focused policy questions. There was also evidence that these knowledge networks have actually influenced policy, project or system development.

UNDP knowledge products were considered reliable and addressing pertinent issues. Where there was clear acknowledgement of technical expertise, there were differing perceptions as to their innovativeness. The outreach of knowledge products appeared to be rather limited, confined to the sphere of UNDP direct influence and where English was regularly used as a medium of research and communication.

Some knowledge products generated from projects or knowledge networks were mere collections of case studies with limited number of samples, limited comparability of cases and without much in-depth analysis. Hence, their generalizability or the applicability to a different context remained questionable. Opportunities to make cross-country analyses from engagement with country offices through technical support services were not used effectively. The challenge is to make the maximum value out of these various knowledge generation opportunities, including knowledge networks, individual projects and the engagement with the country offices

through technical support services, and produce high-quality knowledge that can be used in further country support, policy advice or advocacy.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme as the instrument playing an important leveraging role within the overall architecture of the UNDP delivery mechanism of development results.

The current regional programme was programmed as if it is essentially a standalone development programme. RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme, fully taking into account the significant leveraging roles it plays for UNDP to deliver development results on the ground. For this purpose, RBAP should consider embedding into the regional programme how it will contribute to the development results together with the global and country programmes, while keeping room for some strategic regional initiatives.

Recommendation 2. RBAP should create a framework for shared responsibilities and mutual accountability between the regional centres and country offices for development results at the country level to be achieved by regional programme activities or by country programme activities supported by the regional centre.

As parts of UNDP, the regional centre and the country offices should have common objectives in achieving development results on the ground and work together to this end. This does not imply their in-country programmes should exactly match. They could take different roles and/or tackle different issues. Still, as a part of the team, each should consider itself responsible not only for the support but also for the results – whether it is by a country programme activity supported by the regional centre, or an in-country

regional programme activity supported by the country office.

Such a framework for shared responsibility and mutual accountability can involve: the country office responsibility to support in-country regional programme activities and to follow them through towards the results; the annual work plan of the regional centres that draws on country programme objectives that are planned to be supported; more regular engagement of regional centre experts with the country office counterparts not only to support country programme activities but also to monitor results achieved at the country level by regional programme activities or country programme activities supported by the regional programme; and strategic alliances with relevant country offices to enhance national ownership of the regional programme initiatives where applicable.

Recommendation 3. RBAP should seriously explore ways to use the issue-based approach for the regional programme to address key development challenges in the region, and further encourage the cross-practice work within the regional centres and in their support to country programmes.

UNDP has expertise in dealing with the whole gamut of development issues in the social, economic and political fields. Using this strength to address multidimensional development challenge is imperative in discharging its core mandate for human development. The regional programme is in an ideal position to promote innovative ways to tackle multidimensional development issues, fully utilizing the issues-based approach, and to support country programmes in creating and managing cross-practice interface.

Recommendation 4. The regional centres should continue to seek appropriate regional or national partners to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the regional programme contribution.

Having a firm engagement by regional or national partners is important in ensuring the effectiveness and the sustainability of the regional programme's contributions. Given the limitation in the size and outreach of regional programme activities, their influence would also be limited without support of appropriate regional or national partners in the policy-making arena or on the ground. Their impact would not be sustained without such partners to carry forward the agenda. The country offices must also be held responsible for providing appropriate support to the regional programme activities and their agenda at the country level.

Recommendation 5. The regional centres should introduce into the engagement policy with country offices, regular monitoring of progress made and results achieved by the regional programme initiatives and technical support rendered to the country offices.

Introducing such a mechanism forms an important part of the regional centres' accountability for development results. It could be achieved, for instance, by instituting regular interactions between the centre experts and their respective counterparts in country offices.

The regional centres could gain important learning opportunities from the results achieved (or not achieved) at the country level. Knowledge generated from such monitoring can be a great asset as it provides a basis for broader cross-country analysis that would complement more in-depth and focused knowledge generated from individual projects and knowledge networks.

Recommendation 6. The regional centres should define knowledge management as one of the core mandates of its experts.

Effective knowledge management can be achieved only when the experts in each practice team fully engage in it. These experts are in the best position to integrate knowledge generated from various sources – knowledge networks, individual projects

and the engagement with country offices through technical support – and analyse it into a valuable knowledge asset. Such knowledge assets would help the regional centres in further enhancing the effectiveness of its country support or advocacy.

Recommendation 7. The regional centres should further enhance the outreach of their knowledge products and their contents, particularly at the national level in the region.

The regional centres should invest more in disseminating the knowledge products and their contents, the creation of which claimed a substantial amount of resources. The strategy to enhance the outreach could include: finding appropriate national partners, such as research institutions, to translate knowledge products into national languages and disseminate them as joint products; and improved use of different media and formats such as social media, e-learning and video clips.

Recommendation 8. UNDP should seek ways to establish programming and funding arrangements that ensures coherence of the programme of regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.

The regional centres' work is currently resourced by not only core funding allocated to the regional Programme but also with the posts funded by the global programme, co-financing by country programmes for support services, the GEF resources for implementing the Environment and Sustainable Development programme, and other sources of funding. In reality, contributions to development results have largely been made through and attributable to the combined efforts of all of these. While this integration of work enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of the regional centres' work, it created a mismatch between contribution and accountability, as well as partial or even fictitious result reporting. This ultimately would lead to not fully recognizing centres' contributions and funding uncertainty. One way to address this issue is to redefine the regional programme to cover all activities of the regional

centres so as to clarify its programmatic coherence and the centres' responsibility and accountability.

Recommendation 9. UNDP should introduce in the programming framework the means for the regional programme to come up with, pursue, test and apply innovative and issue-based ideas and approaches that reflect priorities and emerging issues in the region.

The development situation in the region is fast evolving. As a knowledge-based and learning organization, UNDP needs to create a framework that encourages its programme units to innovate, tackle emerging issues, or take an adaptive approach based on first-hand experiences. The regional centres are placed in an ideal position to be a knowledge and innovation hub for the region with the ability to absorb and digest regional and country-level experiences. The current programming method, however, with the rather inflexible five-year results framework, discourages such innovation and an issue-based or adaptive approach.

Recommendation 10. UNDP should create corporate recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issue-based work, and introduce a mechanism to properly attribute results achieved across practice areas.

One of the key comparative advantages of UNDP is its breadth of coverage of development issues. Many evaluations emphasized the benefit of creating synergies from cross-practice work since the development process is innately multidimensional. Similarly, emerging development issues can be best tackled through an appropriate multisectoral approach. However, the rigid practice-based attribution of activities and results discourages such an approach. UNDP should create incentives, not disincentives, for its programme units to proactively take a cross-sectoral or multisectoral approach by revisiting the current attribution mechanism.

Recommendation 11. UNDP should enhance institutional support to the regional centres in mobilizing funding at the regional level.

Given expectations of the precarious funding situation of the organization and the regional centres in particular, fund raising is a critical aspect that needs enhancement. Due to the general lack of regional windows in traditional donor funding, the regional centres could explore non-traditional sources of funding. UNDP should enhance institutional support to RBAP and the regional centres that would facilitate their fund-raising efforts both from non-traditional sources and through traditional channels.

CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an independent evaluation of UNDP's Regional Programme for Asia and Pacific in 2012. The evaluation was carried out as part of the Evaluation Office's annual work plan approved by the Executive Board, which included evaluations of the five regional programmes and the global programme,³ in line with provisions for independent evaluations in UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008-2013⁴.

The purpose of the evaluation is 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 next programme to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014.
- Provide stakeholders in programme countries and among development partners with an objective assessment of the contributions made by the regional programmes.

This evaluation analysed the contributions made by the regional programme to development results during the programme period and UNDP's strategic positioning in the region. The results of the evaluation, including its set of recommendations, are expected to contribute to the programme design and the way in which it is implemented in the next programme cycle.

1.2 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Following the previous evaluation of the Asia-Pacific regional programme conducted by the Evaluation Office in 2007 for the period 2002-2006, the present evaluation intended to examine the regional programme for the current programme period 2008-2013. Delineating the boundaries of the regional programme, and therefore the scope of the evaluation, was, however, a challenge.

The regional programme as set out in the programme document approved by UNDP's Executive Board⁵ is structured around the four focus areas⁶, namely: poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (PRMDG)⁷; democratic governance (DG);

³ DP/2011/24, Programme of Work for the Evaluation Office for 2011-2012, 'Annual Report on Evaluation in UNDP 2010', Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 6-17 June 2011.

⁴ DP/2007/43, 'UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008-2011: Accelerating Global Progress on Human Development', Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS, 18 July 2007, re-issued on 17 January 2008.

⁵ UNDP Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific 2008-2011, October 2007.

⁶ Focus area refers to the thematic areas defined in the programme document. Practice area refers to the organization of expertise in UNDP and experts in the regional centres were generally organized in practice teams. In the case of the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific 2008-2011, the PRMDG focus area includes the practice areas of PRMDG, gender and HIV/AIDS.

⁷ In 2010, APRC renamed the PRMDG programme cluster to Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction (IGPR) but with the exclusion of programmes in the area of gender equality and HIV/AIDS. For consistency in presentation, this report will follow the results framework defined in the regional programme document and use the original name PRMDG as the name of the focus area.

crisis prevention and recovery (CPR); and environment and sustainable development (ESD), and includes 10 intended outcomes. Programme activities designed thereunder include 14 broad thematic programmes (see Table 1),⁸ composed of 56 projects⁹.

The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific is implemented under the responsibility of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP) by its two regional centres: Asia Pacific Regional Centre (APRC) in Bangkok and the subregional Pacific Centre in Suva.

In addition to implementing the regional programme through projects, these centres provide technical support to country offices in the region, which are considered as a part of the regional programme in a broader sense.

Identifying what belonged to the regional programme was not straightforward, however. Of the two regional centres' staff of 82, 44 were funded entirely by the regional programme.¹⁰ The remaining 38 were mainly experts funded by other sources inside and outside UNDP. These non-regional programme experts were not included

Table 1. Thematic Programmes in the Asia-Pacific Regional Programme 2008-2013
Poverty Reduction and Achievement of the MDGs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional Initiative on Human Development Reports in Asia and the Pacific ■ MDGs Initiative (MDGI) – later merged into Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction (IGPR) ■ Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative (APTII) – later merged into IGPR ■ MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific ■ Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) ■ Asia Pacific Gender Project (APGP) ■ Regional Joint Programme for the Prevention of Gender-Based Violence ■ HIV, Human Development and Mobility in Asia and the Pacific
Democratic Governance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP) ■ Democratic Governance in the Pacific (GOVPAC) ■ Regional Initiative on Indigenous People's Rights and Development (RIIP II)
Crisis Prevention and Recovery
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Asia-Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery ■ Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Pacific
Environment and Sustainable Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Regional Climate Change, Energy and Eco-system Project (RCCEEP)

⁸ Each thematic 'programme' was defined by one 'project' document, and hence casually referred to as a 'project' as well. In this sense, it can be considered as an 'umbrella project' containing component projects. In UNDP's online project and financial management system, ATLAS, these thematic programmes (or umbrella projects) are termed 'awards', whereas their component projects were termed 'projects'. This mixed use of terminologies can be a major source of confusion. In this report, an ATLAS award or an umbrella project will be generally referred to as a 'programme'.

⁹ Based on a list provided by APRC, dated 18 May 2011.

¹⁰ As of the end of 2011. Data provided by APRC.

in the resource framework of the programme document and hence, from the funding perspective, may not be considered as implementing the regional programme. However, these experts work as a part of the regional centre team together with those funded by the regional programme, and the work between the two was not clearly separable. Moreover, from the results perspective, the results achieved by regional centres were not clearly attributable to one programme funding source or another.¹¹ When regional centres provided technical support services to country offices, regardless of who provided the services, it has contributed to intended results of not only the regional programme but also the global programme implemented by the Bureau for Development Policy (BDP) and country programmes implemented by the country offices.¹²

With this overlap of results chains between the regional programme and other programmes and the impossibility to clearly separate their effects, the evaluation defined the regional programme as “a set of programme activities designed to implement the programme as set out by the regional programme document approved by UNDP’s Executive Board,” that is, irrespective of the source of funding of those activities. Following from this definition, the evaluation examined not only interventions implemented solely with regional programme resources but also various aspects of work undertaken by regional centres of which effects were not clearly separable from that of the regional programme even if it might have been fully or partially funded by non-regional programme resources.

The evaluation also took into account strategic changes made over time by RBAP in terms of its programmatic focus and management structure.

¹¹ This is with an exception of the work of some GEF-funded experts.

¹² APRC has reported results affected by the technical support services as the programme results, which could also be global programme or country programme results at the same time. This could be seen in its Results-Oriented Annual Reports, which is an internal online reporting system of UNDP.

1.3 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

The regional programme evaluation assessed UNDP’s performance from two aspects. With respect to development results, the evaluation assessed performance against the given programme framework defined in the programme document, which specified UNDP’s strategic intent and the outcomes to which the programme was intended to contribute. For this purpose, the following evaluation criteria were applied:

- *Relevance*: the extent to which the regional programme is relevant to the priority development challenges and emerging needs of the region.
- *Effectiveness*: the extent to which the regional programme contributed to the realization of the intended outcomes.
- *Efficiency*: the extent to which the regional programme made good use of its financial and human resources.
- *Sustainability*: the extent to which the results that UNDP contributed to through the regional programme are, or are likely to be, sustainable.

While assessing performance using the above criteria, the evaluation considered various factors that helped explain performance, such as:

- *Consultation*: to what extent were stakeholders consulted in designing the regional programme projects and activities?
- *Regional dimension*: to what extent did the regional programme focus on issues that were best approached regionally?

- *Partnerships*: to what extent did the regional programme use partnerships to improve its performance?
- *Synergies*: to what extent did the regional programme work in synergy with or leverage work of the global programme and the country programmes?
- *Capacity development*: to what extent did the regional programme invest in capacity development of partners to ensure sustainability?
- *Knowledge management*: how did the regional programme generate, manage and utilize knowledge to enhance the programme's effectiveness?
- *Monitoring*: to what extent did the regional programme monitor country situations and the effect of its initiatives at the country level?
- *Expertise*: to what extent did the regional programme offer appropriate technical expertise and knowledge?

The assessment of the regional programme's strategic positioning examined how UNDP, as one of many development partners in Asia and the Pacific, has positioned itself to respond to development priorities and challenges through the regional programme. In this regard, the evaluation not only considered its strategic position within the region, but the positioning within the multi-tiered structure of UNDP support to the region and to its constituent countries. This necessitated the analysis of the different roles and functions that the regional programme played within the overall delivery mechanism of UNDP to achieve development results. The criteria used in the assessment were the following:

- *Strategic relevance*: what were the relevant roles of the regional programme in the overall development context of the region and within UNDP's support architecture in it, and how effective was the regional programme in playing those roles?

- *Comparative strengths*: to what extent did UNDP use its comparative strengths by applying the cross-practice approach, the capacity-development approach and using partnerships?
- *UNDP values and cross-sectoral concerns*: to what extent did the regional programme embody UNDP values by mainstreaming gender equality in its programmes and facilitating South-South cooperation?

DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY

The evaluation was designed to allow conclusions to be drawn based on triangulation of evidence from different methods and sources (primary and secondary). In the initial stages, the evaluation relied on already existing documentation, including programme and project documents, progress reports, knowledge products, and project and outcome evaluations previously undertaken. To complement this information, the evaluation adopted a three-tiered strategy to collect primary data to ensure both sufficient coverage (breadth) and insight into the role and functioning (depth) of the regional programme:

- (i) A survey of country offices conducted globally by the Evaluation Office;
- (ii) Interviews by focus area through online/telephone interviews; and
- (iii) In-depth, face-to-face interviews during country visits.

Based on this broad strategy, representative projects and countries for the interview and country visits were selected. The main criteria for the selection were:

- Sufficient and balanced coverage of all the areas of work

- Significance and strategic importance of projects (based on consultations with the regional centres)
- Sufficient coverage of different types of countries in terms of size, development situation and subregion.

Based on the above, a data collection plan was prepared, including: the projects/activities selected for detailed assessments, data sources, questionnaires and interview protocols, and the plans for field visits.

DATA COLLECTION

The evaluation followed the following process to collect the data. In total, over 275 people were consulted in the course of the evaluation (Annex 2).

- *Inception mission:* Based on consultations with the programme staff and the key documents, the evaluation team established the data collection plan.
- *Desk review:* A number of programme documents and outputs, as well as reference materials were reviewed throughout the evaluation (see Annex 3).

- *Online/telephone interviews:* A large part of the primary data was collected through online or telephone interviews, covering UNDP staff in 21 country offices and national and regional stakeholders in 17 countries.
- *Country visits:* In-depth interviews of both UNDP staff and national and regional stakeholders were conducted in nine countries through country visits. In each visit, there was a particular thematic focus on one of the four focus areas of the regional programme, as well as the regional centres' partnership with regional organizations. (See Table 2 for countries visited.)
- *Survey of country offices:* A survey to solicit country office feedback on UNDP's five regional programmes and the global programme was conducted by the Evaluation Office. In the Asia-Pacific region, all 24 country offices replied.
- *Cybermetric analysis:* Research to measure the extent of the use of knowledge products on the Internet was conducted by a specialized company for the five regional programmes and the global programme. For this purpose, 24 publications¹³ were selected, based on a preliminary assessment on their use on the Internet (see Table 5 for the list of publications selected).

Table 2. Countries Visited

Subregion	Country visited (thematic focus)
South Asia	Bangladesh (PRMDG), Bhutan (ESD), India (CPR)
South-East Asia	Indonesia (CPR, regional organization), Philippines (ESD), Viet Nam (DG)
North-East Asia	Mongolia (PRMDG)
The Pacific	Fiji (CPR, regional organizations), Solomon Islands (DG)

¹³ See Table 5 in Chapter 4 for the publications selected for this analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS

Following completion of the main data collection phase, the following steps were taken to analyse the data collected:

- The primary and secondary data were analysed by each sector to reach a set of findings for each evaluation criteria defined.
- The sectoral findings were cross-examined to ensure consistency in the quality of these findings across sectors.
- Common issues were identified and analysed from sectoral findings, and cross-sectoral and comparative analysis was conducted.
- Key strategic issues were identified from the above and analysed.

VALIDATION AND REPORT PREPARATION PROCESS

These preliminary findings were presented to RBAP for validation and comment. The feedback received was further discussed and compared with the preliminary findings and conclusions. 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 draft report was shared with RBAP headquarters, APRC and the Pacific Centre, for review with particular attention to factual accuracy. The draft report was also reviewed by an internal reviewer. Taking into account comments received, the report was then finalized in time 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 a brief explanation of the context in which the regional programme was implemented and the evolution and content of the current programme for the period 2008-2013. Chapter 3 presents the assessment of UNDP's contribution to regional development by each evaluation criteria and focus area. Chapter 4 presents the assessment of UNDP's strategic positioning in the region. Finally, drawing on specific findings and assessments, a set of conclusions and recommendations are provided in Chapter 5.

THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND UNDP RESPONSE

2.1 THE REGIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

The Asia-Pacific is the largest and most diverse region in the world, comprising more than half of the global population. It has the most populous continental countries on the one hand and small Pacific island countries on the other. The region exhibits enormous social, economic, political, cultural and geographical diversity that manifests in diverse development challenges. The human development challenges are also very diverse. The region houses nearly two-thirds of the world's poor. At the same time, the region contains the fastest-growing economies of the past few decades. Reducing poverty has turned out to be a huge challenge for many countries because of a variety of factors such as implicit and explicit social class structure, imbalance in economic growth within a country, persistent corruption, and conflicts of varying nature and scales. There are countries that are highly dependent on foreign assistance and those which are not. Gender inequality is highly entrenched in many countries but for different reasons and contexts, and manifests in a variety of ways. With the rapid economic growth, environment degradation has become a huge issue for many countries, while finding a sustainable energy supply to the populace and industry became a difficult pursuit. Reference Table A1 provides selected data on human development, poverty, gender equality, environmental performance and aid dependency, depicting the diversity of the countries in the region.

With rising incomes and consumption potential, there has been an increasing trend of intraregional cooperation and economic interactions in the Asia-Pacific region. A number of regional and subregional trade groupings operate there and several subregional groupings, notably Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Pacific Island Forum (PIF)¹⁴, have developed into comprehensive cooperative arrangements to deal with a wide range of issues ranging from political to social ones. Some groupings also provide a basis for intraregional or international cooperation on such themes as MDGs, gender equality, HIV/AIDS, energy and natural resources, and climate change.

Several challenges in the region are transnational in character. Conflicts, natural disasters and climate change manifestations have regional implications, particularly through cross-border displacement of persons and threats to stability, and require agile and responsive regional inter-governmental instruments to recognize and deal with these exigencies. The high incidence of HIV/AIDS and prevalence of human trafficking all have cross-border dimensions as well. On the other hand, environmental degradation and climate change recognize no geographic or political borders, and affect the region irrespective of causality and attribution. While many of these issues are tackled within the domain and jurisdiction of national governments, by

¹⁴ ASEAN, SAARC and PIF respectively have engaged in promotion of intraregional trade as one of the pillars through, respectively, the ASEAN Free Trade Area, the South Asian Free Trade Area, and the Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement.

their very transnational nature, they generate both needs and opportunities for regional and subregional interventions.

2.2 UNDP IN THE REGION

UNDP supports 21 programme countries in Asia¹⁵ with the same number of country offices,¹⁶ and 15 countries in the Pacific with the two multi-country offices in Fiji and Samoa,¹⁷ and the country office in Papua New Guinea. The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific supports these 36 countries as well as 24 country offices¹⁸ through two regional centres¹⁹.

While UNDP's main delivery mechanism of support at the country level is its country offices, the regional programme was designed firstly to address these transnational issues within the spectrum of development challenges, using the appropriate forums and modalities. At the same time, UNDP also used this regional instrument to address inherently national challenges but which are also ones that are common to many. This was intended to provide a forum for exchanging experiences and seek opportunities for cooperative arrangements among countries on the one hand, while yielding economies of scale on the other. Production of regional public goods was another means to engage in some inherently national issues. During the implementation of the regional programme, UNDP found interventions on transnational issues more challenging

due to the inherently national nature of policy decisions and interventions, and the weight has shifted to multi-country interventions on issues that could be inherently national.

The ongoing global economic crisis, which began in 2008, has necessitated high priority towards budgetary discipline and cost reductions in the overall UNDP expenditures. UNDP's regular resources decreased nearly 7 percent from USD 2,112 million in 2008-2009 to USD 1,967 million in 2010-2011. The tautness remains in the institutional budget estimates for 2012-2013 at USD 856.5 million for 2012-2013²⁰, which represents a 12.3 percent decrease in volume from the approved budget appropriation of USD 980.9 million for 2010-2011. This has been targeted through programme budget reductions as well as staff budget cuts where possible.

At present, the five regional programmes together receive less than 2.5 percent of total UNDP programming expenditures, and around 6 percent of regular resources. Across UNDP, regional programmes have been unable to mobilize adequate external funding resources: during 2006 and 2010, regular resources have accounted for 40-46 percent share of total contributions for regional programmes, compared to the 13-15 percent for the overall UNDP programmes. Thus, corporate budget reductions have a greater impact on regional programmes, given their higher reliance on regular resources. The situation is graver for the Regional Programme

¹⁵ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, I.R. Iran, D.P.R. Korea, Lao P.D.R., Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

¹⁶ UNDP may implement activities in two non-programme countries, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, which are covered by UNDP country office in Malaysia.

¹⁷ Fiji multi-country office covers F.S. Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Samoa office covers the Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau.

¹⁸ For the sake of simplicity, in this report, both country and multi-country offices are collectively referred to as country offices.

¹⁹ At the beginning of the programme period, there was also a regional centre in Colombo, which was merged into APRC in Bangkok in 2010. Also, until 2011, the Pacific Centre reported to APRC in Bangkok. Currently, both APRC and Pacific Centre report to RBAP in the headquarters.

²⁰ Source: UNDP, UNDP institutional budget estimates for 2012-2013, DP/2011/34, June 2011.

for Asia and the Pacific where dependence on regular resources has been at 58-62 percent, the highest among all regions.²¹ Therefore, resource mobilization has been a key challenge for the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific.

During the programme period, the regional programme has been affected by institutional changes. At the outset, the regional programme 2008-2011 was implemented not only by APRC and Pacific Centre but also the Regional Centre in Colombo, which focused on poverty reduction with an overarching effort on achieving the MDGs, and HIV/AIDS and development, while APRC focused on DG, CPR and ESD programmes, as well as cross-cutting issues including capacity development, information and communication technology for development, public-private partnerships and mine action. In 2010, following an institutional review and facing declining resources, the Regional Centre in Colombo was abolished and its work and staff absorbed by APRC. This had some programmatic implications as elaborated in the subsequent sections.

In the area of CPR, there have been major shifts in strategy and institutional arrangements in 2009, driven by the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BCPR) Strategy 2008-2011 that aimed to engage in focused strategic partnerships directly with a set of priority countries. This has resulted in reduction of BCPR staffing at the regional centres, and merging of objectives of their activities.²²

2.3 THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME

The current Regional Programme 2008-2011 for Asia and the Pacific is designed in alignment

with UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and extended to 2013 when the Strategic Plan was also extended. Its thematic configuration follows UNDP's global programme structure comprising the four core focus areas, PRMDG, DG, CPR and ESD, and cross-cutting issues of gender equality, South-South cooperation and capacity development. Unlike its predecessor, the regional cooperation framework, the regional programme has an explicit results framework and is presented as a standalone development programme. As noted in Chapter 1, the regional programme was implemented through 14 thematic programmes (or umbrella projects) listed in Table 1.

The distinctive feature of the regional programme was in the application of principles of *regionality* in their intent, strategy and implementation. The regionality principle implies a focus on: the needs and challenges common to several countries that comprise the region; regional (cross-border, transboundary) dimension of the problems; and regional modality of implementation. These three principles provide the rationale for the regional programme.

In line with the regionality principle, the regional programme developed several modalities of delivery: using cross-national, regional, and thematic knowledge products to inform and advocate governance challenges and solutions in national contexts; facilitating cross-national and regional networking through instruments normally excluded from country-level programming; organizing regional dialogues on sensitive and emerging development issues; utilizing seed capital for piloting ideas of potential regional values for future country programming.

In addition, the regional programme included provision of technical support to country programme activities in the forms of: advocacy;

²¹ Source BOM, October 2010, taken from evaluation of regionalization, 2010.

²² Refer to the minutes of Local Project Appraisal Committee with regard to project revision in 2009.

expert referrals; policy advice; research and analysis; resource mobilization and donor relations; substantive product review; support to programme strategy and project formulation; technical advice and backstopping; and workshop and training.

The initial programme document estimated financial resource requirements for the regional programme at USD 100 million over the four-year implementation period, proposed to be funded almost equally from regular resources (USD 49.2 million) and other resources (USD 50.8 million). The actual expenditure during 2008–2011 was USD 75.67 million, indicating a delivery rate of 79 percent against its initial target. The main contributions to non-regular resources have been from Australia, New Zealand, European Union, Global Environment Facility (GEF), Japan, United Kingdom, Norway and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

Distribution of budget and actual expenditures among different focus areas are presented in Reference Table A2. It shows that the distribution of expenditure roughly followed that of budget proposed. Three of UNDP's four core focus areas occupy significant shares of the regional programme's budget and expenditures, with the broad PRMDG focus area leading with 46 percent, and DG and CPR areas were about 20 to 25 percent. The smaller share of the ESD focus area at 9 percent is a normal pattern in UNDP programmes because of the large amount of non-regular resources available by GEF and other global environmental trust funds.²³ It is also to be noted that the funding of staff²⁴ by the global programme is also not included in these figures. The GEF and the global programme resources were the main factors that explain

the difference between the regional programme and regional centres in terms of budget and financial figures.

The regional centres are responsible for the management of regional programme activities under the oversight of RBAP and the technical guidance from BDP and BCPR mainly through the experts financed by them. Overall governance vests in the Regional Centre Management Board, chaired by the Director of RBAP, and participants from UNDP resident representatives, country directors and government representatives.

POVERTY REDUCTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGS

The PRMDG cluster of the regional programme had several strands of work. The first strand was the work to promote the use of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as the policy framework, comprising the MDGs Initiative (MDGI) for Asia and the MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific programme. These initiatives, building on the previous MDG initiatives, worked through UN country teams to provide technical advisory and capacity development services for the formulation and implementation of MDG-based national development strategies. This work has included MDG-costing with estimation of finance and capacity needs for implementing the MDG-based strategy; advice on policies and options for MDGs achievement; and monitoring of the results of support for MDG achievement.

Closely related to the MDG work was the support provided for reducing poverty, inequality and unemployment. In this, the regional programme used such modalities as regional knowledge sharing, codifying good practices and

²³ Such as the Adaptation Fund and the Multilateral Fund for Implementation of the Montreal Protocol.

²⁴ BDP manages the global programme and, from global programme resources, usually funds the experts at regional centres who lead the practice teams as the 'practice leaders'. BDP may also finance other experts at the regional centres.

techniques for promotion of public-private partnerships; inclusive finance, such as microfinance and microinsurance; and regional policy options for enhancing employment and decent work.

Another strand of work was the publication of the Regional Human Development Report (RHDR) as the primary advocacy instrument of the regional programme to address issues of inequality, discrimination and human development. During the programme period, RHDR covered themes on climate change, gender, and corruption, straddling multiple focus areas. With RHDR and associated research outputs, the programme aimed to provide high-quality analysis followed by advocacy for better integration of human development concerns into national policies.

These strands of work all together aimed to achieve:

- Outcome 1: Improved achievement of the MDGs for reducing poverty and inequalities.

To promote inclusive globalization and South-South cooperation, the APTII programme implemented by the Regional Centre in Colombo provided policy advisory services to promote sustainable international competitiveness, including support for the Integrated Framework process and post-quota textiles and clothing industrial adjustment, and to assess and advocate for human development-oriented regionalism, foster regional cooperation and integration. This work aimed to achieve:

- Outcome 2: Capacity of key stakeholders strengthened to address trade competitiveness and mainstreaming.

However, with the closure of the Regional Centre in Colombo and its absorption into APRC in 2010, this area of work was downscaled

and integrated into broader Inclusive Growth and Poverty Reduction (IGPR) initiative as its component, together with MDGI.

There were two strands of work that dealt with 'cross-cutting issues' for UNDP concerning gender equality and HIV/AIDS. The regional programme has supported the preparation of gender-responsive MDG-based national plans and the integration of HIV/AIDS in those plans.

In addition, Partners for Prevention: Working with Boys and Men to Prevent Gender-based Violence – a joint regional initiative with UNFPA, UNIFEM²⁵ and UNV – supported region-wide campaigns, research and policy advice to prevent such violence. In the programme's result framework, the work on gender equality was defined as a contribution mainly to outcome 1 though it also contributed to other intended outcomes.

A joint regional HIV/AIDS and Trafficking Initiative with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), International Organization for Migration, International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, now merged into UN Women) aimed to: strengthen the capacities of regional organizations such as ASEAN, SAARC and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community to develop regional multisectoral responses on the human development, human rights and gender dimensions of HIV; reduce discrimination and the socio-economic vulnerability of people on the move; and foster an enabling environment for their access to prevention and treatment. A specific outcome was defined for this area of work, namely:

- Outcome 3: Regional and national capacity developed for effective human

²⁵ Currently UN Women.

development and governance responses that ensure the access of people on the move to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

This cluster of the regional programme was designed to address governance challenges confronted within the Asia-Pacific region, ranging from the management of transboundary issues such as energy, water and migration and to national governance issues such as accountability and transparency, inclusive governance, human rights protection, access to justice and information, freedom of the media, state-civil society dialogues, and aid management.

The regional programme defined three programme outcomes for the DG cluster:

- Outcome 4 on regional and national institutions effectively addressing key cross border issues in the region;
- Outcome 5 on improved inclusive participatory processes in policy-making and implementation for more equitable development; and
- Outcome 6 on international norms and standards on anti-corruption and human rights implemented through public policies.

To achieve these outcomes, the regional programme established three umbrella programmes, namely: the Asia Regional Governance Programme (ARGP), the Governance in the Pacific (GOVPAC), and the second Regional Indigenous Peoples Project (RIPP II). The three programmes comprise a total of 16 component projects.

In 2009, outcome 4, which focused on cross-border regulatory mechanisms, was dropped because of funding constraints and the fact that the cross-border issues were dealt in other sectoral

programmes. The programme activities hence focused on the achievement of the remaining two intended outcomes at the national level mainly with a multi-country approach.

The duration and scope of the three programmes were further adjusted in 2011 when ARGP and GOVPAC were extended to 2013 to align with UNDP's overall Strategic Plan, while RIPP II was discontinued. In terms of scope, projects were amended to include a broader range of beneficiaries, highlight more cross-practices, link the programme more closely with MDG objectives, and align more closely with the global programme. The reasons were: the absence of dedicated capacity on the part of the regional programme; relatively low demand and the emergence of alternative providers; new windows of opportunities related to the global programme; and a move towards multiple-stakeholder projects involving the public, the non-governmental, and the private sectors.

Five of the six ARGP outputs were thus revised with stronger link with the global programme. GOVPAC's projects were also modified to fit the changing socio-economic priorities in the region, including a switch of focus from the local government system to social accountability, and the refocusing on human rights work to concentrate on socio-economic rights. These changes reflected the programme's attempt to respond to the changing socio-economic and political context of the region, as well as UNDP's corporate priorities.

CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

The CPR cluster of the regional programme sought to address the persistence of conflict and increasing number of disasters in the region by strengthening national and regional capacity to prevent, respond to, manage and recover from crisis and restoring the foundations of development in post-conflict and post-disaster

situations. Accordingly, the programme defined the following two outcomes for this area of work:

- Outcome 7: Improved and effective capacity of governments and civil society organizations (CSOs) to prevent, manage and respond to conflict and natural disasters; and
- Outcome 8: Enhanced capacity to carry out socio-economic activities for early recovery and sustainable post-conflict/post-disaster recovery.

The evaluation of the previous programme made a recommendation to prune down the list of over 50 projects and group them into fewer and more coherent projects. Accordingly, the activities were bundled under two distinct umbrella programmes, namely, the Asia Pacific Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery programme, which actually remained an Asia-only programme, and the Crisis Prevention and Recovery Project in the Pacific.

Significant revisions were made in the Asian CPR programme resulting from realignment with the new BCPR strategy 2008-2011, which introduced a more direct country-support framework and restructuring of the regional staff, as well as to accommodate budget reduction. This resulted in a reduced scope and dilution of entire outcome 8 that aimed at post-crisis early recovery, and substantial downscaling of resources from USD 9.09 million to USD 4.97 million.²⁶ Programme implementation was delayed for almost two years. Thus, in Asia, the CPR programme was implemented only for two years in the four-year programme. The Pacific CPR programme received a multi-year funding commitment from AusAID to the full extent as sought, and implemented its originally planned outputs.

The thrust of the regional programme has been to assist integration of conflict and disaster risk assessments in national strategies and plans, and support the building of crisis resilience in communities and states. The nature of support has been to enhance human and institutional capacities at the technical level and to raise awareness and advocate for policy formulation and resource allocation. A mix of modalities was used, such as: regional and in-country forums and events for capacity development; technical advice to improve national response mechanisms and structures; and knowledge products, networking, communities of practice (CoPs), and information portals.

In the region, the regional programme was only one among many programmes that provided support in the CPR area. Even within UNDP, several country programmes had sizeable CPR programme components. The overall magnitude of the CPR portfolio in country programmes in the region, excluding Afghanistan, is USD 410 million²⁷, and at USD 15 million, the regional programme represented merely 3 percent of the aggregate UNDP spent in the portfolio. Indeed, the regional programme was a small player on the canvas, amid several others within the UN system and outside.

The other key actors at the regional level were: the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), which supports regional inter-governmental engagements and also operates a regional trust fund for disaster risk management; the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR) with the principal responsibility for implementing the Hyogo Framework of Action, which is increasingly engaging in national and regional

²⁶ This is despite the general increase in UNDP expenditure on crisis prevention and recovery since 2000, with the Asia-Pacific region having by far the highest shares (nearly 70 percent) of UNDP's global expenditure in this area during 2004-2009, according to the 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Disaster Prevention and Recovery' of 2010.

²⁷ Aggregated from the Country Programme Documents of 28 countries in the region.

programming activities through its World Bank partnership of the Global Facility for Disaster Risk Reduction; and UNDP's BCPR. The matrix of interventions by all these players is partly complementary and partly overlapping. At the same time, all these three actors provided funding to the regional programme as well. Other actors with synergies but no overlaps with the regional programme include: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

A distinct feature of the regional programme's ESD programme is that it specifically focuses on three areas of work among various ESD subject areas that UNDP is globally engaged in, namely: climate change, energy, and ecosystems including biodiversity. This excludes such areas of work as sustainable land management, ozone depletion, chemicals and waste, and water and ocean governance.²⁸

The Regional Climate Change and Energy and Ecosystems Project (RCCEEP) document defined the regional programme's work as supporting the mainstreaming of environmental and energy issues into national and sustainable development strategies to achieve MDGs. It would address the poverty-environment nexus and energy-poverty challenges; and support regional advocacy on climate change and adaptation, address transboundary concerns, enhance access by the poor to ecosystem services, mobilize human and financial resources of GEF

and other donors, including new opportunities of carbon financing.²⁹

The strategy to focus on the areas of climate change, energy and ecosystems was made on the ground that these issues were especially important to the region with a number of fast-growing economies with high-emissions growth, and a large number of poor with inadequate access to energy. Many countries were already suffering from the effects of climate change, and placed adaptation as a priority agenda. Also, given high growth and density of human activity, the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems was a high environmental priority. Moreover, focusing on these areas would allow the integration of other important UNDP issues of gender, poverty, governance and crisis prevention within the environmental projects, not as add-ons but as core elements.

RCCEEP was implemented by the Energy and Environment Group (EEG) in APRC. Unlike other clusters, there was neither separate ESD unit in the Pacific Centre (one EEG staff is out-posted in Samoa) nor separate ESD programme for the Pacific. In addition to several staff funded by the regional programme, EEG also includes a practice leader financed by the global programme and a large number of technical experts funded by GEF, the Montreal Protocol Unit, United Nations collaborative initiative on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation (REDD) and other global mechanisms. EEG worked as a cohesive team, and its work was often not really attributable to one funding source or another. Therefore, the line between the larger EEG work and the RCCEEP work has not been as clear as it was purported in the documents. This was more so when discussing the results achieved by their work.

²⁸ The regional programme hence did not work in such areas as chemicals and waste, and ozone depletion. While such areas as sustainable land management, and water and ocean governance, were not a part of its focus area, the regional programme has done some work in this area in a broader context.

²⁹ Except for its specific mention of carbon financing as a specific priority, the regional programme document broadly aligns with the overall statements for the ESD work across UNDP.

The stated focus and priorities of the RCCEEP and the broader EEG work have been common, with priorities attached to leveraging funds for countries and delivering its results through country offices.³⁰ EEG facilitated access to the global, environmental funding source, by assisting in preparing the concept notes for new work, project proposals for approval of the different funds and subsequently in implementing these projects. It also supports countries in policy dialogues, disseminates best practices, and shares knowledge both across the region and between the regions. It was also stated that EEG would be responsive to the specificities of the national priorities of individual countries, and support national capacity-building in ESD for human development.

The regional programme defined two programme outcomes for the ESD work of the regional programme, namely:

- Outcome 9 on poor enabled with improved access to ecosystem assets and sustainable and affordable energy services; and
- Outcome 10 on adapting to climate change and catalysing environmental finance (with institutional capacities enhanced to manage, adapt and monitor climate change, and leverage carbon financing.

While one could interpret these outcomes as covering the three strands of work of RCCEEP, namely outcome 9 covering energy and ecosystems and outcome 10 covering climate change, further examination of the results framework revealed that the specific outcomes, outputs and indicators defined in the framework had little implication on the actual RCCEEP work. This issue will be further discussed in the next chapter.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Provision of technical assistance, advisory services and backstopping is integral to the design and rationale of the regional centres. The main recipients of these services are UNDP's country offices.

RBAP maintains an extensive database of advisory services to country offices with detailed breakdown by country, activity type, client profile and by practice/cross-practice areas.³¹ The database enables a good understanding of the nature of technical assistance contributions. On average, every professional staff of the regional centres clocked 249 person days of advisory services, representing 62 days (out of total 220 working days) per annum for the four-year period. Two-thirds of the assistance was technical/advisory in nature, with technical advice, policy advice and workshop support ranking as the most important services. (See Box 1)

ESD and DG were the practice areas in which a large amount of services were demanded and provided. The relatively low consumption of services (15 percent) in the Pacific was due to the fact that the Pacific Centre serviced only three country/multi-country country offices and that Pacific Centre had been providing a large portion of services directly to countries in the region.

In 2010, the regional centres introduced the annual engagement policy with the country offices, whereby the programme teams of the centres and the country offices discuss and jointly prioritize the service requirements in line with the annual work plans of the country offices and the centres. Each service provided by the centres is tagged to a work in the annual work plan of receiving country offices. This policy has

³⁰ It adds some specific details for RCCEEP: "there would be a Regional Energy Project to support regional and subregional advocacy on access to energy for the poor, and cross-border trade in energy and energy security; and RCCEEP will allow for cooperation with UNEP, relevant UN agencies, and regional and subregional institutions."

³¹ The database, Service Tracker, does not include those provided by the Regional Centre in Colombo. It follows the practice architecture (rather than the categorization based on the focus areas) because it refers to the provision of practice-based expertise.

**Box 1. Snapshot of Technical Support Services to RBAP Country Offices
(1 January 2008 – 12 February 2012)**

- Total service time: 12,713 person days
- Average professional staff strength of regional centres: 51 persons (including core and non-core staff)
- Average advisory service provision per staff: 249 person days (62 days per year or 28% of total 220 working days per year)
- Mode of assistance: missions (67%); desk-based (33%)
- Nature of assistance: technical/advisory (67%); access to knowledge (33%)
- Key services (% of total): technical advice (38%); policy advice (21%); workshops (17%)
- Subregional distribution: South-East Asia (38%); South Asia (38%); the Pacific (15%); East Asia (9%)
- Most serviced country offices: Indonesia (8.4%); Fiji (7.7%); Cambodia (6.2%); Bangladesh (6.0%); India (5.8%)
- Practice areas: ESD (23.4%); DG (19.5%); CPR (14.9%); PRMDG (11.3%)

Source: RBAP Service Tracker

changed the service provision from a request-based to a needs-based one, helped rationalize and prioritize service provision to meet the tightening resource constraints, and clarified linkages of technical support services to the country programme results framework.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

The regional programme facilitated knowledge dissemination and exchanges through a number of knowledge products typically in the form of publications, regional networks, technical forums, and CoPs on various themes.

Publications

As regional public goods, the regional programme produced a number of publications and knowledge products. In all, the evaluation identified 216 publications issued under the current Regional Programme 2008-2013 to date (Reference Table A4). Most of these publications were produced by APRC. Based on the nature and intended use of these publications, they have been classified as: research and policy series;

advocacy and outreach series; tools, guides and briefs; and compendia of good practices.

Research and policy series dominate the list (115 of the 216 publications), followed by tools, guides and briefs series (58 publications). Among the focus areas, PRMDG was the most prolific with 97 publications, followed by DG with 68 publications. ESD stands out in that only two publications were generated during the period 2008-2011, while a spate of 19 publications has been generated in 2012 alone.

Several publications and products are considered flagship or best-in-class products, most notably, the Regional Human Development Report; Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk and the Primer on Capacity Development for Disaster Risk Reduction; and the documentary on Himalayan Glacier Meltdown and Glacial Lakes Outburst. Also, a number of publications produced in the DG focus area have been scaled up globally. For instance, country case studies from APRC's Community for Empowerment initiative contributed to the global report on

initiative. Others included Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Reviews; Capacity Assessment of the National Human Rights Institutions; Guidance Note for UNCAC³² Self-Assessments – Going Beyond the Minimum; and Practitioners’ Guide to Capacity Assessments of Anti-Corruption Agencies.

Knowledge Networks

The creation and facilitation of regional knowledge networks is another illustration of the regional public goods created by the programme. The regional programme has successfully created 14 CoPs (see Reference Table A5).

Box 2 presents examples of such CoPs. Unlike publications, CoPs required maintenance to keep its effectiveness, and regional centres’ staff spent considerable time on their maintenance.

The evaluation perused a selection of the knowledge products and networks, and found several to be rather useful and informative in support of policy actions, in creating suitable institutional mechanisms, or even in requisition of specific technical assistance to implement solutions. However, actual use of these publications and knowledge networks as well as the perceptions about their usefulness varied. These are assessed in greater detail in Chapter 4.

Box 2. Some Examples of Communities of Practice

- Access to Justice Consortium: The Asia-Pacific Access to Justice Portal (<http://a2jportal.org/access-to-justice-consortium>) supports a community of practice which has made it possible to develop a set of tools and resources for practitioners working in the field of justice and human rights, now available on this portal.
- PACWIP (www.pacwip.org): The Pacific Centre developed a portal on women’s political participation. Although new and limited in scale, this website put an agenda of women’s political empowerment in the public sphere for the first time.
- DRM-ASIA (www.drm-asia.net): An internal UNDP group of disaster risk management practitioners, DRM-Asia has grown to a widespread community of practice with over 250 subscribers from 33 countries. These are all practitioners, and include UNDP staff, government officials, academic institutions and civil society groups. The portal is maintained and moderated by regional centre staff, and is funded by BCPR.
- Solution Exchange Pacific (www.solutionexchange-un.net/pacific): The Solution Exchange Pacific, hosted at the Pacific Centre and funded by AusAID was launched in 2011, and is the first Pacific Climate Change and Development Community. Presently, it operates as a moderated email discussion platform for query/response, discussion, consultation and collaboration, and has over 1,000 members. It discussed 24 issues and produced 24 corresponding knowledge products.
- Pacific Peace Community: The Pacific Peace Community is a closed community of peace experts trained in the workshops under the Capacity Building for Peace and Development programme (CPAD) regional workshops, and presently has close to 100 members. It is maintained under a CPAD project, and moderated by the Pacific Centre. Given the sensitivities of CSOs and governments, membership size is not an important criterion for its effectiveness.

³² United Nations Convention against Corruption.

CHAPTER 3.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNDP REGIONAL PROGRAMME TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

In this chapter, the contribution of the regional programme to development results is assessed. The assessment on programmatic relevance and effectiveness is presented together for each focus area for readability. This is followed by the assessment on efficiency and sustainability, which is presented across the focus areas as they address issues related to the overall programme.

3.1 POVERTY REDUCTION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MDGS

RELEVANCE

The PRMDG work of the regional programme has generally been very relevant to the human development challenges of the countries and the needs of country offices in the region. The regional programme also addressed issues that, though relevant, were difficult to be taken up by the country programmes.

Poverty has worsened in the Asia-Pacific region since 2008. Food-fuel price volatility and climate change converged with the global economic crisis to create what UNESCAP labelled as the 'triple threat'.³³ Dramatic rise in food and fuel prices in 2008 causing an increase in the prices of rice by 150 percent (the region's main staple) have hit the poor of the region the hardest. Although the regional programme was designed before any of these crises arose, the overall thrust of the poverty reduction and MDG achievement theme

was highly relevant to the region, providing a human development perspective in dealing with these challenges.

MDGI has displayed responsiveness by conducting rapid synthesis studies, national workshops and a regional workshop with ASEAN on the social impact of the global financial crisis in 2009. Later, MDGI shifted its emphasis from macropolicies, needs assessment and macromodelling (which have reached their logical conclusion) to supporting UNDP country offices and UN country teams (UNCTs). This allowed the programme to logically move from the analysis to the application, and maintain the relevance of the programme.

The Asia-Pacific RHDR enabled UNDP to engage with wide external and internal audiences on issues of critical policy relevance to the region. The report allowed UNDP to bring to the table issues that were of a long-term nature and often could not be addressed in country programmes. Country offices generally have high ownership of RHDRs as they were involved in the theme selection and drafting process, and the reports provide analysis otherwise not available to country offices and governments. The regional joint programme on gender-based violence was another good example of a regionally generated initiative that, while potentially too sensitive to be initiated with many governments, has important longer-term value for many country programmes.

³³ UNESCAP, 'Addressing Triple Threats to Development', March 2009.

The project on HIV/AIDS has been relevant in the Asia-Pacific context where there are about 5 million people living with HIV and over 100 million people are estimated at higher risk of HIV infection. This relevance was reinforced by having positioned the HIV/AIDS issue within the broader poverty reduction and governance efforts, in relation to the key social drivers of HIV epidemics such as the status of women, their economic empowerment, the protection of human rights, and the legal environment, and in the context of cross-border challenges such as labour migration.

Relevance of PRMDG work in the Pacific was amplified by the strong endorsement of its work by the countries, the alignment with their regional and national plans and the flexibility to adjust the programme to address priority issues in the region.

The Pacific Plan, endorsed by the Pacific country leaders, provided a regional platform for its overall work and ensured that the work of the Pacific Centre was highly relevant. The MDG component of UNDP's Pacific programme focused on the regional priority set by the Pacific governments to cost and implement National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS), which integrate poverty indicators, gender disaggregated data, energy and environment, climate change, HIV and private sector support to achieve MDGs. The support to NSDS hence made important contributions to addressing the vulnerabilities of the region. On the financial inclusion component, the Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) aimed to improve the access of 80 percent of the region's low-income populations who were excluded from financial services that would help them achieve their full economic potential. PFIP was highly relevant also because it was closely aligned with the objectives of government departments, ministries and central banks which have made commitment to inclusive finance good practice. The Pacific programme has also been sufficiently flexible to respond to

emerging needs, for instance, by supporting the work on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) for women's rights.

EFFECTIVENESS

Outcome 1: Improved achievement of the MDGs for reducing poverty and inequalities

In general, MDGI and the recent rollout of the MDG Acceleration Framework (MAF) have contributed to raising awareness of MDGs and policies in favour of their achievement. The flexible approach adopted in the current MDGI allowed more effective intervention in support of countries in crisis. At the same time, the success ultimately hinges on whether the countries truly internalize MDGs in their own national planning and budgeting framework. The result in this context has been mixed.

MDGI has adopted a more flexible approach than its predecessor programme, responding to requests for technical assistance for the preparation of full-fledged MDG-based national development plans and the mainstreaming of MDGs into short/medium-term plans and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers. The food crisis in 2008 and the recent financial crisis slowed down the achievement of MDGs for some countries, and the issue of hunger and marginalization of some population groups became more acute. MDGI responded well through a series of country studies, technical advice and a regional forum on 'inclusive growth and reduction of inequalities' (e.g. India, Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste). The MDG virtual CoP and Regional Hunger Campaign were launched in nine countries; and development of MDG-consistent national plans was supported in 10 countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Bhutan, Lao PDR, Nepal, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu). MDGI helped 15 countries to respond to the social and economic impacts of the global financial crises with country case studies and regional synthesis. These interventions led to

significant public awareness on the impact of the crisis and policy changes.

The programme's strong engagement with key government counterparts during the scoping mission for MAF and their capacity training have had a positive impact on awareness at the decision-making level. The MAF rollout support has been provided to several countries (e.g. Bhutan, Nepal, the Philippines, Mongolia and Indonesia) and country offices have been very satisfied with the support. Representatives from 18 countries participated in the CoP meeting and learned and shared tools and good practices on MDG acceleration.

Ultimately, the true effect of MDGI and the MAF rollout would be judged by the extent of internalization of MDGs into the countries' own national planning and budgeting framework. Various ADRs have shown mixed results. Some larger or more developed countries tended to pursue their own planning and budgeting scheme, and the MDG work has often been considered as an external pursuit useful mostly in smoothing international compliance and relationships. Some smaller or less developed countries considered MDGs as a useful framework to draw in development financing, and are often disappointed when they learn that MAF does not offer any guarantee of funding. In some cases, promoting MAF at the national level has been a struggle for the country offices.

APRC has emphasized building the capacity of ASEAN Member States in the recent project revision, and supported the revitalization of the ASEAN Roadmap for the Attainment of the MDGs. At same time, the impact of upstream capacity-building and the country-level follow-up have not been very evident yet.

To facilitate the acceleration of MDGs at the regional level, APRC supported the finalization and subsequent revitalization of the 'ASEAN Roadmap for the Attainment of the MDGs' with substantive technical inputs and facilitation of the

consultative processes. The revitalized roadmap included recommendations for improving contents, clear timeline and activities and practical mechanisms for reporting and monitoring the MDG progress. The roadmap was adopted *ad referendum* by ASEAN Member States in July 2011.

APRC has worked closely with relevant ASEAN sectoral bodies to identify specific areas of collaboration and provide implementation support through existing ASEAN mechanisms. This provided an important foundation for regional collaboration and partnerships on research and advocacy related to MDGs. However, the necessary follow-up role of country offices in taking this agenda forward has not been integrated adequately into country office programming.

The MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific programme has strengthened national capacity to develop and implement MDG-based NSDS, raised awareness of the importance of MDG monitoring and reporting, and built supporting partnerships with national and regional stakeholders with a sector-wide approach, departing from project-based approach. A challenge in realizing the MDG monitoring was found in weak statistical capacity.

The Pacific Centre has strengthened national capacity to develop and implement MDG-based NSDS, which integrate environment, energy, climate change, poverty indicators, disaster risk management, HIV/AIDS and gender, and to use costing and budgeting tools and to integrate the MDGs into NSDS. Policy formulation and planning was supported through comprehensive policy analysis and a menu of policy options to align sectoral and provincial policies and plans with national development priorities. The work with Samoa and Vanuatu commenced in 2011. These initiatives constitute a structural shift from project-oriented interventions towards an integrated sector-wide approach to planning and budgeting where UNDP is a valuable development partner.

With MDGs better understood, the Pacific Centre has been engaged in the capacity development for planning and budgeting, and in broader governance issues that would affect MDG achievement. Capacity in evidence-based policy-making was strengthened with poverty and MDG data. PacificInfo is the Pacific's customized database launched in 2010 that provides MDGs data on 15 Pacific island countries. United Nations Country Team established the database and its technical working group manages and quality-assures it. However, a major difficulty remains in data collection, and the database is populated as and when data becomes available. The weakness in the statistical capacity is understandable in the Pacific where most countries are demographically small yet geographically scattered.

The Pacific Centre has also built the capacity of Samoa, Vanuatu and Solomon Islands governments to formulate and implement prioritized, time-bound, fully costed and inclusive MDG-based NSDS. Further, technical support provided to Pacific island countries participating in the Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis enabled delegations develop effective policy measures and responses global economic crisis.

PFIP was one of the most successful programmes, having been the driving force behind financial inclusion activities in their respective countries, having instigated a marked change in attitudes and behaviour towards savings, insurance and remittances, and having created new partnership and network opportunities between financial service providers and mobile network operators, or insurance companies and aggregators.

At the macro level, programme activities led to an improved low-income financial services regulatory environment. PFIP has encouraged eight

national reserve banks to pose 'no objection' to trial mobile phone banking services. With the support of PFIP, four national financial literacy programmes and six national inclusive financial sector development strategies are at various stages of development.

At the micro level, PFIP's investment/grants in partner inclusive-financial institutions (PIFIs) have increased their human and financial resource bases, lowered their transaction costs, and supported the development of pro-poor financial services, and expanded access/scale of services geographically and demographically. For example, the money transfer and non-interest bearing savings products developed and offered by two mobile network operators in Fiji, have significantly lowered funds transfer and increased access to convenient and secure savings services to their 150,000 new financial service clients, 40 percent of whom are women and many are rural clients.

PFIP played significant advocacy role through several stakeholder groups³⁴ to advocate for the establishment of market-driven, good-practice approach to inclusive finance and through publication of several documents essential for market development, as well as provision of trainings and scholarships to key stakeholder groups, including reserve bank executives.

Overwhelmingly, all stakeholders rated the support received from PFIP as excellent, given the complexity of managing such a programme and the absence of significant inclusive-financial sector service providers/stakeholders experience. An area of concern was that the support to Microfinance Pasifika Network aimed to create a vibrant sustainable institution capable of replicating the networking, training and advocacy role of PFIP has not worked out as expected. This is an important gap that poses a substantial sustainability or phase-out concern.

³⁴ RB working groups, AFI, MPAG, FEMM, FE dMM, FTIF, MPN, etc.

The Asia Pacific Gender Project (APGP) has produced many important results, often by working with or influencing other partners inside and outside the organization. There was a strategic shift from MDG-focused direct support to national governments and other partners, to working more through ongoing programmes and processes supported by country offices. This shift would enhance effectiveness. However, there is a serious lack in country office capacities and institutional arrangements for effective gender mainstreaming at the country level.

APGP aimed to create a sustainable corps of gender experts within the region with specific expertise and capacities for engendering MDG-based NSDS, institutional gender mainstreaming and ending gender-based violence. The Framework for Action on Sex-Disaggregated Data and Gender Analysis and its implementation strategy emerged out of collaborative work with UNESCAP and UN Women. An action-oriented operational note on the regional MDGs report has been termed as a best practice collaborative knowledge product within sister agencies for the region.

Capacity for gender-responsive economic policy management was enhanced in the region with a creation of a pool of trained regional experts, comprising 21 senior experts from 14 countries. APGP helped country offices mainstream gender in environment and energy project documents, ensured adequate activities and budget, and designed a tracking tool. This led to an initiative in Cambodia with clear results and whose local partners now want to take this further after the end of UNDP funding. Similar initiatives are now under way in Bhutan and Thailand.

At the country level, technical support has been provided to Cambodia, Afghanistan and Nepal on MDG-based planning on such aspects as statistical literacy, gender-mainstreaming tracking and gender-responsive budgeting. As a result, the countries could reflect gender concerns more effectively in national household surveys. More gender-responsive decision-making was hence made possible due to the sex-disaggregated data collected. Support also led to a 'road map' to set up the first cross-party caucus of women parliamentarians, an important step in ensuring women's meaningful participation in public affairs.

There was a strategic shift from MDG-focused direct support to national governments and other partners, to working more through ongoing programmes and processes supported by country offices. Thus the gender mainstreaming of country programmes has become a core strategy of APGP.³⁵ However, a mapping of internal UNDP expertise³⁶ on gender equality and women's empowerment in the region indicated a serious lack of capacity in country offices in this regard in all practice areas. The mapping exercise respondents stated that capacity-building was needed in areas ranging from institutional issues of gender mainstreaming, gender parity, gender-related advocacy, gender statistics, gender-responsive budgeting, and accountability/monitoring, to thematic issues such as climate change, policing, media, economic empowerment, and political participation. The results of the mapping will be used to plan capacity-development initiatives and to support establishment of a virtual peer mentoring system to link more experienced gender focal points with those who are less experienced.

Another impeding factor was the lack of incentive to properly incorporate gender dimension in

³⁵ Issues related to gender mainstreaming of country programmes by APGP are discussed here, as a part of the project's effort to promote gender equality in countries, while those related to gender mainstreaming of the regional programme is discussed in Chapter 4 to be in line with the standard report structure of the Evaluation Office.

³⁶ The mapping exercise was responded to by 47 staff UNDP staff at the country level, including gender focal points, and project staff, and staff with some gender expertise.

other programme activities at country offices. For effective mainstreaming, it is imperative for staff on the ground to understand, at the technical level, how incorporating gender dimension can critically influence the results in their own areas of work, that gender dimension is important in reducing poverty, managing disaster risks, providing better public service by local governments, improving access to justice, reducing conflicts, and ultimately contributing to human development. This would require a substantial shift in the technical content of policy guidance from the headquarters on these areas of work. Also, many gender focal points lack capacity in terms of proper authority, resources, expertise, and sufficient time to engage in effective gender mainstreaming. In some country offices, it is an 'additional' work of a staff whose main responsibility lies elsewhere.

RHDR has enjoyed a wide range of readership. It has been used effectively as a tool for human development dialogue in the countries and supportive engagement with country offices has helped yield positive uptake of its recommendations. The approach to national dissemination was still event-centred, however, and could be improved. Integrating RHDR in the national process pursued by country offices was an effective way to bring the thrust of RHDR into national policy arena. In this context, capacity development of the country office staff is also an important element in enhancing its contribution.

As the flagship report of the regional programme, RHDR provides high quality analysis and advocacy towards better integration of human development concerns into policies. Thus far, a range of themes of importance in the region has been covered namely: corruption (2008), gender (2010) and climate change (2012). A cybermetric analysis conducted by the Evaluation Office indicated

that, among all regional programme publications, RHDR enjoyed by far the widest range of readership. The report has been referred to or cited in well-above-average number of websites and discussion boards. More detailed analysis on the use of knowledge products in cyberspace is provided in Chapter 4, together with other publications.

While assessing the policy impact of such reports is inherently difficult, there are some indications that suggest their outreach to policy forums. The RHDR 2008, 'Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives' informed a forum for Lao PDR's accession to the UN Convention against Corruption. Regarding RHDR 2010, 'Power, Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific', the report was discussed in Cambodia at an annual parliamentarians forum on MDGs; in Myanmar, the report was used as a tool in sensitive dialogue on the national plan for advancement of women; in the Philippines, the report informed a strategic forum on implementing rules for the path-breaking Magna Carta for women; in Lao PDR, the report was presented to a Parliamentarians Forum on MDGs. With regard to RHDR 2012, 'One Planet to Share: Sustaining Human Progress in a Changing Climate', the President of Indonesia encouraged all Indonesian decision makers to use the report.

The impact of RHDR was stronger when it was used in conjunction with the dialogue and process that country programmes have been pursuing. For instance, based on RHDR 2012, the country office in Bhutan made recommendations on climate change that have been reflected in the Government's five-year plan. In other instances, country offices have decided not to launch RHDRs for a variety of reasons. In Bangladesh, the country office opted not to launch RHDR 2010 because of sensitivity over data used in the report³⁷ and concern over repercussions in

³⁷ RHDR uses data produced by international institutions to facilitate comparability across countries. Some governments have their own data that may not be comparable or compatible but, from the government viewpoint, more authentic. Overall, in the region, unavailability of up-to-date information remains a big concern and may lead to such disputes.

the country. In Mongolia, the country office has postponed the launch of RHDR 2012 due to elections that would make it hard to get the attention of policy makers or the media.

The approach to work with country offices has still been event-centred and limited to national or subregional launch events. Further dissemination and utilization are left to country office initiatives.³⁸ Dissemination could further be improved to reach such readership as national research and academic institutions, local media and civil society actors. The report's recommendations need to be contextualized into the national circumstances, and integrating RHDR thrust and recommendations into the country programmes and other country office activities require creative engagement between the country office, the Government and the regional programme.

The RHDR process generated capacity-development benefits for country office staff and national partners through specific capacity-building events and exchanges of experiences. This was further reinforced through technical support services and consultative processes to identify stakeholder priorities, sharing of ideas and experiences, preparation and discussion on technical background papers, and online discussions on AP-HDNet. These efforts have contributed to promote dialogues, enhance understanding of the issues, and strengthen the ownership of national partners inside and outside UNDP.

Outcome 2: Fostering inclusive globalization

The major contribution of the Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative (APTII) was to have deepened the understanding of trade and human development impacts through research, advocacy, technical advisory and capacity-building support. It has also informed

policy forum of specific options and measures to this end. However, the intended outcome, “to foster regional cooperation and integration for enhanced trade flows leading to increased employment and poverty reduction,” was overly ambitious and turned out to be unrealistic given the programme’s limited scope and resource constraints.

A major objective of APTII has been to strengthen capacity to implement pro-poor regional integration strategies, including through key regional processes and/or mechanisms. APTII has provided technical and policy advisory support to the launch of the Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies under the Enhanced Integrated Framework. APTII assisted Asia-Pacific countries in the oversight of the Integrated Framework and in preparation of World Trade Organization accession. Cambodia, for instance, has been supported through the multi-agency diagnostic studies, which aims at export diversification and jobs.

The Human Development Impact Assessment of Trade Tool (HDIA) has helped advance understanding of the relationship between trade policy and human development outcomes, including gender impact by analysing and tracking gender linkages at the macroeconomic level to identify strategies to enhance the role of women. The UNDP-UNITAR online course on Human Development Impact Assessment of Trade set-up based on the HDIA tool received positive feedback from participants. However, the full potential of the tool remained untapped, as resource constraints impeded its further development, testing, deployment and application across countries.

APTII has supported high-level policy platforms for strengthening regional integration in South Asia. APTII suggested specific measures for expanding trade in South Asia and building

³⁸ For additional copies, country offices are expected to make a request and pay for the postage. APRC provides seed funding of USD 2,000 for national launch and dissemination or strategic dialogue upon submission of country launch/dissemination plans along with budget.

South-South coalitions for increasing employment through trade. Examples include: evidence-based research on unlocking the potential of the services sector for South Asia; enhancing participation of LDCs in SAFTA; and cooperative regional industrial development strategies on account of the impact of China and India in the region.

Over the years, the programme focus has shifted from an emphasis on knowledge products to working with the governments to promote dialogue on implementing pro-poor regional integration strategies. Accordingly, the current programme aimed to develop and strengthen capacities of key stakeholders, including ministries of trade, finance and planning, the private-sector actors, civil society, and research organizations. Providing such substantive technical support would require substantial and long-term investment both in human and financial resources.

The effectiveness of APTII has been affected by human and financial resource constraints operating with only half the approved staffing strength. Scattered interventions through workshops and seminars³⁹ did not help to define UNDP's niche, value addition and comparative advantage vis-à-vis other development partners. In the short term, it has been able to raise awareness of the links between trade and human development and to bring diverse stakeholders together to regional dialogues on trade and human development. However, to gain the credibility and consolidate its position, a long-term commitment to and investment in the human development agenda in trade would be required. The programme itself has been considerably downscaled and merged with MDGI into a new initiative IGPR.

Overall, the intended outcome, "to foster regional cooperation and integration for enhanced trade

flows leading to increased employment and poverty reduction," was overly ambitious and turned out to be unrealistic to be achieved over the span of several years and within the limited resource invested in this area. The trade and human development linkage is not yet established in the mainstream thinking of trade policy makers, nor fully reflected in trade negotiation agenda.

Outcome 3: Mitigating the impact of AIDS on human development

The HIV, Human Development and Mobility in Asia and the Pacific programme addressed the human development, governance, human rights, and transborder challenges of HIV/AIDS. The programme led to a heightened awareness of the issue by policy makers and made significant achievements both nationally and internationally. The HIV project stands out as a truly cross-sector initiative and helped countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies.

The programme initiated positive actions to support controlling the transmission of HIV/AIDS across borders through high-level forums, studies, and legal reviews. Two high-level round tables on HIV vulnerabilities of migrant women brought together government policy makers, UN agencies and CSOs from Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Bahrain, and Lebanon. A multi-country research study on the subject has been acknowledged as a good practice by the UN-EC Knowledge Fair on Mobility and HIV in Brussels. UNDP played an instrumental role in creating a Joint UN Initiative on Mobility and HIV/AIDS in South-East Asia that brought together governments, leading CSOs and the

³⁹ For example, seminars and workshops were organized in relation to: the First South Asian Economic Summit to strengthen and speed up regional trade arrangements; Regional Workshop on Trade and Industrial Policy Environment and Human Development: Issues and Challenges; High-level regional conference on Promoting Human Development in Trade Regionalism: Scope for South-South Cooperation.

UN family to promote ‘universal access’ to HIV prevention, treatment and care and support for mobile and migrant populations in South-East Asia and Southern China.

Legal reviews on trafficking and sex work and women’s inheritance and property rights in South Asia provided evidence on key loopholes in laws that impact HIV-positive women. The 2009 publication on the HIV vulnerabilities of migrant women, followed by a seven-country study on migrant Asian women in the Arab States, led to programme interventions in the Philippines and Sri Lanka. Between 2010 and 2011, UNDP mobilized some USD 6.5 million for advocacy initiatives and strategic information on HIV, human rights and sexual diversity. A high-level regional dialogue on the health challenges for Asian labour migrants resulted in 13 labour-exporting countries agreeing to take the issue to the Colombo Process Ministerial Consultations. Another dialogue brought together senior officials and other stakeholders from the Philippines, Bangladesh and United Arab Emirates to discuss the HIV vulnerabilities of Asian migrants in Arab States. The model regional tool developed by the programme helped Mongolia, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Papua New Guinea to estimate short-, medium- and long-term resources needed for comprehensive HIV responses, as well as per-unit costs. The CoP on HIV, gender and human rights provided evidence on the issue of HIV and intimate partner transmission in Sri Lanka and Nepal, through country studies.

The programme took a pioneering step towards carrying out large-scale multi-country studies on the socio-economic impact of HIV at the individual household level to guide impact-mitigation steps, including appropriate social protection schemes. Three completed research initiatives on the socio-economic impact of HIV in China, Cambodia and Indonesia, led to strong government commitment on mitigating the impact on the households of people living with HIV/AIDS.

The programme also made significant contribution to addressing issues of access to health and HIV services for ‘men who have sex with men’ and transgender persons. Based on the recommendations of a pioneering research study in 20 countries on increasing access to health and HIV services for ‘men who have sex with men’ and transgender persons, the Malaysia National Human Rights Commission is developing a review of the human right issues relating to access to services among these highly marginalized groups. Further, in Papua New Guinea, the Ministry of Community Development and the Ministry of Justice called for a review of punitive laws relating to same-sex behaviour and sex work.

The HIV programme paid strong attention to helping countries put HIV/AIDS at the centre of national development and poverty reduction strategies; build national capacity to mobilize all levels of government and civil society for a coordinated and effective response to the epidemic; and protect the rights of people living with AIDS, women, and vulnerable populations. Country offices have greatly benefited from the high-quality and timely advisory services and overall, the project has balanced well its drive to promote its regional agenda while being very responsive and relevant, though there have been reservations about this from the larger country offices which see support provided as scattered.

The Pacific component of the HIV programme was aligned to the Regional HIV Strategy and Implementation Plan, and resulted in a coordinated regional response to HIV/AIDS in partnerships with regional institutions, other UN agencies and CSOs. The programme provided region-wide technical assistance and backstopping on gender, human rights, sexual diversity and socio-economic determinants of HIV risk. Significant results at the national and regional levels were achieved with the programme’s contribution. Despite this success, several external and internal factors hindered the programme to achieve maximum impact.

The HIV programme in the Pacific has contributed to an improved ‘enabling environment’ at the policy level. Beneficiary countries have gained much better planning tools, key evidence-based policy recommendations, drafting instructions for human-rights-based legislative reform, and several countries have drafted human-rights-based HIV laws with the Pacific Centre’s support. The programme worked together with a range of regional partners and, as a cross-practice theme, with its own DG team and coordinated by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, the main regional counterpart. This approach limited overlapping, fostered joint programming and created significant synergies among partners.

The programme implemented a number of projects that led to lasting impact in the Pacific, for example: HIV law and national policies were drafted in Fiji and the Cook Islands, policy recommendations on gender and HIV were adopted by 15 Pacific countries; Fiji’s National Strategic Plan was informed by ground-breaking social research undertaken by UNDP; and networks and civil society capacity were developed through programming and funding mobilization support. The first regional assessment of HIV risk vulnerability related to migration and mobility, conducted jointly with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, made policy recommendations. Training and capacity development represented roughly more than half of what the Pacific Centre provided through various means such as workshops, training events, desk support and publications.

The success in achieving such results can be attributed to several factors. First, there was national ownership in countries where concrete results were achieved and, from such countries, explicit demands for assistance were made. Second, regional and national priorities were well coordinated so that the response was adequate to each country’s situation and priorities. Third, appropriate partnerships were built with regional institutions, other UN agencies and CSOs. In addition, appropriate cross-practice approach was

taken within UNDP, especially with the PRMDG and DG clusters. Finally, despite HIV/AIDS being defined as a ‘cross-sectoral issue’ in UNDP, dedicated staff was assigned to projects, which allowed retaining quality technical expertise.

There were a few external factors that posed a challenge for the Pacific Centre to achieve maximum results in this area. First, while the Centre took a truly cross-practice approach, the national HIV responses remained largely health-centric in reality, limiting the benefit of the approach. Second, with the small size of most Pacific countries, national implementation capacity is inherently low with high staff turnover rates due to high demand on experts, and significant ‘brain drain’. Third, UNDP being less engaged in HIV at the country level means some demands that would typically fall within UNDP’s HIV mandate are not addressed by UNDP. Finally, the Pacific island countries are generally not very high HIV-risk countries and the social burden from HIV/AIDS is comparatively small in many of them.

3.2 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE RELEVANCE

The issues addressed by the regional programme on democratic governance were relevant to governance challenges in the region. At the country level, given the diversity in socio-economic and political systems, the programme outcomes did not represent an agenda shared by all countries in the region. To create entry points, the regional programme responded by emphasizing various dimensions as appropriate to the needs and demands of the specific country context. At times, the programme relevance was compromised due to discrepancies between what the programme could offer and the expectations of the country offices and its partners.

The objective of the regional programme in the DG cluster was to address deficiencies of inclusive political processes and the concretization

of international norms on anti-corruption and human rights in the governance of the region. To this end, the three programmes – ARGP, GOVPAC and Regional Initiative on Indigenous People’s Rights and Development (RIIP II) – focused on specific governance deficits and on filling in gaps at the national level, and functioned as advocates, knowledge brokers, facilitators, and capacity builders.

While the issues addressed by the programme were relevant to governance challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, their projects and programme outcomes did not represent an agenda shared by all countries in the region, particularly in Asia. Not all output projects were equally subscribed to by national partners and country offices in the region. As an example, the regional centres had expertise in electoral reform, political parties, women’s participation and the handling of electoral violence, all of which were supportive of democratic governance. By their nature, these issues are inherently national and their relevance in each country varied. In some countries, the regional programme’s agenda on inclusive governance was readily and avidly adopted while in others, it was only moderately used to fine-tune what the national partners and country offices had already been doing. In countries where electoral commissions were well developed, the relevance of the regional programme was limited from the national perspective.

The factors that affected the relevance of ARGP and RIPP II at the country level were: national socio-economic and political contexts, awareness of the regional programme mission, the existence of alternative service providers for democratic governance, and funding potentials from the regional programme. Many country programmes included projects that fell under thematic focus of ARGP or RIPP II, while others did not. The country offices that sought APRC technical support were the ones that had or planned to have activities related to ARGP and RIPP II output projects. Relevance also depended

on human resource availability in the country and whether there were alternative sources of technical support. Many country offices had developed networks of experts, either nationally or internationally, to support their programme activities and thus did not seek service inputs from APRC. Relevance at the country level also depended on political climates and the needs of national partners. In these cases, country offices functioned as brokers between national partners and APRC on technical inputs when the national partners made urgent requests.

In many cases, however, there were discrepancies between what the regional programme could offer and the expectations of the country offices and its partners; the latter’s concern had often more to do with funding to sustain certain efforts, than with technical assistance. This may be partly because some country offices were not fully aware of the regional programme mission and agenda.

In the Pacific, programme relevance stemmed from its alignment with the Pacific Plan, the absence of comparable service providers, and weak country office capacity and resources, thereby placing the Pacific Centre in a more frontline role as provider of services and programme delivery. In-country adoption was, however, still affected by national priorities and sensitivities in each country.

The role and thrust of the programme has evolved through the years, with the Pacific Centre initially having no alternative than leading the agenda at the forefront, given the absence of appropriate or active counterparts (particularly organizations working on women’s issues). This has changed with time and regional organizations such as Regional Rights Resource Team and UNIFEM/UNW have grown over the years and developed greater capacity to take on women’s rights issues. Also, the weak capacities in country offices resulted in inadequate coverage of important elements of good governance in country programming. These gaps resulted in the Pacific Centre taking a more direct

role in the programme implementation than its counterpart in Asia. Accordingly, the Centre played an important role in supporting ratification of UNCAC as it had had a comparative advantage due to its existing network and on-the-ground presence. Similarly, in Solomon Islands, despite the presence of a UNDP sub-office, the Pacific Centre has worked directly with the national government on areas such as freedom of information, anti-corruption, and human rights.

Despite the overall endorsement of the programme at the regional level, in-country adoption of interventions varied among countries. At the stage of official endorsement and implementation by national partners, the national political situation and the national government's priorities were the key factors together with domestic coalitions of advocates. This can be clearly seen in GOVPAC's advocacy of UNCAC ratification and the development of a legal framework for freedom of information in the region.

APRC and the Pacific Centre have combined forces where possible to respond to changing needs of countries in transition requiring reassessment of relevance and due adaptation of interventions. This is reflected aptly in the case of Solomon Islands, with the Centre and APRC addressing diverse needs shaped by this Pacific island country's governance agenda, based on relevance of expertise. The Pacific Centre supported provincial government strengthening, freedom of information, anti-corruption and human rights monitoring, whereas APRC worked on electoral cycle programme with a focus on poll registration, civic education, capacity-building for the electoral college, and electoral reform, which are strong expertise areas of APRC.

EFFECTIVENESS

In the DG cluster, the regional programme filled crucial governance gaps and made contributions both in terms of having more inclusive policy-making and implementation

for equitable development, and anti-corruption and human rights meeting international norms and standards. Overall, the three governance programmes, ARGP, GOVPAC, and RIPP II, helped increase inclusiveness and adherence to international norms and practices.

The programme outcome 5 focused on improved inclusive and participatory processes in policy-making and implementation for more equitable development. Although to varying degrees, measured against the four criteria defined for this outcome, ARGP, GOVPAC, and RIPP II have contributed to the realization of intended outcome.

On the first criterion of having effective governance strategies addressing barriers to measurable progress in off-track/slow MDG targets, ARGP's local governance programmes made numerous inroads into local government systems in addressing various MDG issues and deficits, although momentum for MDG-related governance reform was still lacking. GOVPAC linked attainment of the MDGs with its parliamentary development activities, helped CSOs build capacity to monitor delivery of human development services, and introduced public-private partnership for local economic development towards the MDGs. GOVPAC's training in social accountability has opened up opportunities for societal involvement with local government in MDG-related issues.

The second criterion was having increased representation of women in national parliaments, local councils and regional/provincial assemblies, opportunities expanded for women's civic engagement, and positive action mechanisms implemented in support of women's parliamentary candidacies and membership. ARGP, GOVPAC, and RIPP II made a considerable impact on women's participation in agenda setting and capacity-building. ARGP identified entry points for female empowerment by publishing 'Women's Representation in Local Government in Asia-Pacific'. Special measures for women have been

introduced to promote gender balance in Pacific island parliaments. Mock parliaments for women, held in Kiribati, the Marshall Islands and Palau in 2011, are increasingly in demand.

On the third criterion, to have legislation formulated and implemented on greater media independence and public access to information, ARGP supported access to information through a small-scale e-governance endeavour, the Communication for Empowerment Project, and initiatives on democratic space and governance assessment. GOVPAC introduced freedom of information, and a number of countries have already drafted laws, including Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea. Many endorse this issue as part of democratic reform or have included it in their legal reforms. This trend has led to a network of accountability set up for information sharing. GOVPAC involved the media in controversial issues such as freedom of information and anti-corruption.

On the fourth criterion, to have regional networks of indigenous peoples' and CSOs able to engage in democratic governance and policy making processes relevant to indigenous peoples, RIPP II carried out regional dialogues that raised the consciousness of stakeholder capacities to participate in policy-making processes.

The programme outcome 6 was international norms and standards for anti-corruption and human rights being implemented through public policies. Again, measured against the four criteria defined, the regional programme has made important contributions for its realization.

The first criterion was having international legal conventions, especially domestic laws implemented in compliance with CEDAW and reports of UNCAC implementation based on participatory consultation. The Asia-Pacific region made considerable progress in UNCAC ratification and self-assessment and most of those countries

that ratified UNCAC received the regional programme's support through GOVPAC. They include Vanuatu, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Solomon and Cook Islands.

The second criterion was to have capacity built for regional and national organizations working on human rights, particularly for the alignment of regional (ASEAN) and international human rights standards. The programme supported the study of best practices from other regions, and capacity-building among human rights commissions, ombudsman offices and other national human rights institutions. A number of countries expressed commitment to use tools and guides produced by ARGP to standardize human rights in Asia. With GOVPAC assistance, many countries also drafted family and civil law bills: the Cook Islands Family Law Reform initiative being one example.

The third criterion was to have more countries strengthen oversight of financing for development. For this, ARGP recently introduced support to ministries of finance on climate change financing. The result of this is too early to judge.

On the last criterion, RIPP II was the programme that addressed protection of indigenous people's right. Its whole activities raised the capacity among policy-making institutions to promote and protect the rights of indigenous people to the extent that they were implemented.

As explained in Chapter 2, cross-border issues were largely dropped in programme implementation and hence outcome 4 as defined in the programme document was not achieved.

In designing programme activities, ARGP and GOVPAC have gone beyond the boundaries of projects so that they were mutually reinforcing and creating cross-practice benefits.

The Pacific Centre linked or repackaged projects so that they could reinforce one another. One such

innovation was to use parliamentary advocacy to promote inclusive participation and equitable development for women, freedom of information, anti-corruption, and the attainment of MDGs. The Centre worked with its regional partners to raise policy-maker awareness of the importance of women's political participation. It also involved the media in campaigns to promote freedom of information (especially at media forums), in monitoring and reporting on human rights, including socio-economic rights as reflected by MDGs. It facilitated consciousness-raising sessions on these freedoms, social accountability initiatives and the media's role in advocating all of them nationally. Additionally, it highlighted the right to information as more than just a media right, but as the right of every citizen participating in a democratic process. Finally, the Centre also linked the development of CSO capacities with human rights monitoring.

ARGP inter-programme and cross-practice linkages helped promote not just its own effectiveness but other programmes' as well. Key inter-programme linkages were created between ARGP activities on Communication for Empowerment and RIPP II and between ARPC work on human rights and RIPP. Although work on e-governance was discontinued due to limited resources, the programme focused on the instrumental role of information and communication technologies as a means to strengthen the inclusive participation of democratic governance. It also introduced cross-practices during the ARGP revision in 2011 which treated local governance, climate change, aid effectiveness and climate change financing all as interrelated.

The regional programme organized a number of 'South-South exchange forums' for sharing information and experience on governance reform measures that encouraged the discussion of sensitive issues, as well as interregional exchange of experiences. In some cases, when a global model was imposed in a 'top-down'

manner without sufficient contextualization and buy-in, the forum failed to produce policy-level results especially in Asia where diverse political and ideological systems exist.

Some salient examples of the regional programme having facilitated useful exchange of experiences are provided in Box 3. For instance, stakeholders assessed that the CoPs Manila had specific, positive impacts on experience sharing in validating human-rights based approach to electoral reform; using human-rights based approach in electoral registration; electoral justice and linkages between election violence and putative cheating; political party reform by legislation, state subsidies and 'turncoat' prohibitions; and voter education, voice channels, leadership training and sector caucuses for empowering women and indigenous peoples to participate in governance.

However, when the global model promoted by the global programme was brought in without sufficient contextualization and buy-in, the forum had sometimes focused too much on technical aspects and failed to produce engagement of the governments at the decision-making level. The exchange forum on governance assessment was a case in point. In presenting experiences, countries did not follow the guideline issued by the Oslo Governance Centre. For example: Indonesia's assessment was based on the experience of the government planning sector; China presented a theoretical framework; Bhutan's approach was based on the national gross happiness index; and UN REDD focused on forestry. With such differing approaches, no attempt was made to pull things together in the forum. Further, stakeholders reported that networking opportunities were not very useful since delegation composition differed from one country to the next, and there were no high-level policy makers who could be considered as policy champions.

Both the Asia and Pacific programmes integrated women's political empowerment

Box 3. Examples of South-South Exchange Forums in the DG Focus Area

- South-South peer exchanges on anti-corruption where Bhutan, the Maldives and Timor-Leste shared experiences, and where policy makers, practitioners, development partners, and CSOs were brought together by the Regional Consortium on UNCAC. The consortium has extended support to Bhutan, the Maldives, Lao PDR and Viet Nam to date.⁴⁰
- The ASEAN-SAARC Knowledge Exchange that gathered representatives from the judiciary, civil society and academia and outlined the future South Asian Human Rights Commission to protect, promote and develop a shared understanding of human rights.
- A public-private partnership round table for local economic development, where government officials, private sector, and non-governmental organizations from various Pacific island countries shared experiences with participants from Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, the Philippines, and Bangladesh.

into their projects, reflected in activities ranging from women's political participation to the promotion of human rights through family law bills and women's rights capacity-building.

ARGP focused on boosting the number and quality of female representatives in politics in Asia and the Pacific region through support for women's participation inside and outside formal political systems, the collection of data on women's participation in politics, and networks between men and women dedicated to achieving political equality. GOVPAC promoted women's roles in decision-making processes in conjunction with parliamentary support. The Pacific Centre worked with the PIF Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, UN Women, Ministries of Women and CSOs to raise awareness with policy makers on the importance of increasing women's political participation. Two key activities were the preparation of special temporary measures for women and the mock parliament for women. The Pacific Centre also supported the consultation and the drafting of a civil family law bill now pending enactment in the Cook Islands parliament. A project had an element

focusing on the capacities of Pacific CSOs at the Commission on the Status of Women. RIPP II's capacity-building also involved women in the discussion on women's rights.

Although the regional programme's DG programmes addressed governance deficits that naturally have national implications, few beneficiaries were aware of the programmes' vision, profile or components. There was no explicit linkage between the regional and country programme outcomes, and with partner government concerns.

Country offices and national stakeholders came into contact with the regional programme through selected project activities. Although the two DG outcome indicators of inclusive participation and standardization of norms and practices naturally overlapped with many of the result indicators found in country or national reform programmes, there was no explicit link between the regional and country programme outcomes, and with partner government concerns. Any alignment and linkage at the project level, which is more specific in its results, could be a good starting point.

⁴⁰ The Consortium is a partnership between the Bangladesh Institute of Governance Studies-IGS, Basel Institute on Governance, UNDP and UNODC. It has promoted experience sharing in Kenya, Bangladesh and Indonesia, undertaking participatory gap analyses in a concrete and practical manner and particularly how to conduct required UNCAC Self-Assessment exercises.

3.3 CRISIS PREVENTION AND RECOVERY

RELEVANCE

UNDP's rich and diverse expertise in disaster prevention and recovery has been very relevant in a region with diverse disaster and conflict challenges. The regional modality of the programme found a natural fit with the needs in this area.

With the highest vulnerability among all regions to the impact of natural disasters, the Asia-Pacific region is susceptible to a variety of disasters: floods, cyclones, earthquakes, drought, storms and tsunamis. During the past decade, the region accounted for more than 65 percent of people killed by natural disasters annually, and 38 percent of worldwide economic losses from disasters.⁴¹ A number of countries in the region are emerging from conflict situations, and have specific needs for restoring and rebuilding systems, institutions and capacities to restore stability and economic development and strengthen democratic governance and rule of law. Countries can learn from one another's experiences in responding to natural disasters and crisis situations. The path to build crisis-resilient communities and states calls for a long-term engagement with emphasis on prevention and risk reduction approaches, as much as restoring the foundations of development in post-crisis situations. Therefore, a regional intervention that collates, conflates and document lessons and develops best practice models for several countries to apply in their own contexts is highly relevant and useful.

The regional programme is only a small player among several actors in the region addressing conflict and disaster risk reduction needs at the country level. To find its niche and relevance, the programme narrowed down the scope of work from what would be expected from the programme document. At

the country level, the regional programme's CPR work mostly complemented, but at times overlapped with activities of other key actors. Maintaining relevance in this area will continue to require careful strategic positioning, particularly in Asia.

The regional programme is only one among several interventions in the region addressing conflict and disaster risk reduction needs at the country level. The regional programme is a small player on the canvas, amidst several others within the UN system and outside. The CPR programme of the regional programme represents just over 3 percent of the aggregate UNDP spending at the national level.

APRC and Pacific Centre took completely different approaches in the area of focus, in their outcome orientations and partnership strategies and yet maintained relevance to the needs of the respective subregions. The Pacific programme oriented its activities to engender regional policy outcomes, and was able to engage with and secure the ownership of the regional counterpart institutions. The Asia programme, on the other hand, focused more on strengthening technical capacities at individual and institutional levels and engagement with the subregional institutions was limited and sporadic.

Further, in Asia, the bulk of activities and resource were dedicated to disaster risk reduction aspects with much less programming on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The Engage for Peace, Equality, Access, Community and Empowerment (N-PEACE) programme sums up the entirety of conflict prevention and peacebuilding work in Asia and, even within that domain, focuses narrowly on 'Woman Peace and Security' as the theme, with CSOs as the entry points and key beneficiaries. The entire thrust of N-PEACE looked at involving women in policy dialogue purely from a peace and conflict

⁴¹ Statistical Yearbook for Asia and Pacific 2011: data source: EM-DAT.

resolution perspective, without due coverage of substantive aspects from the perspective of disaster risk management.

In contrast, a large part of the Pacific CPR programming focused on conflict prevention and peace-building, with the Regional Human Security Framework as the core principle. Disaster risk management support has largely been through programming support for preparation of action plans, advocacy and awareness-raising of gender aspects of disaster risk management and climate change, and the facilitation of the South-South project. Unlike in Asia, the Pacific Centre also assisted in emergency relief support and some early recovery work in a few countries.

With the reformulation of the programme in 2009, some areas were dropped or marginalized in scope. Of the two planned programme outcomes, only one outcome was substantively addressed in programme activities, namely “improved and effective capacity of governments and CSOs to prevent, manage and respond to conflict and natural disasters”. Even under this outcome, the programme dropped the element of a regional surge capacity system, aligning with the new BCPR strategy to create national surge capacities – which were more proximal than regional capacities. The regional programme did not initiate activities on the second outcome, “Enhanced capacity to carry out socio-economic activities for early recovery and sustainable post-conflict/post-disaster recovery”. The evaluation considers this to be an appropriate decision, noting that early recovery and sustainable post-conflict/post-disaster recovery activities are essentially national, highly resource intensive and require long-term engagement and substantial capacity at the field. They are less amenable to and seem misplaced for a regional programme modality.

At the country level, UNESCAP and UNISDR are active players in this field, in particular in disaster risk management. Further, UNDP’s own BCPR directly operates and supports country

programmes in the region outside the regional programme framework. There has been overlap of activities in some countries between the regional programme and recent country-level initiatives of UNISDR while all three actors, UNESCAP, UNISDR and BCPR, provided funding to the regional programme in the same area of work. Avoiding such overlap and optimizing role sharing would further enhance the relevance of each organization’s work, especially when sharing the same funding source.

EFFECTIVENESS

UNDP has established high credibility as a neutral, trusted partner in the Pacific, through the regional programme interventions addressing key capacity needs towards a regional human security framework and developing national security policies to strengthen peace-building and human security. The partnership with the PIF Secretariat was central to the design as well as effectiveness of UNDP interventions.

The regional programme has played an important role towards strengthening the PIF Secretariat in implementing a regional human security framework and broadening the definitions from state to human security. The PIF Secretariat and UNDP have worked as partners to jointly design institutional structures and mechanisms for regional support to conflict prevention, develop and implement regional projects, including a mix of regional and in-country activities. This contributed to the Forum Regional Security Council endorsement in 2008 of a regional Human Security Framework for Conflict Prevention, to identify and address the underlying causes of conflict and crises through improved conflict resolution capacities. This endorsement provided the PIF Secretariat as well as UNDP the mandate to effectively engage with individual members, under principles and mechanisms endorsed at the regional level. As a result, common themes such as youth in crime and violence; sexual and gender-based violence;

women, peace and security; and climate change and security, were brought into the regional programming, and their consideration at the annual leaders' meetings enabled raising the profile of these issues at the highest levels.

The partnership with the PIF Secretariat was central to the design as well as effectiveness of UNDP interventions. The endorsement of a regional framework and the partnership approach of the PIF Secretariat and UNDP facilitated country-level assistance in conflict prevention and peace-building, in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. While the PIF Secretariat served as the most appropriate entry point and interface with the member country, the involvement of UN agency in all the technical assistance provided the much needed neutrality and equidistance with members of the PIF.

The regional programme support in security sector governance project helped Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu map security frameworks and structures, and main challenges to security sector governance in the region and identification of common regional priorities. The project developed specific support projects in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu on: formulation of national security policies; enhancement of responsible government offices; establishing parliament committees on justice and security; and building CSO and media capacity. Subsequent work on security sector governance was affected by changed circumstances in requesting countries. At the regional level, progress of work on plans to develop Security Sector Governance Principles and Guidance Notes for Pacific Parliaments and Peace Keeping remained somewhat slow. This also underscores that security sector governance is not accorded same level of priority in all the Pacific island countries and the regionality characteristic is not overriding national sensitivities.

The Capacity Building for Peace and Development (CPAD) programme was considered by the

beneficiaries as an innovative and successful initiative. Its contribution were noted in: the creation and resourcing of a Pacific Community of Peace Practitioners as a structured regional network; and the facilitation of government officials to engage with civil society actors without getting committed in an 'official negotiation dialogue' process, which enabled an objective appreciation of the positions and perceptions of diverse stakeholders. Its most significant results were noted in Fiji where the project successfully paired government and CSO teams to work jointly on specific issues and in the Solomon Islands it enabled government to engage with CSOs to develop Principles of Engagement, and formulate a National Peace Building Policy.

In Asia, the regional programme in the CPR cluster has made specific contributions to strengthening technical capacities of national and regional institutions and communities in respect of tsunami early warning systems and operating procedures for immediate responses. The regional programme has been a consistent factor in these improvements.

The flagship contribution of the regional programme's CPR programme in Asia is the strengthening of national and regional capacities for tsunami early warning and mitigation systems, through a set of in-country and multi-country activities. The regional programme partnered with the Intergovernmental Coordination Group for the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System and supported activities of thematic working groups with funds, resource persons and coordination support. The support to the commencement of services by the Regional Tsunami Service Providers, and the successful test run of Exercise Indian Ocean Wave 2011 enabled the 23 participating countries to test their operational lines of communications, and to review their tsunami warning and emergency response as well as test the standard operating procedures. The exercise achieved its goal of evaluating the state of readiness of the system in

responding to a potentially destructive tsunami. Preliminary results indicate that all the participating national tsunami warning centres were able to receive timely messages from Regional Tsunami Service Providers.

Regional centres' technical support has contributed to creating national systems and actions plans for strengthening disaster response mechanisms. However, there was a concentration of technical assistance patterns and over-dependence on a few key people that limit the possibility of expanding services to all those needed.

Regional centres have provided technical support to a number of countries and contributed to integration of disaster risk analysis in their national plans and strategies develop appropriate mapping and data on disaster vulnerability and creating national systems and actions plans for strengthening disaster response mechanisms. APRC supported the creation of seven Disaster Loss Databases in six countries in Asia that are being used to different degrees in the countries. Indonesia, Thailand and Sri Lanka also received support for a mapping of Institutional and Legislative Systems, as an initial step toward strengthening institutional capacities for disaster response and mitigation. Technical support was provided to strengthen end-to-end tsunami warning systems at the country level in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, India and Sri Lanka. In Indonesia, the regional programme had a close and seamless integration with the country programme providing support to development/upgrading of national standards and local government guidelines for tsunami risk assessment and mitigation, completing hazard vulnerability profiles and national disaster loss database. This integration of the regional programme with the country programme, and with the national

disaster risk management strategy, was rather unique and not always observed elsewhere.

In the Pacific, the programme worked closely with the regional agency South Pacific Geosciences Commission and provided country assistance for development of the national action plans on disaster risk management for Vanuatu, Republic of Marshall Islands, the Cook Islands; and a sector-based disaster risk management strategy for Fiji, among others. The commission values the UNDP partnership considerably, and cited the collaboration as being very effective over the past several years. Besides support for policy and institutional structures, the programme also included a number of activities intended to enhance awareness of the linkages such as gender-disaster-conflict. Thus, the partnership enabled a well-rounded programme, including work on gender and humanitarian aspects of disaster risk management and climate change besides the institutional strengthening of national agencies. Due to constraints in technical capacities and resources in the multi-country offices, interventions by the CPR team at the Pacific Centre were called upon on and immediate deployment of CPR staff from the Centre was necessitated in four occasions – the Cook Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu Fiji and Samoa – with some demands occurring simultaneously.

Technical support services by the CPR team added up to 1,777 person-days, representing 14.7 percent of all technical advisory services during 2008-2011. However, a closer analysis revealed that seven members of the 24 service providers listed in the database accounted for 1,060 person-days, which is 61 percent of the total service provided.⁴² This over-dependence on a few key people imposes constraints in expanding services to those who need it, and may pose a risk in contingencies.

⁴² The number may actually be higher since the name of only one service provider is recorded but in reality, other service providers may have joined the servicing.

While adopting an intense focus on tsunami-related assistance and on a limited number of countries, the regional programme could not sufficiently engage across the region on supporting countries with the implementation of the Hyogo Framework of Action and the UNDP Eight-Point Agenda for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality in Crisis Prevention and Recovery. The programme focused on intermediate milestones such as creating tools and strengthening human knowledge and skills for risk analysis and gender-responsive risk assessments, which are necessary but not sufficient to ensure that such knowledge and skills result in mainstreaming disaster risk management in the national plans and resource allocations. In that regard, in Asia, the programme provided technical and funding support to Indonesia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Nepal and Lao PDR in data analysis for quality reporting on the Hyogo Framework objectives. However, by not directly focusing on the Hyogo Framework, the regional programme missed an opportunity to push for and advancing region-wide implementation of specific national commitments to implement the Hyogo Framework, the principal instrument towards creating disaster-resilient states and communities. Although the programme activities were concentrated in few countries, there were several areas where regional programme could offer support such as: 24 national authorities for disaster risk management, national action plans, gender responsive policies and actions in national action plans, multi-stakeholder platforms.

The more important point is that the lack of adequate progress in gender mainstreaming as well as creation of broad-based stakeholder consultative mechanisms in disaster risk management action plans in several countries reflects poorly on the implementation of the Hyogo Framework's priority on gender. This is an area of work that very much meets UNDP's mandate and expertise. Gender-responsive risk assessment is mentioned as a result indicator and four of the UNDP Eight-Point Agenda on Women's Empowerment

and Gender Equality in CPR directly address needs for national action in respect of gender-responsiveness. These are: Strengthen Women's Security in Crisis; Expand Women's Citizenship, Participation and Leadership; Promote Gender Equality in Disaster Risk Reduction; and Ensure Gender-Responsive Recovery. Beyond N-PEACE, the programme did not address these aspects and all the disaster risk management efforts focused on tsunami response.

The regional programme has enabled significant milestones in the Pacific in raising the profile of the 'Women, Peace and Security' agenda and the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 as a regional priority. Involvement of national counterparts was secured 'innovatively' under the CPAD project. In Asia, useful contributions have been made in select number of countries to strengthen CSOs working on 'Women, Peace and Security' concerns. However, engagement of government counterparts and country offices has been less than satisfactory in some countries.

In the Pacific, there was a sustained engagement with regional institutions, national governments and other non-government stakeholders, towards enhancing the role and participation of women in conflict prevention and peace-building in the overall regional human security landscape. The programme implemented a mix of regional and in-country activities to enable a regional mechanism to accelerate the implementation of various commitments, particularly Security Council Resolutions 1820 and 1325. The high point in this direction was the successful embedding of 'Women Peace and Security' in the Regional Human Security Framework, through an official endorsement of a regional action plan for implementation of Resolution 1325. The Regional Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security is presently being drafted by a regional working group composed of regional institutions, international agencies as well as women organizations.

The N-PEACE programme, which remained the sole intervention in Asia under the conflict-prevention theme, has put together a sizeable multi-country network of women peace practitioners with over 25,000 members, including leading women organizations. The network also has a group of 22 trainers who have been trained on 'Women, Peace and Security' issues with aim to promote national implementation of Resolution 1325 through in-country training and advocacy. However, in at least two of the four countries where the project was launched, there were challenges in securing due involvement of national governments. This presented challenges in continuity and sustainability for the programme.

Engaging relevant national partners was a challenge in some cases, resulting in limited effectiveness of the programme activities.

National or local ownership was observed to be inadequate in some countries due either

to the low relevance of UNDP's activities for national counterparts or to the sensitivity of issues, affecting the effectiveness of the needed follow-up of programme activities.

The evaluation's findings in India bring out two contrasting examples for the CPR interventions: in Tamil Nadu, the regional programme intervention remained ineffective due to insufficient involvement of the state machinery, while in Orissa the UNDP field office presence allowed the regional programme to enter into an established state coordination mechanism and implement the activity to a successful end. Similarly, N-PEACE faced challenges in securing appropriate national engagement in both Nepal and Sri Lanka and remained purely CSO-based direct interventions. On the other hand, disaster risk management work in Indonesia further corroborates the positive correlation between national ownership and results, as illustrated in Box 4.

Box 4. Integrating Disaster Risk Analysis into National Plans and Strategies: Indonesia

Indonesia's substantial progress in strengthening its national disaster response has benefited from strong national commitment, substantial resource allocation by the Government of Indonesia, as well as the UNDP country programme. As a best practice model, it represents a mix of regional/multi-country activities dovetailing into national strategies and measuring into national outcomes.

Indonesia built on the internationally accepted best practice Guidelines on Tsunami Risk Assessment and Mitigation, supported under the regional programme, and adapted them into Minimum National Standards to be followed by provincial/local governments. The implementation of these standards was furthered with the Government linking funds allocation based on the level of tsunami risk as assessed by the standardized, nationally adopted methodologies, supported from the regional programme technical assistance. The Asia-Pacific Regional Centre also helped to establish disaster loss databases – with historical data for the past 30 years, which have been substantially amended and adapted by the national authorities to suit national contexts, building over the base of regional programme-supplied software.

The regional programme also dovetailed into a pivotal integrated country project, Safer Communities Through Disaster Risk Reduction in Development. The project supported institutional capacities particularly for decentralized disaster risk reduction; and involved local government and community capacity development, which complemented the knowledge and practice tools created by the regional programme. The project was instrumental in the formulation of Indonesia's National Disaster Management Plan 2010-2014; and the National Action Plan on Disaster Risk Reduction 2010-2014, as well as local laws, regulations, and local action plans. Similarly, the N-PEACE programme, which has already been endorsed with the participation of senior government officials, will be formally embedded into the recently signed Peace for Development Programme, with funding from the Government as well as other donors.

3.4 ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

RELEVANCE

The work undertaken by the ESD cluster of the regional centres, including RCCEEP activities and technical support services, was very relevant to the development challenges of the region, the needs of the country offices and aligned with the Strategic Plan of UNDP.

The regional programme document and the elaborated RCCEEP document note that environment and energy pose the biggest challenges facing the Asia-Pacific region. The combination of deteriorating land, water and air quality, the loss of ecosystems and their services, the negative effects of climate change and the overdependence on fossil fuels for energy exacerbate these challenges and undermine socio-economic development.⁴³ Both the regional programme and EEG staff facilitates access to the global, environmental funding sources, supports countries in policy dialogues, disseminates best practices, and shares knowledge both across and between the regions and responds to the specificities of the national priorities and supports UNDP's mandate to build national capacity for human development in ESD.

The regional programme design and its limited resources were focused on the areas of energy, climate change, ecosystems and biodiversity. The choice of interventions was appropriate as the region represents a mix of fast-growing economies with high emissions growth, a large numbers of poor with inadequate access to energy, a number of countries needing to combat the effects of climate change and adaptation and loss of biodiversity and ecosystems.

The main work described for EEG and the work defined under RCCEEP were coherent and matching only within these broad intents. RCCEEP was considered as another funding source for EEG work, and along with others streams of funds – the global programme, GEF, Montreal Protocol, Poverty and Environment Initiative, among others – was used altogether to deliver the results in the region. The work plan and reports demonstrated that EEG utilized all funding in an integrated manner ensuring high level of services to country office and quality assurance for country-based ESD projects.

At a strategic level, the evaluation identified the programme having the broad objectives of mainstreaming environment and energy; increasing institutional capacities to manage, adapt and monitor climate change, and leveraging funds for these actions on behalf of partner countries. Interpreted as above, it is found that RCCEEP aligns well in this regard with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011 and with UNDP plans for human development and also with the broad strategic framework for the ESD area.

The work implemented under RCCEEP did not logically follow or fit to the scope of the results framework defined in the programme document. This was largely due to the results framework being too limiting and badly designed in this focus area.

EEG has indeed recognized this limitation and design flaws. For instance, the first intended result of the programme was the “poor enabled with improved access to ecosystem assets and sustainable and affordable energy services”. This was to be achieved by two sets of outputs, namely, pro-poor pilot projects (downstream) and improved policy and institutional arrangements (upstream).

⁴³ The UNDP Executive Board approved the UNDP Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific (2008-2011) in October 2007. The UNDP Regional Programme Document on RCCEEP prepared by EEG provides a strategic assessment of the region. In our view, the programme document provides an excellent summary of the strategic importance of EE in the region to develop the activities and outputs of the regional programme.

An analysis of the outputs and the indicators of both sets reflect serious logical disconnect and lack of appropriate links. Recognizing the limitation in scope, the project document of RCCEEP has further expanded and elaborated the results framework which made it more complex without adding much clarity in the logic. With 25 indicators set originally, later expanding to 29, it was observed that these indicators were not very useful for the actual management of RCCEEP and did not appear to have served any purpose beyond completing mandatory reporting requirements.

The heavy reliance on global funding mechanism, in particular GEF, has placed some limitation on the scope of work. At the same time, greater attention to climate change adaptation in recent years has contributed to raising awareness and understanding about the importance of addressing the development-environment nexus coherently.

It is worth restating what earlier evaluations on UNDP's work on energy and environment confirmed: "The relevance of environment and energy to the principal UNDP mission of poverty reduction seems overwhelmingly clear"⁴⁴ and "UNDP programme reviews have stressed the value of addressing poverty and environment concerns *concurrently* and pointed out that poverty-environment linkages move in both directions"⁴⁵. UNDP's dependence on external funding, especially for environmental activities, reinforces the institutional focus and makes it more difficult to articulate the connections.

The availability of GEF funding has still been the most important driving force determining where, how and when UNDP country-level environment and energy work was undertaken. The reliance of UNDP on GEF to support its environment

and energy work has caused some high-priority national environmental issues – such as environmental health, water supply and sanitation and energy management – to be replaced by the GEF priorities related to climate change mitigation, biodiversity and international waters. The fit between UNDP's poverty reduction mandate and the GEF objective of mitigating global climate change has been less than convincing. While ESD is central to the mission of UNDP, in practice, the availability of financial resources from GEF has had a far greater influence on the priority setting and choice of activities of country offices in this area than UNDP corporate plans and strategies.

UNDP efforts to explore the development-environment nexus in its innovative projects and approaches should be recognized. Accumulation of such efforts has and would provide empirical evidences in proving the importance of addressing the nexus coherently. Further, greater attention to climate change adaptation in recent years has contributed to raising awareness and understanding about the importance of the nexus, not only in terms of the poverty-environment nexus but also other areas such as disaster risk management and inclusive governance.

EFFECTIVENESS

Activities that RCCEEP directly implemented did not really achieve the specific outcomes as defined in the results framework of the programme document. Nevertheless, different elements of these outcomes were achieved by country-level projects that were supported by EEG.

RCCEEP did not exactly follow the results framework of the programme document largely

⁴⁴ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of the Role and Contribution of UNDP in Environment and Energy', New York, August 2008.

⁴⁵ UNDP Evaluation Office, 'Evaluation of UNDP Contribution to Environmental Management for Poverty Reduction: The Poverty-Environment Nexus', New York: December 2010.

due to its limiting nature mentioned above. There was no specific evidence that RCCEEP: developed gender-responsive tools or methodologies on ecosystem services; promoted renewable energy projects applying the PPP modality; or promoted greater use of carbon market funds. Nevertheless, there were a number of cases where country-level projects supported by EEG achieved different elements of the programme outcomes. At the country level, gender-responsive tools on ecosystem services were applied in specific projects; renewable energy projects were supported, and almost all Asia-Pacific countries indicated evidence of greater use of global GEF funding.

The single most important contribution made by APRC/EEG was the financial leveraging of country programmes that enabled them to tackle a wide range of energy and environment issues, and technical support that ensured greater quality and results. Hence, despite the small amount of resources provided under RCCEEP, the regional programme resources allocated to this area have made significant contributions to the development results through providing increased support to country offices.

It was a unanimous view of the country office staff interviewed that external global financing requires a strong APRC involvement and country offices are not equipped to handle it by itself. The inputs and activities supported by EEG are in

the most part environmental projects, which emerge from the interplay between country needs and the availability of the special funds, most often GEF. The steps in obtaining GEF funds involve an initial approval of a concept note, followed by project design document, and the final approval thereafter. Regional programme’s technical advisory support at all the stages plays an important role in bringing the projects on stream and mobilization of GEF funding.

Analysis of the GEF projects supported by the EEG shows that there were a total of 134 active projects supported in the region during the period 2008–2011 with an investment of over USD 520 million. Of the above, those managed by the staff funded by the regional programme was 30 projects with a total value of USD 112 million (see Table 3). This indicates that under the objective “catalysing and mobilizing finance for improved environmental management” for the countries, the practice has provided for very positive and growing outcomes, to which the regional programme has contributed.

On the quality of the GEF country projects supported by EEG, the GEF quality ratings showed that in Asia the score was 86 percent in 2011. Individually, country offices cited a number of contributions of RCCEEP as being particularly useful. They include the Poverty Environment, Climate Change Mainstreaming, Barrier Removal of Energy Efficiency Standards

Table 3. Funds Generated and Managed for Country Projects in the Region in ESD

Funds leveraged (US\$ million)					
Projects managed (number of projects)					
Managed by:	2008-2011	2008	2009	2010	2011
All EEG staff	520.5	211.2	292.8	386.6	460.9
	134 projects	60 projects	78 projects	101 projects	114 projects
RCCEEP staff only	112.5	49.0	66.2	73.3	99.4
	30 projects	11 projects	16 projects	21 projects	25 projects

Note: ‘All EEG staff’ includes ‘RCCEEP staff’. Since projects are normally multi-year, the sum of annual figures does not correspond to the total for the period.

Source: APRC

& Labelling; Pilot phase of UN REDD in Viet Nam; the Indian Ocean Tsunami Early Warning System; and broadly the support received on Climate Financing.

On the management of cross-border externalities and spillovers, there were a few but important contributions made mainly through country programme support. These initiatives are evidences that EEG also engaged governments successfully in sensitive transnational environmental issues where opportunity existed. These initiatives were generally complex in nature and not without challenges.

The Sulu-Celebes Sea Regional Fisheries Management and Partnerships in Environmental Management for the Seas of East Asia are two excellent examples where EEG engaged governments successfully in transnational environmental issues and providing regional governance mechanism and a framework for integrated and collaborative planning, coordination and monitoring and reporting. The first project aims to improve the condition of fisheries and their habitats in the Sulu-Celebes Sea (Sulu-Sulawesi Marine Eco-region) through an integrated, collaborative and participatory management by the three participating countries of Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines. The second project is a partnership involving stakeholders of the Seas of East Asia, including national and local governments, civil society, the private sector, research and education institutions, communities, international agencies, regional programmes, financial institutions and donors. Starting as a GEF-supported regional project on marine pollution prevention in 1993, it was transformed as a regional coordinating mechanism for integrated coastal management⁴⁶ by the participating countries. The regional work on international waters was a complex and long-term undertaking. The sample

of projects reviewed and other project evaluations suggest that this portfolio has been satisfactory.

Given the regional mandate of the programme, one may claim that EEG should have engaged more in this type of initiatives. However, in addition to the complexity mentioned above, such initiatives could easily stroke political sensitivities in any participating countries. Further, it was observed that the governments generally favour national projects over regional projects of such nature. Hence, it appeared that the programme had no choice than to be somewhat opportunistic in pursuing cross-border and transnational issues. This makes it impossible to set a benchmark (i.e. what the programme could have done) against which the performance can be judged to justify such a claim.

Promoting knowledge sharing and learning was the main objective of many activities undertaken directly by RCCEEP. Overall, these activities produced a large amount of knowledge. RCCEEP had some success in advocacy and awareness-raising activities. However, the knowledge was not sufficiently codified and analysed for effective learning. The knowledge products did not pay sufficient attention to linking theory and lessons learned from country-level experiences. These initiatives hence were more disjointed than strategic.

The core team of EEG experts in Bangkok (except one person in Fiji and another in Samoa) provided common management of knowledge resources of the staff, pooling together the experiences gained from projects, the special features, achievements and challenges, as found in the region. The team also facilitated the synergy between identification of knowledge, its codification and transmission. This has been a relative success and a major contribution of the EEG.

⁴⁶ The countries that participate in this include Cambodia, DPR Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, PR China, Philippines, RO Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam.

The CoPs internal to UNDP were excellent platforms for seeking inputs on questions, share opinions and disseminate information with other UNDP staff. Due to broad-based participation, CoPs often generated cross-practice and cross-sectoral knowledge flows. For instance, an EEG and Poverty CoP – E-Discussion on Climate Change and Human Development – preceded the RHDR on the same theme and allowed better understanding on how climate change affected human development, and steps to improve the quality of human life in the changing climate.

RECEEP pursued a variety of avenues in support of advocacy. For example, support provided for the making of a documentary – ‘Melting Himalayas’ – proved to have excellent results with a global coverage and positive feedback through 17,000 Google references, multiple theatres and TV channels across many countries. The regional programme supported some of additional knowledge events and exchanges such as public forum at a SAARC regional meeting on climate change, knowledge sharing facilitated among the pilot UN REDD countries in the region, knowledge

and experience sharing between regional countries related to the Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding (GLOF) project (see Box 5).

Overall, the ESD portfolio produces much more knowledge than is captured and codified. While the programme aimed to improve the use of knowledge among country offices and national partners, the small resources and low attention it paid to ‘learning’ resulted in weaker, disjointed and non-strategic efforts. A key focus for knowledge management by EEG should have been to ensure that country-level knowledge and experiences gained through the very large number of projects were systematically collected, shared to support partners in countries and agencies, improved upon and then applied to new policy development and to new operations. Knowledge and skills have also not yet fully matched to the varied country office needs for interactions and policy advice above the project level, especially for countries that have reached higher development profiles.⁴⁷

The strong coherence between RCCEEP and the larger EEG work, as well as the appropriate level of consultations with the country offices,

Box 5. Glacial Lake Outburst Flooding Project

Reducing climate change-induced risks and vulnerabilities from Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) is a GEF-funded project in the Punakha-Wangdi and Chamkhar valleys of Bhutan.

The project objectives were to reduce climate change-induced risks from floods due to the outbursts from glacial lakes and to enhance local adaptive capacity, and one of the key results was a Disaster Management Bill for Bhutan. UNDP formulated the project with national partners (the Department of Geology and Mines, Department of Disaster Management, Department of Energy, the Gross National Happiness Commission and district administration). The work included hazard-zone mapping with the identification of high-risk zones and development of evacuation sites. This was followed by GLOF-resilient land-use planning; creation of district disaster management committees, and awareness and planning teams, in all three districts covered by the project. It built local capacity in community-based disaster risk management, and specific GLOF risk management. It supported a controlled drainage at one of the glacial lakes involving members of the community. An early warning system was established in the downstream valley linking automated data collection systems, early warning control centres and sirens, with community involvement, to provide GLOF event early warning and evacuation. A majority of households in the target area were found to be aware of GLOF hazard planning and evacuation routes with community-based plans formulated in 100 villages.

⁴⁷ Feedback from several country offices and national counterparts.

were the major factors that enabled the regional programme to make significant contributions to development results in this focus area.

The regional programme was able to make significant contributions to results in this focus area because RCCEEP has been defined in ways that provide for almost 100 percent concordance with the larger EEG work. Thus, it was not affected by fragmentation that was noted in the earlier evaluation on regionalization.⁴⁸ The work plan of EEG was established in such a way as to include RCCEEP work in an integrated manner, and hence no initiative was found really “thinly spread, poorly coordinated, or duplicative” in this area.⁴⁹

A notable feature of the practice as a whole is the consultation process between the regional staff with their counterparts in country offices. The country offices define their needs for technical support in annual meetings with EEG and, in turn, EEG, including RCCEEP staff, attempt to deliver the technical support requested and agreed. This has provided for a systematic framework for gauging demand, identifying opportunities and constraints, and has ensured relevance of EEG support to country programmes.

3.5 EFFICIENCY

DELIVERY

Given the institutional and resource constraints and other external factors, the regional programme has operated efficiently. The programme experienced initial delays in 2008 due to restructuring.

The programme had to adapt to the pressures of corporate budget constraints. Overall resource constraints in UNDP necessitated an across-the-board reduction in programme resources, resulting in a reduction in the total programme size. The 2010 merger of the Regional Centre in Colombo into APRC was a significant step taken in terms of efficiency and cost reduction.

Accordingly, the programme delivery for the four-year period 2008-2011 was approximately USD 75.77 million as against an original budget of USD 95.42 million, reflecting a delivery rate of 79 percent against target⁵⁰ (see Reference Table A2). Core funding, at USD 36.5 million, was significantly lower than the levels of USD 47.2 million indicated in the programme document, accounting for most of the divergence, while non-core funding remained marginally below the initial targets, with USD 44.3 million against the target of USD 48.4 million (see Reference Table A6).

Among the practices, delivery rates were the lowest for DG. This was partly because a number of activities were dropped, particularly cross-border initiatives, due to insufficient interest shown by national governments for political and other sensitivities. The PRMDG practice had the highest delivery rates ranging from 83 to 89 percent across the themes despite having been most affected by the closure of the Regional Centre in Colombo.⁵¹

The 2008 revision of BCPR strategy necessitated significant revisions to the CPR portfolio of the regional programme, leading to a reduced scale and also an almost two-year delay in

⁴⁸ UNDP Evaluation Office, ‘UNDP Contribution at the Regional Level to Development and Corporate Results’, New York, December 2010.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Delivery rate refers to the actual expenditure over budget. Note that the non-core portion of the budget includes unfunded resources to be raised.

⁵¹ This aspect has been covered extensively in the past reviews, and therefore not discussed in this report in any depth.

implementing activities in Asia. As a result, a number of programme activities could not be completed as planned earlier. Notably, the work for the programme outcome 8 was drastically downsized and one of three results to be achieved under outcome 7 was dropped. This resulted in a delivery rate of 78 percent, with a much-diluted programme in Asia compared to the Pacific.

The ESD practice experienced delays in recruiting programme staff for RCCEEP, having taken almost one year to get the necessary staff in position to fully utilize the programme resources. Hence, low utilization of funds is observed for 2008 and this largely explains the gap in the budget and expenditures, with the overall delivery soon getting back on track.

HUMAN RESOURCES

There has been a significant reduction in the staff strength of the regional centres, mainly due to cost-reduction measures. While this has not overly affected provision of technical support or programme delivery, the current human resource situation poses a risk of affecting UNDP's programme effectiveness not only at the regional level but also at the country level. If regional centres cannot respond adequately to country offices' support service needs, the negative impact on country programmes would be qualitative rather than financial.

The reduction in funding and the restructuring of the regional centres also saw a net reduction of 22 staff from 104 persons in 2009 to 82 at the end of 2011. This was almost entirely attained by reductions in core staff from 63.5 to 44 persons, representing almost one-third of the initial complement (see Reference Table A3). While this raises important concerns over the centres' capacities to implement the regional programme as well as to provide technical support to country offices, the centre management was of the view

that the reduction was in fact a 'right sizing', and led to an improved balance between allocations towards the project delivery and other activities of the centres, namely, technical support services and knowledge management.

Notwithstanding the argument provided, the evaluation considers that available capacities may have been stretched to the limit, and the staff strength hung in a rather tenuous equilibrium, with very little elasticity or slack. This was observed, for instance, in the CPR practice in the Pacific, which does not have any response capacity to natural disasters that can occur in multiple locations, or in the gender practice where the vacancies in a few post left only one staff, the practice leader, to serve all the needs with obvious difficulties in delivery.

This constraint poses a great risk to the regional programme, which relies heavily on human resources to deliver the knowledge-oriented programme. The risk is amplified by the fact that a substantive portion of the programme resources has been devoted to technical support services to country offices provided without cost recovery except for travel and daily subsistence allowances. Country offices expressed appreciation for the responsiveness of the regional centres to the technical requests, and the most cited factors behind this view were: knowledge and expertise of regional issues; knowledge of UNDP systems and processes; effective fund-raising support; and single-point assistance. In contrast, cost savings was not mentioned as a factor in country offices' positive assessment. This implies that, if the centres cannot respond adequately to service requests, the negative impact on country programmes would be qualitative rather than financial.

To a large extent, the programmes for Asia and the Pacific have been implemented independently by APRC and Pacific Centre respectively.

Given the geographical distance between the subregions and the distinct feature of the Pacific with its regional architecture, this parallel programme arrangement provided more efficiency gains than losses.

Despite being under one regional programme, APRC and Pacific Centre actually operate two programmes independently of each other with an exception of the ESD practice. The monthly coordination meetings and a combined results reporting have been the only points of substantive synthesis between the two programmes. While it is tempting to consider the potential for greater cross-utilization of expertise between the two centres, the sheer expanse of the region in terms of time zones and distances poses logistical challenges for a seamless connection of the two regional centres. From a programmatic viewpoint, the existence of a strong regional architecture in the Pacific, through which the Pacific Centre largely operates, justifies a distinct programme approach in the subregion.

The efficiency of subregional configuration of the centres needs be assessed from various dimensions. The main factor that favours consolidation of centres is economy of scale of having experts in variety of specialities serving larger number of countries, and the fact that being in one place greatly facilitates in-person interactions among experts that promotes programmatic cohesion and synergies. The negative side of consolidation is the distance it creates between the centre and the countries it serves in terms of country context knowledge, personal connections and the travel cost. Programmatically, consolidation reduces the scope of work to deal with sub-regional issues. While precise examination of these factors is beyond the scope of this evaluation, given the human resource situation of the regional centres, the evaluation considers that the current configuration is an appropriate one.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND LEVERAGE

Resource mobilization remains a serious challenge for the regional programme with a pessimistic financial prediction for UNDP in the near future. The regional centres need to pursue innovative fund-mobilization strategy with institutional support from headquarters. There is also a mismatch between financial and results accountabilities among the global programme, the regional and country programmes under the current arrangement that is affecting the financial health of the regional programme.

A perusal of funding sources shows the regional programme's considerable dependence on core funding. The leverage, expressed as a ratio of non-core and core resources, was marginally over 1.21, although the pattern significantly varied across focus areas (see Reference Table A6). The CPR programmes have attracted large amounts of non-core funding with the ratio at 4.58. The PRMDG area's low funding ability at 0.86 would further drop to 0.47 if HIV/AIDS (2.13) and gender (1.63) programmes were excluded, meaning that funds raised were less than half of the core resources. The reported leverage was equally low in the ESD area (0.48); however, this did not take into account the enormous leveraging of country programme resources made by APRC in this area (see Table 3; if the funds raised for country programmes were added, the ratio would be over 20).

Discussions with programme staff as well as donors and other stakeholders pointed that regional funding remains somewhat a 'blind spot' in donor programming, with most donors oriented largely toward country-specific funding or supporting global or corporate thematic trust funds. AusAID stands out as an exception, with a strategy of focusing most of its Pacific funding through the regional channels. As a result, the Pacific programme has fared better at raising

donor funds than the Asian programme. The regional centres have also been able to mobilize resources from regional funding windows of other UN agencies, notably UNAIDS, UNISDR and UNESCAP, including bidding competitively for access to regional trust funds and GFATM. These were, however, rather small in scale (see Reference Table A7).

An indirect indicator of programme efficiency is to examine the extent of leveraging other funds and other partner resources, whether cash or in kind, to support programme delivery. In this respect, there were few illustrations of such leveraging other than in the ESD practice where leveraging funds has been directly ingrained into the programme itself through mobilization and facilitation of substantial GEF funding for country projects.⁵² Another example was the Pacific Public Sector Linkages Programme of AusAID, in which the Australian Parliament with the Pacific Centre's support provided technical training of parliament ministers and staff in Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and the Cook Islands. Thus, the programme results were produced while the programme funding did not stream through the Pacific Centre. Other than these cases, there were a few examples of cost-sharing, co-hosting of events, and so on in individual projects but these were more incidental than strategic in magnitude.

Given the expectation of substantial decrease in UNDP's core resources⁵³, and the regional programme's reliance on core funding, the financial health of the regional centres is threatened. The centres need to pursue an innovative fund-mobilization strategy with institutional

support from headquarters. Further, the regional programme is currently configured as a stand-alone programme with its own resources to achieve its own objectives, while a large portion of the programme's contribution lies in leveraging results at the country level, producing results for the global programme and country programmes as well. This contribution is not properly reflected in cost-sharing and funding structure⁵⁴, leaving a mismatch between financial and results accountabilities.

3.6 SUSTAINABILITY

Engagements with regional institutions and national actors enhanced the sustainability of the contributions made by the regional programme. The sustainability of most regional programme contributions critically depended on the follow-up by the national partners and/or the country offices. While there were many cases where individual efforts and interactions ensured such a follow-up, it was not always ensured.

A key approach to sustainability is through linking the activities and initiatives to organizations that will continue to pursue the agenda for the long term. The regional programme's engagements with regional institutions often created a regional framework for development, addressing a common regional agenda, using regional forums and networks. This was more evident in the Pacific where the Pacific Centre continued its engagement with and supported regional institutions. The HIV/AIDS programme has engaged with SAARC and ASEAN as well as community-based organizations.

⁵² A side result of leveraging country projects with the GEF fund is additional revenue streams to APRC in the form of a fee against resources mobilized and coordinated.

⁵³ UNDP institutional budget estimates for 2012-2013, Report of the Administrator.

⁵⁴ While country offices finance mission costs, the personal cost involved in support services or country-level programme interventions is subsidized by APRC. The global programme provides its own regional advisers to APRC, who also work for the regional programme. However, accountability mismatch will remain unless the global programme provides full funding for the post and operations for the realization of its objectives through regional mechanisms.

A good example of the programme's contributions having integrated into national structure was found in PFIF. PFIF implemented a project with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) and more recently with ILO on its micro-insurance work. The programme has reached a stage to be mainstreamed to national banking sectors. For example, financial inclusion was a part of the agenda of six central banks in the Pacific region and two countries have developed national strategies and a task force to oversee its implementation, and five central banks are testing mobile banking.⁵⁵ Not many regional programme activities, however, could afford to implement national-level and downstream activities as much as the PFIF programme did. Therefore, it would require country office engagements to pursue the initiatives at the country level.

Many regional programme activities were multinational in nature or realized through leveraging country programme activities. Hence, the results to which the programme contributed were innately made at the country level. Moreover,

by their very nature, many individual initiatives were not set up for sustainability, as their purpose was often to seed and test approaches or to raise awareness and advocate issues. Thus, the sustainability of the effect of the regional programme contributions critically depended on actions by the country offices and/or national partners and their continued engagement on the supported activities.

An important element in ensuring the sustainability is the degree to which the regional programme shares common objectives and continues to engage with country offices to follow through on the progress made towards results. The regional programme staff has frequently been engaging with the country office counterparts through project activities and technical support servicing. However, the country offices were not institutionally responsible to follow up on regional programme's initiative at the country level, or to report on the effects of the regional programme's contribution to the development results at the country level.

⁵⁵ Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme Final Report to the EU (2011).

CHAPTER 4.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING OF UNDP IN THE REGION

Chapter 3 provided an assessment of the regional programme's development contribution in different programme areas. This chapter will examine the strategic positioning of the regional programme in the overall context of the region and within UNDP's support architecture, and the role of the regional centres in this regard. It will also present an assessment of the extent to which the programme made the best use of UNDP's corporate strength and approach in design and implementation of programme activities, and how has it mainstreamed key values embodied in UNDP's approach, namely gender equality and South-South cooperation.

4.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

Despite the constraints of operating in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region, as well as its limited resources, the regional programme has put together a highly useful programme with useful elements for nearly all the countries in its footprint. The regional programme's relevance also stems from its ability to address issues that country programmes could not due to political or cultural sensitivities.

Putting together a meaningful regional programme of relevance to the vastly diverse Asia-Pacific region with considerable diversity in social, economic, political and cultural profiles was undoubtedly a complex challenge. Compounded with a rather limited financial envelope, the regional programme has been quintessentially a multi-country intervention and not a truly regional one that encompassed all the countries

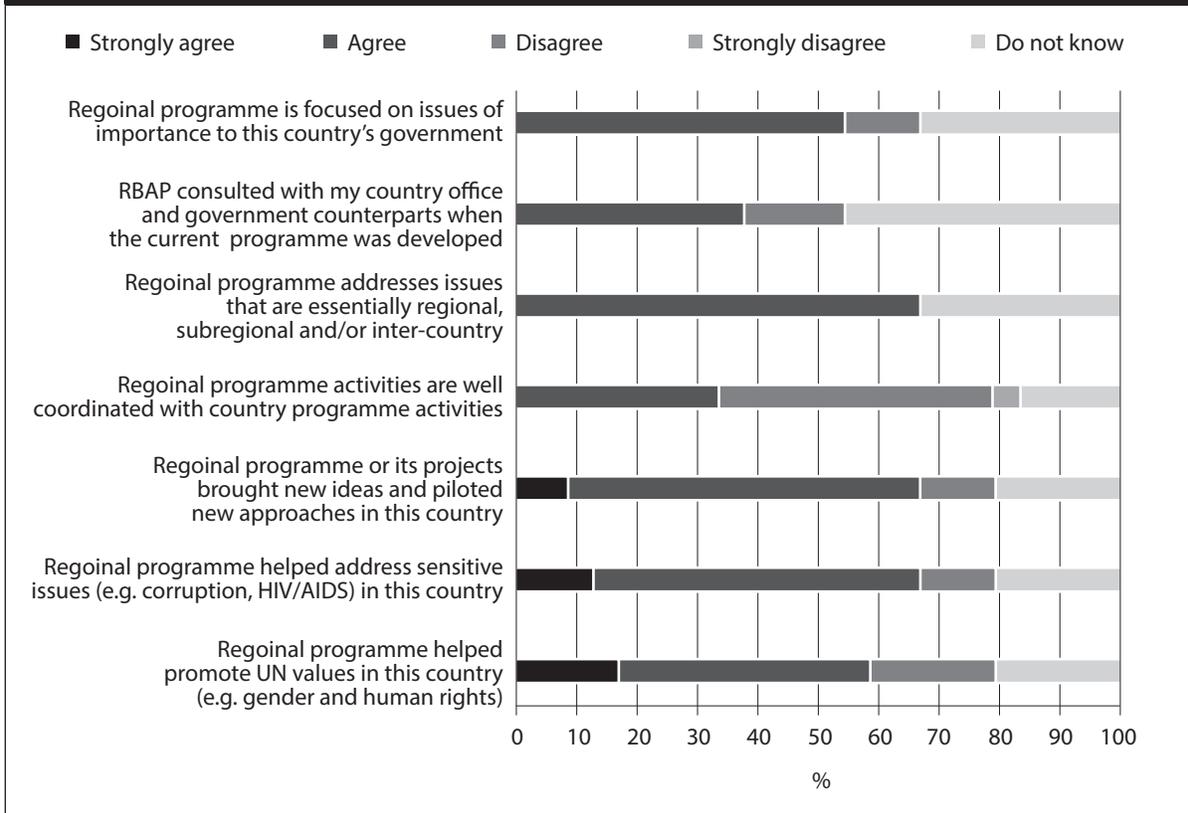
of the region or engaged in cross-border and transnational issues.

Despite the diversity and the thin spread of the regional programme, country offices have attested its relevance, as shown in Figure 1. The majority of the 24 country offices surveyed concurred that the regional programme has addressed: issues that are essentially regional, subregional and/or inter-country in nature; helped address sensitive issues (e.g. corruption, HIV/AIDS) and promoted UN values in the country (e.g. gender and human rights); and focused on issues of importance to national governments. This evaluation has confirmed these survey perceptions to a large extent. The two principal factors for the regional programme's relevance were: a) its responsiveness to the need of expertise in countries and governments in the areas of priority to them; and b) the regionality principle.

An important feature of the regional programme was its ability to offer a neutral and non-official platform to discuss a number of issues that could be considered sensitive for a direct engagement at the national level. The regional character of the initiatives allowed flexibility for national governments to participate without having to commit to official positions on any sensitive issues. This advantage has been proven in the regional programme activities in throughout focus areas.

The regional programme initiatives generally met the three regionality principles, in its intent, intervention strategy and implementation modalities. This has provided a strong rationale for the regional programme. There were some

Figure 1. Country Office Views on the Relevance of the Regional Programme



Source: Country office survey

challenges in pursuing cross-border issues due to the complexity in managing multiple institutional and political contexts and in enlisting country-level engagement on sensitive issues.

The regional programme provided opportunities for experience sharing, building knowledge networks and communities of practice at the regional or subregional level that were not available in typical country programming. Regional events have been cost-effective mechanisms for technical capacity development in a number of projects.

Cross-border and transnational issues were addressed selectively in different areas of work. On such issues as CPR and HIV/AIDS, there were strong rationale and entry points for cross-border intervention initiatives. Several interventions such as CPAD and tsunami

response were not only inherently regional; they were beyond the scale for a country-level initiative. Some programmes like CPAD provided a neutral, non-political turf for government and non-government stakeholders to discuss politically sensitive issues without taking an official position or commitment. Similarly, on HIV/AIDS and migration, the regional programme enabled due engagement on the part of regional actors. In case of the tsunami-response interventions, the regional programme enabled the creation of subregional public goods such as best practices, regional standards, and contributed to the formation of the Regional Tsunami Service Providers network.

Seed funding for pilot ideas is another important modality used successfully in the regional programme. Several interesting and effective

examples were found in this regard. N-PEACE used small grants facilities innovatively to stimulate community engagement in conflict-affected areas, and to create a body of evidence for appropriate advocacy. Seed funding was used effectively also in the areas of climate change and sustainable development in policy facilitation of access to climate change financing, and in such projects as International Waters in Philippines, Sustainable Development Strategy for the Seas of East Asia, Glacial Lakes Outburst Floods in South Asia, and Climate Change in the Pacific.

Pursuing cross-border and transnational issues turned out to be a challenge because it involved managing a more complex institutional and political environment. Beyond the issue of relevance to specific countries (such as the non-relevance of a tsunami intervention to a land-locked country), political sensitivities to specific issues also limited the engagement of government actors in some programmes. The regional programme had to drop some cross-border components, such as some anti-corruption, aid effectiveness, and climate change initiatives, due to sovereignty aspects and domestic sensitivity. The evaluation believes that the limited success was sometimes due to the inappropriate entry point and profiling of the regional programme.

The regional programme has made an effort to balance demands at the country level and UNDP's corporate priorities, drawing on UNDP's comparative strengths: acknowledged domain leadership, country office network and its neutrality. While it responded well to country office needs and national priorities, the regional programme has not always coordinated well with country programmes to the extent desirable. While the broad development objectives of the regional and country programmes basically converge and a substantial part of regional centres' work has aimed at leveraging

country programmes, they were programmed as if they aim for their own objectives through their own activities.

The regional programme has kept its alignment with the corporate strategic plan, responded to global initiatives, and showed strong propensity to address UNDP's cross-sector concerns such as gender equality and capacity development. At the same time, the regional programme has made an effort to balance the corporate priorities with the needs of the countries and country offices, enhancing its relevance to the countries. The important factors to make the regional programme relevant were, according to the country office staff⁵⁶: the regional programme addressing priority issues in the country, synergies with and leveraging of the country programme, and consultations with the country office in designing projects and activities.

These concerns impinge on the need and rationale for mutual accountability between the regional and country programmes. While there can never be complete harmonization between two essentially complementing but different programme modalities, there must be a mechanism to underpin results accountability in both ways. When a regional centre provided technical support to a country office or implemented an activity in collaboration with a country office, both the country office and the regional centre should be accountable for results derived from it. In large part, the broad development objectives of both the regional and country programmes agree. A substantial part of regional centres' work has aimed at leveraging country programmes whether through technical support services, knowledge products or networking.

Yet, they are programmed as if they aim for their own objectives through their own activities. The mutual accountability was hence not built into

⁵⁶ Based on the evaluation team's own field research and the country office survey conducted by the Evaluation Office.

the programme framework. The 2010 introduction of the engagement policy on technical support services was a step in the right direction which, by linking the services to country programme elements, provided the programmatic basis for the mutual accountability.

If seen as a standalone development programme, the regional programme was a very small player in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region. Seen as a part of the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture, however, the regional programme played several critical leveraging roles: the technical supporter of country programmes; the knowledge manager and network facilitator; and the knowledge and idea leader. The regional programme's relevance thus rested in its agility to strategically address key regional issues on one hand, and its ability to leverage country-level results on the other.

If the regional programme was seen as a standalone development programme, it is a very small player in the context of vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region. The relative weight of UNDP's programme expenditure in Asia and the Pacific during 2004-2012 demonstrated that regional programme expenditure accounted for a mere eight percent of total expenditure under RBAP (see Reference Table A8). While the direct country-level support through country programme remained the principal means of delivery mechanism by UNDP, the regional programme's relative size placed demanded for it to be strategic rather than scale-intense and focus on value-added modalities, innovation, advocacy and piloting new ideas that complement and leverage in-country programming for results.

Seen as a part of UNDP's overall assistance architecture, the regional programme played several critical roles. The most recognized and appreciated role was that of the technical

supporter of country programmes. Another key role was that of knowledge manager and network facilitator, where UNDP's country-level experience and organization-wide knowledge were amalgamated. Finally, it played a role of knowledge leader through advocating, contextualizing and applying new ideas in the region. These leveraging roles, in addition to the regional programme's agility to strategically address key regional issues, were the main factors that underlie its strategic relevance.

Below, these leveraging roles of the regional programme are analysed individually.

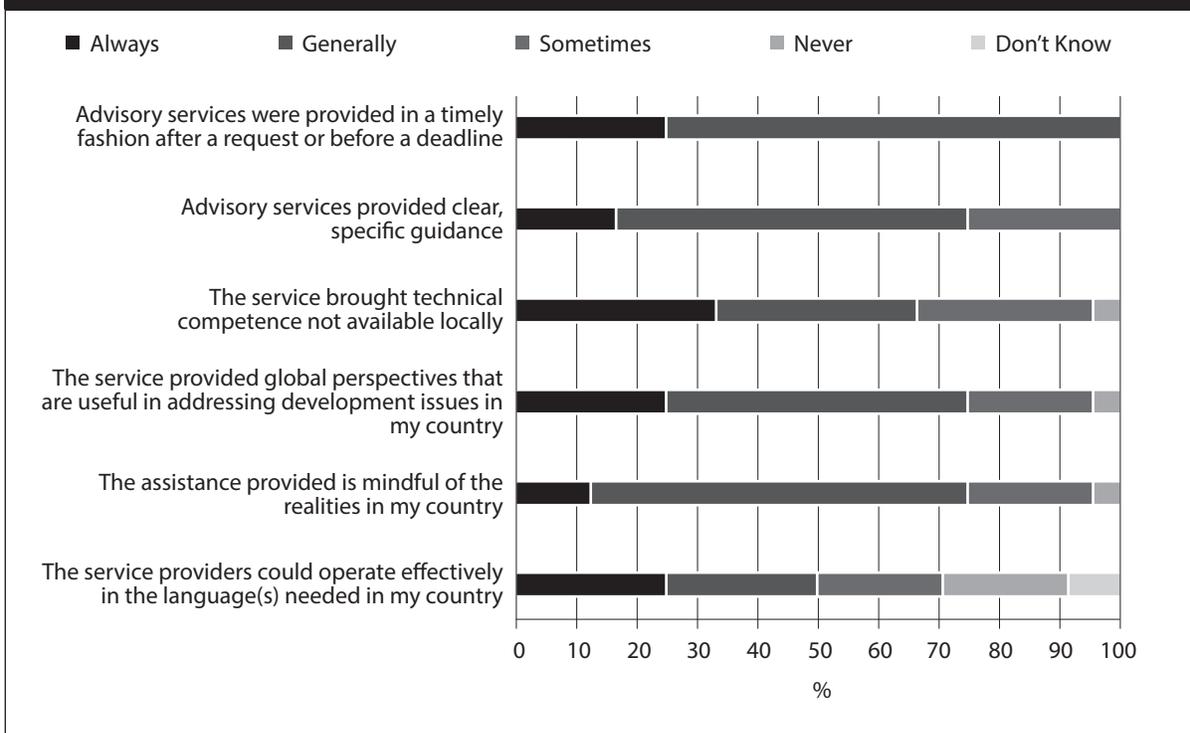
TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO COUNTRY OFFICES

On average, there is a high appreciation and satisfaction among country offices with the responsiveness and quality of support provided by the regional centre staff, particularly in programming support, referral of expertise and, to a lesser extent, resource mobilization. Slightly lower rate of satisfaction is recorded for the relevance of assistance to the reality of the country receiving assistance, which seems to have reflected the transactional nature of the service provided. The views were more split in terms of the language availability of support provided, reflecting different language needs and proficiencies of the countries in the region (see Figure 2).⁵⁷

Figure 3 shows the views of the quality of technical support services by practice area. In core practice areas, respondents generally accorded high degrees of satisfaction with the quality of technical services provided by the regional centres. The rate of satisfaction significantly drops when it comes to support in other areas, namely capacity development, knowledge management, partnerships and donor relations, and monitoring and evaluation.

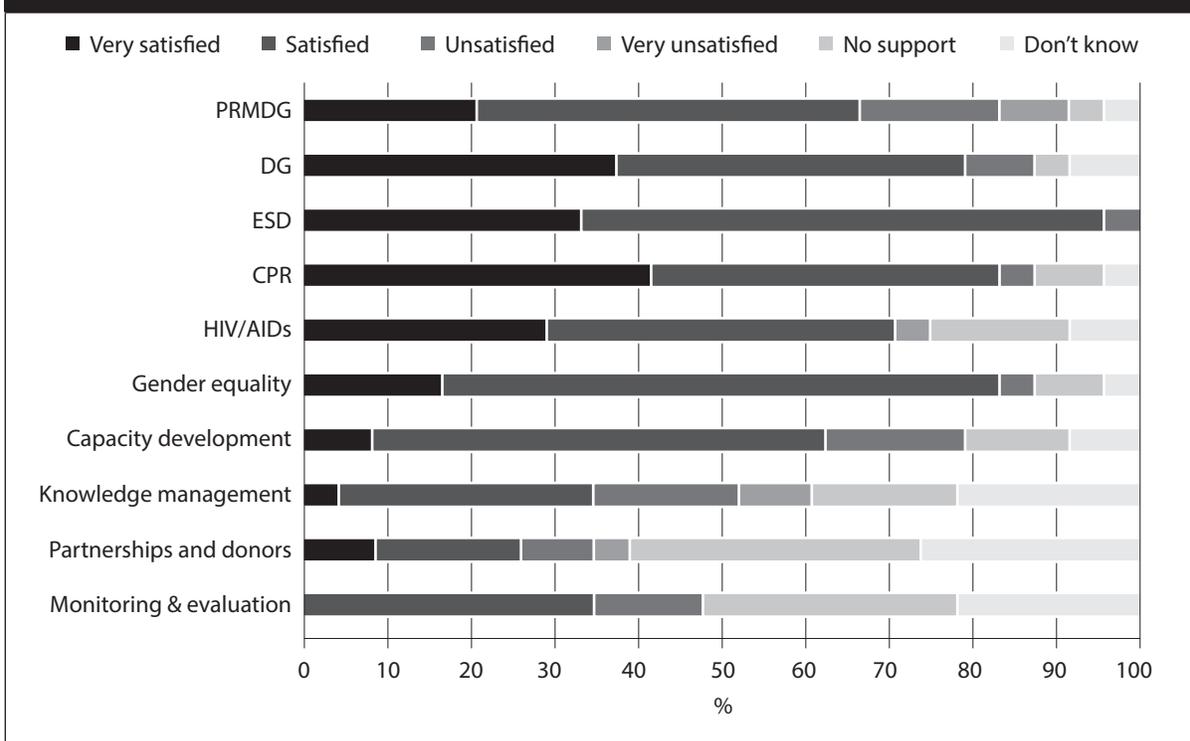
⁵⁷ Technical support services were referred to as advisory services in the survey.

Figure 2. Country Office Views on Technical Support Services Provided by the Regional Centres



Source: Country office survey

Figure 3. Country Office Views on Quality of Technical Support Services by Practice Area



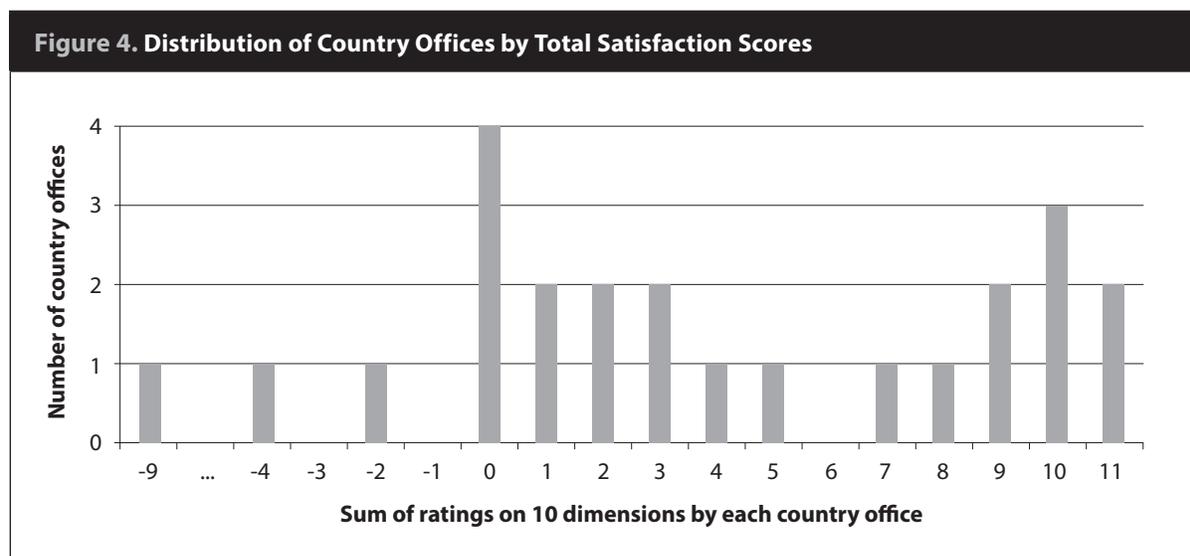
Source: Country office survey

The past evaluations⁵⁸ of country programmes pointed out issues that exist in such areas as capacity development and monitoring and evaluation. For instance, an Assessment of Development Results report concluded that “in most UNDP initiatives, there have not been proper capacity assessments or exit strategies to prepare national institutions to take over the work and functions, putting into question the sustainability of the capacity developed”. Another Assessment of Development Results report concluded that “the design of the UNDP programme, as well as the projects that constitute it, did not always adequately focus on ensuring sustainability through stronger institutional linkages and capacity development”. Therefore, the relatively low satisfaction rates provided by country offices on these issues suggest the support needs in these areas should be further reviewed.

There were country offices that were clearly satisfied with the services, and those that were not. Those that were not satisfied considered the levels of expertise were often not adequate

as compared to the needs. In support services, country offices did not distinguish between the regional programme and the global programme, indicating that the two programmes were well integrated in the case of regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.

The high appreciation on average, however, masks the fact the views were actually divided among country offices. Figure 4 shows the distribution of country offices in terms of total satisfaction scores.⁵⁹ It shows that, broadly, there were two types of views: country offices that were generally satisfied with the support and those that were not. The division was corroborated by statements made by some country offices to the evaluation team. While many conferred positively about the support, some country offices stated that the technical knowledge of the regional centre staff has not necessarily been the best. It appeared that country offices with relatively high capacity tend to view the expertise as not always adequate to meet higher-order demands in those countries.

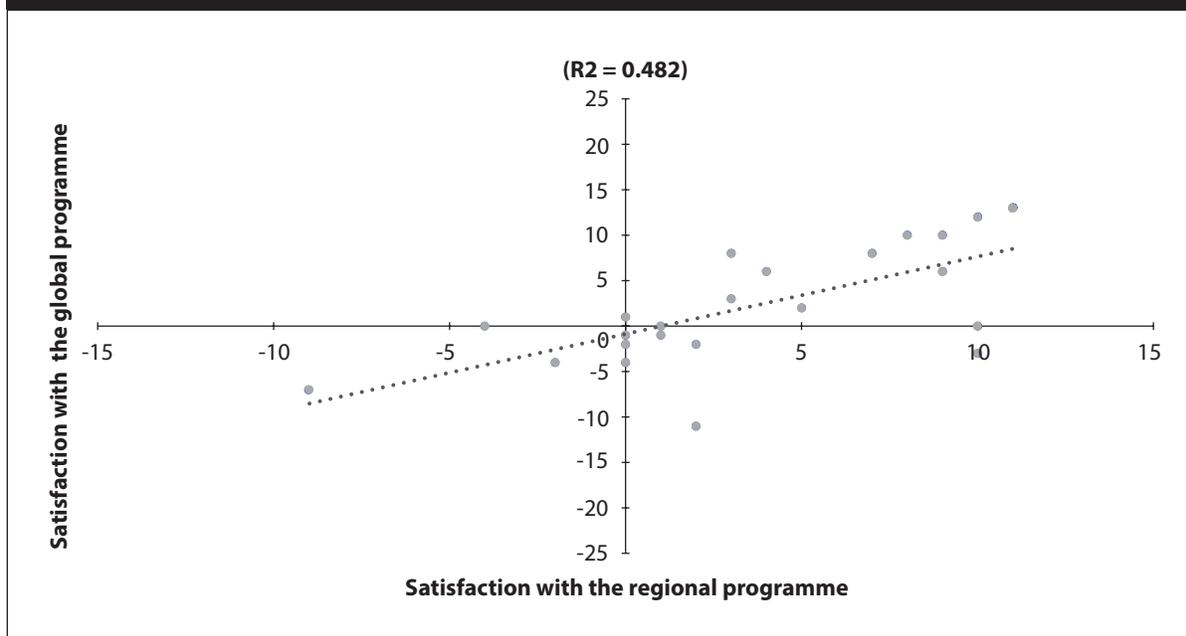


Source: Country office survey

⁵⁸ Various Assessments of Development Results conducted by the Evaluation Office.

⁵⁹ Total satisfaction score is the sum of ratings on 10 dimension of the regional programme. For each dimension, the respondents were asked to what degree s/he agrees with a (positive) statement made on the regional programme. Each answer was scored as follows: strongly agree = 2, agree = 1, do not know = 0, disagree = -1 and strongly disagree = -2.

Figure 5. Correlation Between Satisfactions with Regional and Global Programmes



Source: Country office survey

Finally, Figure 5 shows the distribution of countries in terms of satisfaction rate between the regional and the global programmes. As compared to the regional programme, the distribution shows that the perception of the global programme support was relatively neutral. From the cross-regional analysis, this seems to imply a higher degree of integration between the regional and the global programmes at the regional centres in Asia and the Pacific – as compared to regional centres in other regions of the world – and that country offices tend not to recognize the support provided by the global programme as separate from that provided by the regional programme.

There was no systematic results monitoring of how country offices used the support service and what end-results it contributed towards in the country. The 2010 introduction of the annual engagement policy, by linking services to the country programme work plans, provided the basis for the regional centres to make a further move into a result-based provision of services. Introducing results-monitoring would allow the

centres to learn from the effect of its support in different country context, adapt the types and contents of support in due course, and further gain knowledge on what works, what does not and why in real time while supporting different countries.

Even though the regional centres maintained a comprehensive service tracker and solicited feedback, the structure of the feedback form and the depth of its contents did not provide an indication of how the service was used by country offices and what results it contributed towards in the countries. The evaluation could not find evidence of how these hundreds of one-off services link up to country level results, or how such a linkage was proposed to be established. This was particularly important because support services were either 'free' or fairly subsidized by the regional programme and the global programme. The real needs were hence not reflected in the support requests since they were essentially free. The 2010 introduction of the annual engagement policy with the country offices has rectified some

of the issues above, having provided linkages between the support services and the country programme work plans and moved the service provision from a request-based to a needs-based one. This created the basis for the regional centres to make a further move into a result-based provision of services. The introduction of the linkages made it possible for the centres not only to provide services where needed as identified in the annual engagement process, but actually monitor their effect in relation to the progress made in the achievement of country programme results. The result monitoring would allow the centres to learn from the effect of its support in different country context, adapt the types and contents of support in due course, and further gain knowledge on what works, what does not and why in real time while supporting different countries.

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND FACILITATION

With its regular interaction with country offices, the regional programme was ideally placed to generate lessons from UNDP's main source of knowledge – its country-level experience. The regional programme has been using this unique position to create knowledge products and services and contributed to UNDP's global, regional and country-level knowledge. Some knowledge products thus generated were, however, mere collections of case studies with limited number of samples, limited comparability of cases and without much in-depth analysis. Hence, their generalizability or the applicability to a different context remained questionable.

At the regional level, the regional centres have been supporting country programmes with practice-specific expertise through provision of guidance, diagnostics, tools and good practices. The regional knowledge was captured and synthesized, drawing from regional and country-level projects and experiences. From

this knowledge base, the regional programme provided evidence-based advices and engaged in policy and project-level dialogue. This knowledge perspective and capacity accord the centres a unique comparative advantage as a knowledge repository for the region.

For instance, the Pacific Centre has been producing knowledge products on such issues as HIV/AIDS, gender equality and financial inclusion in the form of reports on success stories and lessons learned from its initiatives, as well as a quarterly newsletter Pasifika Focus to inform the stakeholders on key events and news stories. The Centre in partnership with the PIF Secretariat, the Asian Development Bank and the University of the South Pacific launched the Pacific Solution Exchange: Development Effectiveness Community as a knowledge facilitation network in 2010 to share knowledge by email and leverage, connect and expand the expertise pool throughout the Pacific using information technology.

In the CPR area, given the unannounced eruption of crises, the chaotic response environment and the lack of time in which knowledge is to be applied, a highly customized knowledge management strategy and roadmap has been developed under the direction of BCPR. Various platforms and tools were developed, such as: a virtual CPR Practice Network, a document and information archive in the intranet, a project database, an expert roster and quarterly newsletters. The codification of internal knowledge took place through mission reports, debriefings, concept notes, lessons learned papers, comparative experiences papers, how-to guides and practice notes. Transfer of peer knowledge took place through 'peer assist', 'after-action reviews' and 'peer reviews'.

Within the context of individual projects and focus areas, a number of knowledge products were thus created. However, the review of these

products showed unevenness in the coverage and the depth of analysis. Some publications were mere collections of case studies with limited number of samples, limited comparability of cases, and without much in-depth analysis. Hence, the reader would know what has been done and what happened under certain conditions, but would not know much on why, and how different conditions would affect the results. Hence, their generalizability or applicability to a different context remained very questionable. Some also suggested more systematic interaction with country offices and progress monitoring would have produced data that allowed more robust cross-country analysis.

As a new way of knowledge generation, management and utilization, knowledge networks and the community of practices have started to flourish. There were evidences that, by directly linking experts and practitioners with a focus on a set theme, use of these knowledge networks and the Solutions Exchange model in particular have led to some concrete results. How this form of knowledge generation, management and utilization would further develop and create the depth and breadth of knowledge is to be seen.

The current emphasis of knowledge management strategy by UNDP has been to connect individuals to build, share and apply knowledge toward the effective delivery of results through creation of knowledge networks and CoPs. APRC's knowledge management team focused on establishing the knowledge tools, services and interactions aimed to enable the centre staff, country offices and national and regional partners to work in a more open and collaborative fashion to directly benefit from the process of exchanging knowledge and practical experiences.

A general challenge involved in the use of knowledge networks was to maintain the interest and involvement of sufficient number of participants to keep the network alive⁶⁰, and to maintain the focus and the quality of discussion so that the network is not buried by a number of irrelevant or trivial information. Also, as we move into the age of information saturation and overflow, it is necessary to set up the knowledge network in such a way that the value addition to the participants is clear.

In this regard, a successful model adopted by UNDP and the regional centres was the Solutions Exchange, initiated by United Nations team in India in 2005. To guide the discussion, it uses a moderated exchange of queries and responses. To focus the discussion, a policy query was set up to initiate the discussion and at the end of the exchange, a consolidated reply that collates and summarizes the responses is presented. In some cases, the Solutions Exchange was complemented by a face-to-face event to generate specific policy inputs. This model helped the CoP to overcome some inherent challenges above. A 2010 evaluation report of Solution Exchange India has noted that it had "paved the way for new collaborative ventures and created spaced for discussion that have fed into policy formation while also providing feedback on implementation".

There were evidences that, by directly linking experts and practitioners with a focus on a set theme, use of these knowledge networks and the Solutions Exchange model have led to some concrete results. A number of government officials, parliamentary members, researchers and non-governmental organizations have provided testimonies of the use of knowledge gained in CoPs for policy, project or system development.

⁶⁰ There were varied experiences in this regard. In one of the CoP network, in all of 2011, only 26 email messages were exchanged in the network in all of 2011 and 13 messages in the first half of 2012. On the other hand, another CoPs portal received 61,791 visits from 35,788 unique visitors, of which 43 percent were returning visitors, during one and a half month in 2012.

The advantage of the Solutions Exchange model lies in its relatively narrow focus on specific policy questions and the effective moderation of discussion by an expert. To provide sufficient coverage of policy issues and to maintain the quality, the host agency must devote sufficient time of subject-matter experts who are also skilled in moderating discussion. While CoP reduces the cost of bringing knowledge to where it is needed, it hence involves the cost in the time of these experts. In 2011, UNDP has taken over the chair of the Solution Exchange Committee with a view to further developing this model and ensuring long-term financial viability.

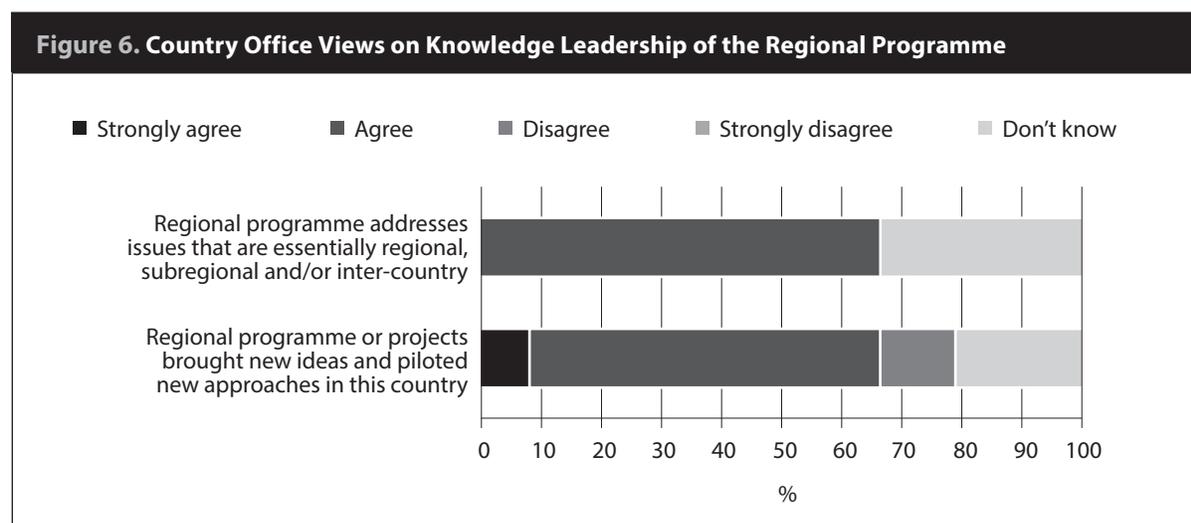
Another challenge is to integrate knowledge generation from different sources – by the knowledge networks, traditional projects and interactions with country offices through technical support – and manage them effectively to create maximum synergy and value. Knowledge generation from these different sources have their respective advantages and disadvantages. The policy-focused and practical discussions

generated by CoPs could be complemented by in-depth knowledge gained from projects and by systematic knowledge gained through regular interactions with country offices. This will be the next challenge for the regional centres in becoming UNDP’s knowledge hub in the region.

KNOWLEDGE AND IDEA LEADERSHIP

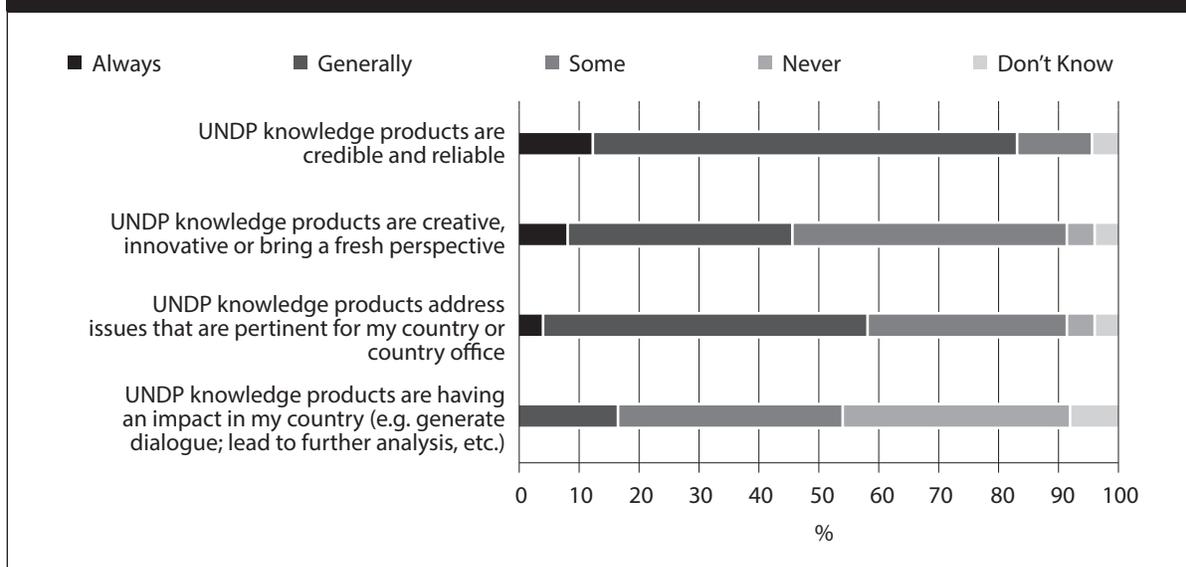
Where there is clear acknowledgement of technical expertise, there are differing perceptions as to the regional programme being thought leaders of regional initiatives and champions of new initiatives.

While there is generally an appreciation of the relevance of the issues the regional programme addresses, there is less agreement on whether the regional programme has actually brought in new ideas and approaches, as seen in Figure 6. UNDP’s knowledge products in general were considered reliable and addressing pertinent issues, but not highly innovative or impactful. (Figure 7)



Source: Country office survey

Figure 7. Country Office Views on UNDP's Knowledge Products



Source: Country office survey

The country offices still rely heavily on international consultants as the source of outside expertise, despite the lower costs of obtaining assistance from the regional centre experts as shown in Figure 8. Further, most sought-after expertise of regional centres is in programme formulation, backstopping of country staff in specific practices, or resource mobilization which reflect a greater demand of their programming and operational knowledge than specialized technical or substantive expertise which constrains regional centres' capacity to devote resources creative activities.

The use of regional programme knowledge products in cyberspace was biased towards 'internal users' from UNDP and other UN agencies, followed by civil society users, with much less usage recorded by governments and other intergovernmental bodies in the region. The outreach in the region was very limited outside the sphere of influence of UNDP and the English-speaking world. Within this limit,

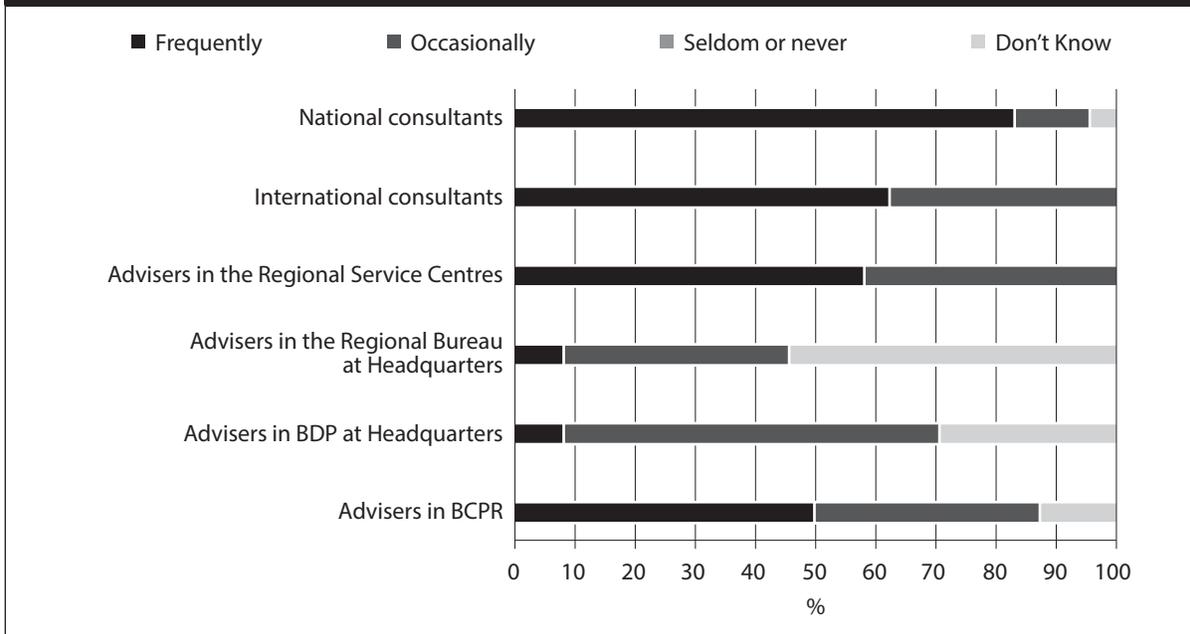
RHDRs were heavily referred to in cyberspace, as well as in platforms that addressed innovative and cross-sectoral topics.

Dissemination and use of knowledge products through the Internet is increasingly becoming important, especially in Asia and the Pacific region. A cybermetric analysis of selected knowledge products produced by the regional programme⁶¹ was conducted to examine the degree of outreach and usage of its products⁶². Figure 9 shows that the single largest user of regional programme knowledge products was UNDP itself, including country offices, and other UN agencies, together accounting for nearly half of the references made. The second largest user groups include academia, media and news agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The presumed target users, governments and intergovernmental organizations (which include regional institutions) lagged behind at about 6 percent of the total references made.

⁶¹ AlterSpark et al., 'Cybermetric Analysis of UNDP Knowledge Products: Asia-Pacific Regional Programme', 2012, commissioned by the Evaluation Office for this evaluation.

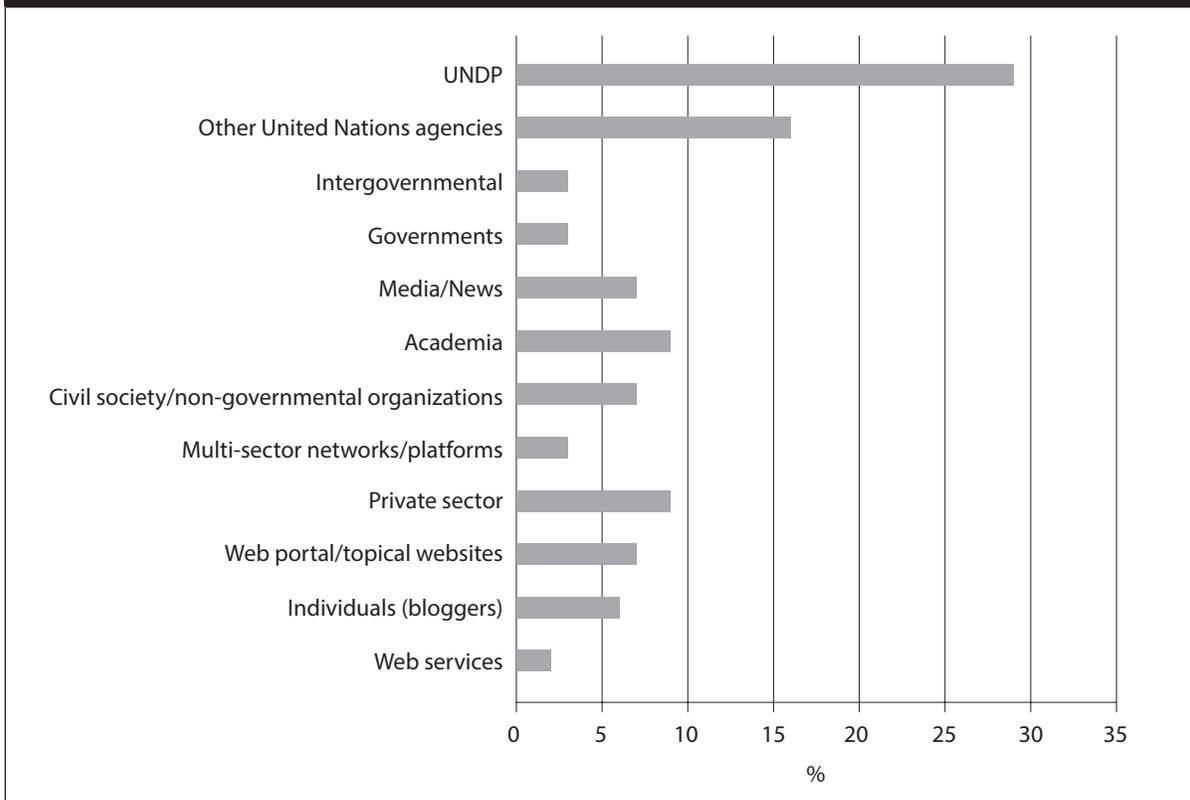
⁶² The usage refers to reposting, referencing or citing of the knowledge product in cyberspace, including the user's own websites or social media such as discussion forums and blogs.

Figure 8. Source of Expertise Used by Country Offices



Source: Country office survey

Figure 9. Usage of Regional Programme Knowledge Products by Users in Cyberspace



Note: The data shows the distribution of the estimated number of referencing by types of web page owner

Source: AlterSpark (2012)

Further analysis showed that the majority of users were from websites of international identity (54 percent) with sizable UNDP and other UN users. The second largest geographical group was from non-programme regions of UNDP (23 percent), such as North America or Europe, the majority of which belong to non-public sector such as academics or international non-governmental organizations. Only about one-fifth of users were clearly from the Asia-Pacific region. About a quarter among them was estimated to be ‘internal users’ from UNDP or other UN agencies.

The country distribution of sample set of users⁶³ was also rather lopsided. Excluding UNDP and UN users, there was 28 references found in the sample set, comprising: Thailand (7 references), the Philippines (6), Fiji (4), India (4), Viet Nam (3), Bangladesh (1), China (1), Indonesia (1) and Malaysia (1). This seems to suggest the users were mostly in regional centre locations and a few countries with presumably vibrant civil society including media and academia.

While the small sample size does not allow further detailed analysis at individual country level, particularly in Asia, the unavailability of most regional programme publications in national languages did seem to matter. Table 4 corroborates the hypothesis that, outside of English-speaking world, the usage of the knowledge products was very low. Although statistics on languages used in web pages vary significantly among different sources and hence the information is hard to benchmark, the general trend has been that the knowledge products were not used extensively in cyberspace outside the sphere of influence of UNDP and UN in the non-English speaking world. This is a worrisome trend given the exponential expansion of Internet usage seen in this region.

Table 4. Languages Used in Web Pages Referring to Regional Programme’s Knowledge Products

Language	Count
English	175
Malayalam	3
Spanish	3
Vietnamese	2
Chinese	2
French	1
Indonesian/Malay	1
Japanese	1
Russian	1

Source: AlterSpark (2012)

Analysis on the thematic distribution of usage indicated that more than half of references were estimated to have been in the area of gender equality. This was followed by ESD and PRMDG publications. However, these figures were heavily influenced by the popularity of RHDRs. Hence, it is more prudent to examine the usage, publication by publication. Table 5 shows the number of estimated links, websites and reposting that used the publications. As a rough benchmark, if the number of web pages referring to the publication was in double digits, it is considered reasonably used. From that perspective, regional programme publications were considered to have been reasonably used (with the proviso that there was a language bias discussed above). Among them, the two most recent RHDRs stand out. The regional MDG report was also referred often, following the general trend of MDG reports that are often used as a reference material. Other well-referred publications include those with innovative and cross-sectoral topics, such as legal environments of ‘men who have sex with men’ and transgender people on HIV, gender equality in elected offices, and electoral violence.

⁶³ A sample set of users was created by a randomized search process. The internal users (UN or UNDP users) were excluded for this analysis.

Table 5. Estimated Number of Links, Websites and Reposting of Individual Publications			
Product Title	Estimated links	Estimated websites	Estimated reposts
RHDR 2010: Power Voice and Rights: A Turning Point for Gender Equality in Asia and the Pacific	137	101	10
RHDR 2012: Asia-Pacific Human Development Report: One Planet to Share - Sustaining Human Progress in a Changing Climate	87	58	0
Asia-Pacific Regional Report: Achieving the MDGs in an Era of Global Uncertainty	66	47	0
Legal Environments, Human Rights and HIV Responses among Men Who Have Sex with Men and Transgender People in Asia and the Pacific	47	33	3
RHDR 2008: Tackling Corruption, Transforming Lives: Accelerating Human Development in Asia and the Pacific	47	28	0
Gender Equality in Elected Office in Asia Pacific: Six Actions to Expand Women's Empowerment	34	21	2
Understanding Electoral Violence in Asia	25	19	4
The Global Financial Crisis and the Asia-Pacific Region	25	19	2
Energy Costing Tool	20	13	0
E-Discussion: Climate Change and Human Development	17	10	0
Designing Inclusive and Accountable Local Democratic Institutions	12	8	1
Pro-Poor Macroeconomic Policy: Lessons from the Asia-Pacific Region	9	8	1
Enhancing Security Sector Governance in the Pacific Region: A Strategic Framework	13	8	1
Going Beyond the Minimum: UNCAC Self-Assessments (Guidance Note)	15	8	2
Energy Costing Tool: User Guide	8	6	0
Indigenous Voices in Asia-Pacific	12	5	0
Perspectives of Women and Girls Living with HIV in Asia and the Pacific	5	4	1
Local Government and Social Protection: Making Service Delivery Available for the Most Vulnerable	7	4	1
Working with Deported Individuals in the Pacific	6	3	0
The Socio-Economic Impact of HIV at the Household Level in Asia: A Regional Analysis	5	3	0
Strengthening Capacities for Disaster Risk Reduction: A Primer	3	3	0
Regional Assessment: The Asia-Pacific Rights and Justice Initiative	3	2	1
Enabling Effective Responses to HIV in Pacific Island Countries	2	2	0
Women's Perspectives of Peace and Security	0	0	1
Total	605	413	30

Source: AlterSpark (2012)

4.2 COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

CROSS-PRACTICE WORK AND ISSUE-BASED APPROACH

Cross-practice work has thrived despite the challenges of ‘vertical’ results reporting, largely due to internal motivations and informal leadership. The formal programmatic mechanism to address multidimensional development challenges has been inadequate. There must be formal recognition of staff contributions through cross-practice work, and a programmatic mechanism to build in cross-practice and issue-based work. In both cases, it is important to find ways to attribute the results achieved across practice areas.

The necessity of cross-practice work is implicit in addressing development challenges, which tend to be multidimensional and often involve cascading or spillover that cut across UNDP’s practice areas. It is the strength of UNDP as a development organization that it addresses a wide gamut of interrelated issues. The 2010 mid-term review of the regional programme also pointed to the need to tackle strategic development issues with a more cohesive issue-based approach, breaking away from the practice architecture.

A welcome finding has been that the different practice teams at the regional centres and country offices have shown important evidences of useful outcomes through cross-practice collaborations. Governance and climate-change adaptation themes seemed to become the popular pivots for cross-practice work in the programme. Interesting examples of cross-practice work were found between: conflict prevention and governance; local governance and climate change adaptation; disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation; and governance and HIV/AIDS.

The greatest incidence of cross-practice work was found in the governance component, visible through the alignment of ARGP and RIPP II,

specifically linking the promotion of indigenous rights with rights to freedom of communication, and further integrating climate-change adaptation into local governance support and aid effectiveness. In the PRMDG area, the HIV/AIDS programme was designed as completely cross-practice work. In the Pacific programme, an HIV/AIDS dimension was included under human rights intervention, and the involvement of gender specialists in the CPR team has enabled a number of cross-practice work on: gender and disaster risk reduction, gender and climate change adaptation; and gender and conflict prevention.

Another notable trend was the joint work among the CPR, ESD and capacity development practice teams of the regional centres, combining skills and efforts in a number of countries to integrate the disaster risk reduction and the climate-change adaptation work, and ensure that capacity-development interventions are also integrated into the national disaster management plans and institutions. In the Pacific, the region’s thrust on the Integration Agenda has facilitated a natural convergence between the crisis prevention and the energy and environment work. Another good example of this kind of collaboration is the Regional Human Development Report 2012 that focused on climate change issues.

Given the natural overlaps across practice areas, with the governance theme being at the fulcrum, needs and opportunities for cross-practice work have only been increasing in a number of themes, such as: Integration Agenda involving disaster risk management and climate-change adaptation; natural resources, conflict prevention and governance; gender, conflict prevention, climate-change adaptation, and disaster resilience; governance and climate-change finance; to name a few.

The regional programme is an ideal test bed to roll out a cross-practice matrix, drawing on expertise resident in the regional centres in

various practices to address multi-country and regional interventions. However, the structures, mechanism and incentives for cross-practice work inside UNDP remain very weak and inadequate for sustained engagement to achieve results effectiveness. Whether in cross-practice or issue-based work, it is important to find ways to attribute the results achieved across practice areas. Currently, when professionals and experts in other practice teams contribute to project/activity of another practice on an ad hoc, voluntary or request basis, the results achieved are usually attributed to the owner practice area. To make cross-practice and issue-based work sustainable, there must be a proper recognition of those initiatives as joint endeavour across practice teams.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

While the programme and project documents maintained capacity development in their intent, the regional programme was not an instrument that primarily provided direct capacity development support. The challenge was often in establishing a long-term engagement with appropriate institutional partners, which is a condition for capacity development.

Capacity development is the main modality with which UNDP supports the programme countries and beneficiaries. While capacity development was in the programme intent, it did so mostly indirectly through providing knowledge products and services and supporting the country offices, which were in the frontline of the capacity development effort.

The regional programme did provide some direct capacity development support especially when it comes to regional institutions. For instance, the programme to strengthen the capacity of ASEAN in addressing migration and HIV was instrumental in advocating for migrants' right to health, including HIV services, among ministries of health, labour and foreign affairs. In the Pacific,

PFIP has supported capacity development of financial services providers to implement pro-poor financial services. Capacity development for women parliamentarians in the Pacific contributed more informed and active participation by them in the parliaments of a number of Pacific countries.

Capacity development is achieved only when it is internalized as a goal and grounded in the main activities of beneficiaries. This normally necessitates long-term engagement with partner institutions. With the exception of regional institutions for the Pacific Centre, the regional programme did not *à priori* have such partners. The programme has used creative ways such as to engage in partnership with CSOs and provide support through networks of institutions.

The RHDR project has contributed to the capacity-building of national and regional stakeholders and strengthened inter-agency partnerships through the launch of the RHDR on corruption. For example, it contributed to the capacity of Sri Lanka's Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption in programming activities, and the Mahbub ul Haq Human Development Centre in Pakistan in producing the South Asian HDRs.

The Pacific Centre supported the capacity development of Pacific CSOs at the Commission on the Status of Women so that they could carry out evidence-based advocacy at national and international levels. Training in social accountability tools helped the members of Pacific CSOs, national and local governments and development agencies strengthen public participation in planning and public budgeting processes, in monitoring and assessing the quality and effectiveness of public services.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships included engagement with regional intergovernmental organizations,

joint work with other UN agencies, although to differing extents across practices, as well as other actors based on thematic relevance.

Partnerships have been a crucial factor of the regional programme's efficiency in reaching regional goals, especially given its limited financial and human resources. Seeking and establishing long-term partnerships has been a key strategy in enhancing the impact and sustainability of its contributions. A further strategy was the multiplication and diversification of partnerships to suit specific output activities.

The programme document emphasized the need for regional projects to ensure inter-agency synergies to 'deliver as one UN', and identified several specific areas and agencies for partnerships.⁶⁴ The evaluation found considerable evidences of active partnerships to deliver the regional programme in both Asia and the Pacific. It was also noted that partnerships with regional and subregional

institutions have been crucial for the programme's relevance and sustainability. Examples of major partnerships are presented in Box 6.

Engagement with regional institutions was much more effective in the Pacific than in Asia due to the higher degree of regionalism in the Pacific and the strong ownership of the regional programme by Pacific institutions. At the same time, the programme has retained its engagement with all the key regional institutions in a form appropriate to each institution's characteristics.

In the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region, the three key subregional organizations are ASEAN, PIF, and SAARC that can be considered as natural counterparts for the regional programme. The programme has varying levels of engagement with each, given the specific characteristics of each subregion as and their institutional arrangements.

Box 6. Major Partnerships for the Regional Programme

Regional Institutions

Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Forum Regional Security Council, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme, South Pacific Geosciences Commission, University of South Pacific, ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN Committee on Disaster Management, SAARC Secretariat, SAARC Disaster Management Centre, ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights

UN and other multilateral agencies

UNESCAP, UNISDR, UNESCO, UNIFEM, UNFPA, ILO, UNAIDS, UNEP, Asian Development Bank

Others

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association-Australia Region, Commonwealth Local Government Forum, Foundation for the Peoples of the South Pacific International, Asia Network for Free Elections, Asia Indigenous People's Pact, Asia Foundation, the Asia-Pacific Forum, the Asian Consortium on Human Rights Based Access to Justice, the Legal Empowerment Asia Partnership, the Asia Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions, Search for Common Ground, International Women's Development Agency, FemLINKPacific

⁶⁴ Paragraph 27 of the regional programme document. These include: ILO on decent work-related agenda, UNEP on poverty-environment nexus, ESCAP on regional initiatives for the Millennium Development Goals, UNIFEM on gender equality and mainstreaming, UNODC and OHCHR on anti-corruption and human rights, UNAIDS on HIV/AIDS, and UNCDF on inclusive finance. External to the UN system, the emphasis on partnership building with regional organizations (e.g. SAARC, ASEAN, PIF), international financial institutions (e.g. Asian Development Bank), academia, civil society and the private sector.

Of the three, the closest and most intensive engagement was in the Pacific, where the programme was able to have the highest possible entry points, with its programme being endorsed by the PIF Secretariat. There has been a high level of congruence in the priorities of the regional programme and the regional organizations. Institutional relationships have been well entrenched between the UN agencies and Council of Regional Organizations of the Pacific (CROP) agencies. The regional programme itself has been implemented in partnership with the PIF Secretariat, Secretariat of Pacific Regional Environment Programme and South Pacific Geosciences Commission (SOPAC)⁶⁵, with a strong programme ownership by these regional institutions.

This high-profile partnership and the strong ownership were made possible due to the strong culture of regionalism in the Pacific, and a shared set of economic and social development issues, constraints of geographical isolation and high cost of delivery of social services and weak institutional capacity among the Pacific countries. The main developed-country partners of the Pacific (Australia and New Zealand) were also committed to address regional issues, and supported common agenda and the regional organizations' role.

Work with ASEAN drew its mandate from UN-ASEAN Summit declarations, the most recent being the Joint Statement on the UN-ASEAN Cooperation and Comprehensive Partnership made at the Summit held in November 2011. Under this broad partnership, APRC has identified four themes: supporting the implementation of ASEAN MDG Roadmap; partnering with ASEAN Human Rights System;

developing disaster loss databases; and promoting migrant rights, including their access to affordable antiretroviral care.

Unlike ASEAN and PIF, there was no UN system-wide framework with SAARC for regional initiatives. UNDP engagement, initiated with a memorandum of understanding in 2007, functions under annual work plans. The engagement has not been able to demonstrate its full potential due to the institutional arrangements and structure of the SAARC thematic directorates.

Further, new opportunities may exist for engagement with other types of groupings. For instance, the regional programme may find common interest on some issues with G20, BRICS, APEC, BIMSTEC⁶⁶, SASEC⁶⁷ and so on. Exploring such new types of 'regional' programming opportunities, using somewhat different regionality criteria and approach, might enhance the relevance and cost effectiveness of the programme by co-opting a larger number of countries having similar needs, or seeking opportunities for interregional cooperation, furthering South-South cooperation within UNDP.

4.3 UNDP VALUES AND CROSS-SECTORAL CONCERNS

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

The regional programme has made important strides to incorporate gender mainstreaming into its policy, programming and implementation. Across focus areas, the programme mainstreamed gender dimension well in both the design and implementation of its projects, as well as in its support to country offices.

⁶⁵ SOPAC also refers to the Applied Geoscience and Technology Division of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SOPAC Division), which implements the programme under the Commission.

⁶⁶ Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.

⁶⁷ South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation.

The regional programme has strong and well-designed gender mainstreaming in the programme design, and outputs include the development and use of gender-sensitive assessment tools, and a range of awareness and advocacy interventions.

To ensure that gender equality is mainstreamed into MDG-based national development strategies, MDGI provided in a number of countries technical training and tools on: engineering MDGs-based planning, statistical literacy, tracking gender mainstreaming, and collection of sex-disaggregated data for more gender-responsive decision-making and budgeting. APTII highlighted gender issues by organizing high-level conferences on the gender implications of economic crisis, or by producing a study on the potential of service sector integration in South Asia to redress gender imbalance in the sector employment. The draft Human Development Impact Assessment Toolkit for evaluating human development and gender impact of trade was used in evaluating gender and trade projects in Pakistan and Cambodia.

Effective work on HIV/AIDS could not be done without the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and without integrating gender concerns. Initiatives in this regard included: a multi-country study on HIV vulnerability of sex-trafficked women and girls; leadership development initiatives for women living with

HIV in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines (see Box 7); a study of women's time use in the Pacific island countries; a CEDAW legislative compliance review in the Cook Islands; research on HIV and spousal transmission in Nepal and Sri Lanka; regional and national research on the HIV vulnerabilities of migrant women from Philippines, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh; and support to the Asia Pacific Network of People Living with HIV on the potential impact of free trade agreements and access to treatment and TRIPS flexibilities. The ministers of health in the Pacific recommended gender-sensitive responses to HIV based on UNDP's guidelines on HIV and gender.

UNDP conducted a regional analysis of the specific, socio-economic impacts of HIV on women and girls at the household level using sex-disaggregated data from national studies in Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia and Viet Nam. Published in 2011 and covering more than 17,000 households, the ground-breaking analysis revealed both the disproportionate impacts of the epidemic on women and girls and their constrained access to services and provided empirical evidence about the real HIV challenges that women and girls face.

The governance programmes implemented a range of activities, from enhancing women's political participation to the promotion of human rights through family law bills, and

Box 7. Initiatives on Women Living with HIV

The regional programme organized two leadership development initiatives for women living with HIV in Papua New Guinea and the Philippines in partnership with the country offices. These initiatives that brought together about 30 potential leaders of women living with HIV brought their voice to the MDG Summit in New York in September 2011. Their perspectives on MDGs 6 and 3 were documented by the programme, discussed in a regional community of practice and distributed at the MDG Summit.

The leadership initiatives also led to the inclusion of the issues concerning women living with HIV in their respective national efforts. In the Philippines, the women who participated in the programme made a special submission to the review committee of the National Strategic Plan. In Papua New Guinea, women have developed a project proposal for implementation.

capacity-building related to women's rights. Technical support addressed the formulation of bills that affected the status of women, and capacity-building for the identification of entry points for women's participation.

In Asia, to boost the number and quality of female representatives in politics, the regional programme provided support for women's participation inside and outside formal political systems, collected data on women's participation in politics, and networked men and women dedicated to achieving political equality. Under the rubric of local governance, ARGP promoted representation and participation of women at subnational levels of the government.

In the Pacific, the Pacific Centre worked with the PIF Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, national ministries of women, UN Women and CSOs to raise awareness with policy-makers on the importance of increasing women's political participation. Notable activities were the preparation of special temporary measures for women, the mock parliament for women, and technical products to facilitate law reform such as CEDAW Indicators, and Drafting Instructions for Human Rights-based Legislative Reform. At the country level, the programme supported Cook Islands in drafting of a civil family law bill, and supported family law reform in Papua New Guinea, the Marshall Islands, and Vanuatu.

In the conflict prevention programme, gender issues were well ingrained into the design of a number of projects. The N-PEACE in Asia, the Pacific Regional Human Security, Security Sector Governance and CPAD projects in the Pacific, provided a menu of activities to build capacities, raise awareness, and engender and sustain networks around the theme of Women, Peace and Security anchor by the Security Council Resolution 1325.

In the Pacific, sexual and gender-based violence have been officially recognized as a regional

security threat at the Forum Regional Security Council, and endorsed by the PIF leaders. A Regional Working Group on Women, Peace and Security, composed of regional institutions, international agencies and women organizations, has been mandated to draw up a Regional Action Plan for implementation of Resolution 1325. An important step was also the creation of a structured regional network – the Pacific Community of Peace Practitioners – to build capacities of peace builders and government stakeholders to engage constructively over peace and development issues.

In Asia, the N-PEACE programme supported a multi-country network in Indonesia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste, which was subsequently extended to the Philippines and Afghanistan. In a rather short period, N-PEACE has put together a regional network of CSOs, women's organizations and relevant government stakeholders to connect and collectively articulate their priorities on the Women, Peace and Security agenda, created a regional resource pool of women peace advocates with knowledge on conceptual frameworks around conflict transformation and peace-building, and with skills in negotiations, networking and advocacy.

The disaster risk management programmes also integrated gender dimensions well. In the Pacific, the disaster risk management and climate change programme emphasized awareness raising and advocacy with such publications as 'Stories from the Pacific – A Compilation on Gendered Impacts of Climate Change in the Pacific', jointly published with South Pacific Geosciences Commission, UNOCHA and IFRC and followed up with training of government officials; 'Making Disaster Risk Reduction Gender Sensitive – Policy and Practical Guidance', jointly published with IUCN and UNISDR; 'Integrating Gender in Disaster Management in Small Island Developing States – A Guide', jointly published with UNDP Cuba under the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative.

In Asia, the most visible compilation on gender-sensitive risk analysis was the ‘Institutional Landscape Assessments in Thailand, Sri Lanka and Indonesia’, covering gender aspects of disaster risk management policies in these countries. However, the evaluation could not find evidences of gender mainstreaming in specific programme activities despite the mandates provided by the Hyogo Framework of Action⁶⁸ and UNDP’s Eight-Point Agenda on Gender Equality in Crisis and Disaster. Natural partnership opportunities existed but were not adequately pursued with regional organizations particularly, the Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, which has created the Guidelines for Gender Sensitive Disaster Management; and the Asian Forum on Women in Disasters, representing the governments, non-governmental organizations and international agencies focusing on post-tsunami reconstruction efforts in four countries.

SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Exploration of South-South cooperation in the regional programme has been opportunistic rather than strategic.

In assessing South-South cooperation as a modality under the regional programme, the evaluation was guided by the definition proposed in the Buenos Aires Plan of Action, which described South-South cooperation as a process among developing countries for enhancing the capacities for national and collective self-reliance, through cooperative exchange of knowledge, skills, resources and technical expertise, sharing knowledge, technology transfer, in-kind and financial cooperation. The operational framework was for developing countries themselves to initiate, organize and manage South-South cooperation activities, with their respective

governments playing a lead role, and with the support and involvement of public and private institutions, non-governmental organizations and individuals.

In the entire regional programme, the only intervention that followed the classical South-South modalities was the Pacific Centre-designed inter-regional project for Small Island Developing States in the Pacific and the Caribbean to exchange knowledge and practices in disaster risk management and climate-change adaptation. This was implemented jointly with the Caribbean Risk Management Initiative. The project accessed funding from the UNDP Special Unit for South-South Cooperation⁶⁹ and UNDP Japan Partnership Fund. Several regional agencies of the Caribbean and Pacific participated in the project, which involved: exchange visits; technology sharing, including a training programme in climate modelling to simulate scenarios appropriate for small island countries; and a publication, ‘Gender Integration in Disaster Management in Small Island Developing States’.

The regional programme had implemented a number of activities, such as exchange of experiences or CoPs that could be claimed as South-South initiatives. The question remains whether the regional programme would be satisfied with these initiatives as those that pursued South-South cooperation – one of the strategic objectives in UNDP’s corporate Strategic Plan.

If one expands the definition of South-South cooperation further, there were many examples found. For instance, on the issue of access to justice and human rights, APRC supported an international workshop on the need for establishing a Sub-Regional Human Rights Mechanism in

⁶⁸ The Hyogo Framework of Action states among its cross-cutting principles that: a gender perspective should be integrated into all disaster risk management policies, plans and decision-making processes, including those related to risk assessment, early warning, information management and education and training.

⁶⁹ United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation from October 2012.

India, supported by the Asian-African Legal Consultative Organization and SAARC-Law. Similarly, the Pacific Centre organized a Pacific regional round table to promote public-private partnerships for local economic development, which brought together members of government, private-sector interests, and non-governmental organizations from the various Pacific island countries. UNDP helped participation of personnel from Nepal, Trinidad and Tobago, the Philippines, and Bangladesh to provide their country's experiences.

In a broader sense, one could claim that several government officials attending a workshop and exchanging experiences is a form of South-South

cooperation; so are CoPs and networking. The question remains whether the regional programme would be satisfied with these initiatives as those that pursued South-South cooperation, which is one of the strategic objectives in UNDP's corporate Strategic Plan. The programme could use these opportunities as a springboard to further develop more structured South-South cooperation programme among the countries, involving, for instance, institutional partnerships. This has yet happened much. There are also opportunities for strategic inter-regional cooperation. For instance, the Asia-based N-PEACE network could be extended to the Pacific Peace Group, which has several important regional organizations.

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The conclusions and recommendations provided below are based on the findings and analysis made in Chapters 3 and 4. The conclusions should be seen as mutually reinforcing, conveying an overall sense of UNDP strengths and challenges in contributing to development results through the Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific within the context of UNDP's overall architecture for development cooperation.

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion 1. The regional programme was highly relevant given the external constraints of operating in a vast, diverse region. In all areas of its work, it addressed critical development challenges in the region. It was designed around UNDP corporate priorities and addressing normative values and sensitive issues that were difficult to be addressed nationally. It relied on UNDP corporate strengths, its geographic footprint and neutrality. Its initiatives generally met the three 'regionality' principles.

Despite the constraints of operating in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region, the regional programme has put together a relevant programme with useful elements involving countries in the region. The programme was designed around UNDP's corporate priorities and the concept of human development, addressing normative values such as gender and human development, provided focus on the challenges faced by vulnerable and marginalized population, and brought up sensitive issues that were difficult to be addressed at the national level. The programme design

has drawn on UNDP's comparative strengths: acknowledged domain leadership; country office network; and, most importantly, its neutrality. Some interventions, such as those in the area of international trade, were not within the core expertise of UNDP.

The regional programme operated in rather contrasting environments in Asia and the Pacific. The programme was able to apply the regional approach much better in the Pacific thanks to the entrenched regionalism and the presence of strong regional institutions. In Asia, given the greater diversity in socio-economic and political systems, the regional initiatives have been largely confined to multi-country initiatives. Having parallel programmes in Asia and the Pacific, operated by APRC and the Pacific Centre respectively, helped address this sub-regional difference.

Conclusion 2. The regional programme made useful contributions towards the intended programme outcomes. If seen as a standalone development programme, however, the regional programme was a small player in the vast and diverse Asia-Pacific region. The relevance and contributions of the programme, and by extension the regional centres which implemented it, has drawn on the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture and through multiple leveraging roles that it played.

The programme's contributions in poverty reduction and achievement of MDGs were most notable in upstream policy support and advocacy. For democratic governance, the regional

programme contributed to the promotion of institutionalized participation mechanisms and adaptation of international norms but was less successful in promoting equitable development and participation of disadvantaged groups. With regard to crisis prevention and recovery, the programme has contributed in strengthening national technical capacities for conflict prevention and disaster risk management in a number of countries and in enhancing regional frameworks in the Pacific. In regard to environment and sustainable development, the programme made significant contributions with its support to country programmes by facilitating their access to and in the management of global funds.

The relevance and contributions of the programme, and by extension the regional centres which implemented it, have drawn on the overall UNDP assistance delivery architecture and through multiple leveraging roles that it plays. The three most recognized and appreciated roles of the regional programme and the regional centres were: the technical support they provide to the country programmes; the role they play as knowledge promoter, manager and facilitator, where UNDP's country-level experience and organization-wide knowledge converge and were brought to bear in programme planning and implementation; and finally, the role as a knowledge leader in advocating, contextualizing and applying new ideas in the region. Balancing and optimizing these roles has not been easy given the pressures and counter pulls on its limited financial and human resources.

Conclusion 3. Cross-practice work has thrived despite the challenges of vertical results reporting, owing largely to internal motivations and informal leadership. The current programming method does not provide appropriate mechanisms to properly programme cross-practice or issue-based work.

The formal mechanism to address multi-dimensional development challenges has been

inadequate. The regional programme is in an ideal position to technically support country offices in pursuing cross-practice work. The regional programme staff has consciously pursued cross-practice work and achieved a number of results. However, the cross-practice achievements have for the most part been attributed to the lead practice area and there was no formal recognition of cross-practice results as such. Further, there was no formal mechanism to programme or projectize cross-practice or issue-based work as such. With the practice-based programming structure with a fixed results framework, the regional programme could not properly programme issue-based work and be accountable for its results.

Conclusion 4. For a number of regional programme initiatives, an important factor for effectiveness and sustainability was the full engagement of regional or national partners. The involvement of country offices in programme design, delivery and follow-up was another important element. While there were many cases where the regional programme collaborated well with regional or national partners and/or country offices, there were also cases where it was not so successful in this regard.

The regional programme has produced regional public goods and undertaken other activities that were best delivered regionally or directly to different types of stakeholders. There were also a number of programme activities that would need to have a regional, national or local partner anchor its activities during implementation and take over the ownership when intervention comes to an end. When the programme was able to secure firm engagement of regional institutions, as seen in the number of Pacific initiatives, it created lasting relationships through which UNDP could address the regional agenda and channel its support through regional mechanisms effectively. There were also some examples where the regional programme's contributions were appropriately integrated into national structure. The programme was, however, not always

able to secure such an ownership at the regional or country levels. This aspect had a bearing on effectiveness and sustainability of those programme activities.

Another important element in this was the degree to which the regional programme also involved country offices in the design and delivery of and follow-up to its activities. After all, the direct country-level support through the country programmes remained the principal means of delivery by UNDP, and the regional programme accounted for only about 8 percent of total expenditure by RBAP in the region. It was thus important to involve country offices in programme activities with shared objectives, and to follow up on the progress made towards results at the country level with shared accountability. For many regional programme initiatives, there has been intensive engagement with country offices to deliver the programme but less so with the follow-up on the results. In some countries with large country programme resources, the regional programme became a marginal player in the overall UNDP activities in the country. This lowered the priority and the profile of the regional programme, reflected, for instance, in poor selection of participants to attend its events or insufficient leveraging of its initiative in the country.

Conclusion 5. The regional programme has responded well to the decline in resources by making efficient use of its human and financial resources. The funding prospect for the regional programme has been limited due to the lack of external funding opportunities and insufficient recognition of the critical role that the regional centres could play in leveraging organizational knowledge and effectiveness.

With the declining resource base and within the institutional and programmatic constraints, the regional programme has operated efficiently, reflected in relatively high delivery rates to budgets. The regional centre staff was highly

responsive to technical assistance requests as assessed by country offices. Limited human resources have often stretched individual capacities in implementation. Due efforts were made to leverage limited funding through partnerships; however, overall, the programme remained highly reliant on regular resources for delivery, particularly in Asia.

Despite the relevance and usefulness of regional interventions and APRC's role within UNDP's overall delivery mechanism, the funding prospect for the regional programme has been limited. The funding framework of most donor agencies lacked a 'regional window'. While the regional centres could explore innovative fund-raising approach such as through the private sector, there was a lack of well-defined mandate and organizational arrangements for regional resource mobilization. Internally, the insufficient recognition of the critical role that the regional centres could play in leveraging organizational effectiveness has been a constraint, resulting in insufficient channelling of resources from where the contribution was accrued to, such as country programme and global sectoral funding sources.

Conclusion 6. The regional centres provided a substantial number of technical support services to country offices in the region. There was generally an appreciation and satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support provided by the regional centres although some country offices considered the levels of expertise inadequate. The 2010 introduction of annual engagement with country offices has substantially improved the relevance of support. There was, however, no systematic results monitoring of how country offices used the technical support, and what results it ultimately contributed towards in the country. This prevented an objective assessment of their contribution to results and the learning process on how the technical advice affected the country results in different contexts.

The regional centres have established their position as an anchor for technical expertise in the region and provided a substantial number of support services to country offices, and sometimes to national or regional partners. Many country offices and partners expressed appreciation for and satisfaction with the responsiveness and quality of support provided by the regional centre staff, particularly in programming support, referral of experts and, to a lesser extent, resource mobilization. There were cases of some country offices which considered the levels of expertise inadequate as compared to the needs.

The introduction in 2010 of annual engagement with the country offices to discuss and jointly prioritize the service requirements in line with the work plans of the country offices and the regional centres has changed the service provision from a demand-based to a needs-based one. This has hence substantially improved the relevance of the service provided. It has also helped rationalize and prioritize service provision to meet the tightening resource constraints.

The real contribution of these services to development results is determined by how the initiatives and programmes supported have yielded results at the country level. However, there was no mechanism to systematically monitor, evaluate and learn from the effect of these services. This lack of result monitoring has prevented an objective assessment of their contribution to national development results and the learning process from observing how the technical advice affected the country results in different contexts.

Conclusion 7. The regional programme has been in a unique position to be the regional knowledge hub, learning from country-level experiences, conducting comparative analysis and feeding it back into the policy advice and technical support. Knowledge networks showed promising signs of being an effective mechanism to generate and deliver knowledge. Its knowledge products were considered

reliable and addressing pertinent issues although questions remained in their outreach and the applicability of knowledge presented in case-study materials. The challenge is to make maximum value out of knowledge generated from different sources.

Knowledge networks and CoPs have started to flourish, as a new way of knowledge generation and management. With the adoption of the Solutions Exchange model, there were signs that these knowledge networks can become an effective mechanism to generate and deliver the knowledge through direct interaction with practitioners, especially when it is used to address focused policy questions. There was also evidence that these knowledge networks have actually influenced policy, project or system development.

UNDP's knowledge products were considered reliable and addressing pertinent issues. Where there was clear acknowledgement of technical expertise, there were differing perceptions as to their innovativeness. The outreach of knowledge products appeared to be rather limited, confined to the sphere of UNDP's direct influence and where English was regularly used as a medium of research and communication.

Some knowledge products generated from projects or knowledge networks were mere collections of case studies with limited number of samples, limited comparability of cases and without much in-depth analysis. Hence, their generalizability or the applicability to a different context remained questionable. Opportunities to make cross-country analyses from engagement with country offices through technical support services were not used effectively. The challenge is to make the maximum value out of these various knowledge generation opportunities, including knowledge networks, individual projects and the engagement with the country offices through technical support services, and produce high-quality knowledge that can be used in further country support, policy advice or advocacy.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

There are recommendations addressed to UNDP as an organization, RBAP and the regional centres, respectively. These sets of recommendations are not independent of each other. Rather, they are intended to be mutually supportive.

Recommendations to RBAP

Recommendation 1. RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme as the instrument playing an important leveraging role within the overall architecture of UNDP's delivery mechanism of development results.

The current regional programme was programmed as if it is essentially a standalone development programme. RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme, fully taking into account the significant leveraging roles it plays for UNDP to deliver development results on the ground. For this purpose, RBAP should consider embedding into the regional programme how it will contribute to the development results together with global and country programmes, while keeping room for some strategic regional initiatives.

Recommendation 2. RBAP should create a framework for shared responsibilities and mutual accountability between the regional centres and country offices for development results at the country level to be achieved by regional programme activities or by country programme activities supported by the regional centre.

As parts of UNDP, the regional centres and the country offices should have common objectives in achieving development results on the ground and work together to this end. This does not imply their in-country programmes should exactly match. They could take different roles and/or tackle different issues. Still, as a part of

the team, each should consider itself responsible not only for the support but also for the results – whether it is by a country programme activity supported by the regional centres, or an in-country regional programme activity supported by the country office.

Such a framework for shared responsibility and mutual accountability can involve: the country office responsibility to support in-country regional programme activities and to follow them through towards the results; the annual work plan of the regional centres that draws on country programme objectives that are planned to be supported; more regular engagement of regional centre experts with the country office counterparts not only to support country programme activities but also to monitor of results achieved at the country level by regional programme activities or country programme activities supported by the regional programme; and strategic alliances with relevant country offices to enhance national ownership of the regional programme initiatives where applicable.

Recommendation 3. RBAP should seriously explore ways to use the issue-based approach for the regional programme to address key development challenges in the region, and further encourage the cross-practice work within the regional centres and in their support to country programmes.

UNDP has expertise in dealing with the whole gamut of development issues in the social, economic and political fields. Using this strength to address multidimensional development challenge is imperative in discharging its core mandate for human development. The regional programme is in an ideal place to promote innovative ways to tackle multidimensional development issues, fully utilizing issues-based approach, and to support country programme in creating and managing cross-practice interface.

Recommendations to the regional centres

Recommendation 4. The regional centres should continue to seek appropriate regional or national partners to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the regional programme contribution.

Having a firm engagement by regional or national partners is important in ensuring the effectiveness and the sustainability of regional programme's contributions. Given the limitation in the size and outreach of regional programme activities, their influence would also be limited without support of appropriate regional or national partners in the policy-making arena or on the ground. Their impact would not be sustained without such partners to carry forward the agenda. The country offices must also be held responsible for providing appropriate support to the regional programme activities and their agenda at the country level.

Recommendation 5. The regional centres should introduce into the engagement policy with country offices regular monitoring of progress made and results achieved by the regional programme initiatives and technical support rendered to the country offices.

Introducing such a mechanism forms an important part of the regional centres' accountability for development results. It could be achieved, for instance, by instituting regular interactions between the centre experts and their respective counterparts in country offices.

The regional centres could gain important learning opportunities from the results achieved (or not achieved) at the country level. Knowledge generated from such monitoring can be a great asset as it provides basis for broader cross-country analysis that would complement more in-depth and focused knowledge generated from individual projects and knowledge networks.

Recommendation 6. The regional centres should define knowledge management as one of the core mandates of its experts.

Effective knowledge management can be achieved only when the experts in each practice teams fully engage in it. These experts are in the best position to integrate knowledge generated from various sources – knowledge networks, individual projects and the engagement with country offices through technical support – and analyse it into a valuable knowledge asset. Such knowledge asset would help the regional centres in further enhancing the effectiveness of its country support or advocacy.

Recommendation 7. The regional centres should further enhance the outreach of their knowledge products and their contents particularly at the national level in the region.

The regional centres should invest more in disseminating the knowledge products and their contents, the creation of which claimed a substantial amount of resources. The strategy to enhance the outreach could include: finding appropriate national partners, such as research institutions, to translate knowledge products into national languages and disseminate them as joint products; and improved use of different media and formats such as social media, e-learning and video clips.

Recommendations to UNDP

Recommendation 8. UNDP should seek ways to establish programming and funding arrangements that ensure coherence of the programme of regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.

The regional centres' work is currently resourced by not only core funding allocated to the regional programme but also with the posts funded by the global programme, co-financing by country programmes for support services, GEF resources for implementing the ESD programme, and other sources of funding. In reality, contributions

to development results have largely been made through and attributable to the combined efforts of all these. While this integration of work enhanced effectiveness and efficiency of the regional centres' work, it created a mismatch between contribution and accountability, as well as partial or even fictitious result reporting. This ultimately would lead to under-recognition of the centres' contributions and funding uncertainty. One way to address this issue is to re-define the regional programme to cover all activities of the regional centres so as to clarify its programmatic coherence and the centres' responsibility and accountability.

Recommendation 9. UNDP should introduce in the programming framework the means for the regional programme to come up with, pursue, test and apply innovative and issue-based ideas and approaches that reflect priorities and emerging issues in the region.

The development situation in the region is fast evolving. As a knowledge-based and learning organization, UNDP needs to create a framework that encourages its programme units to innovate, tackle emerging issues, or take an adaptive approach based on first-hand experiences. The regional centres are placed in an ideal position to be a knowledge and innovation hub for the region with its ability to absorb and digest regional and country-level experiences. The current programming method, however, with the rather inflexible five-year results framework, discourages such innovation and an issue-based or adaptive approach.

Recommendation 10. UNDP should create corporate recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issue-based work, and introduce a mechanism to properly attribute results achieved across practice areas.

One of the key comparative advantages of UNDP is its breadth of coverage of development issues. Many evaluations emphasized the benefit of creating synergies from cross-practice work since the development process is innately multidimensional. Similarly, emerging development issues can be best tackled through an appropriate multisectoral approach. However, the rigid practice-based attribution of activities and results discourages such an approach. UNDP should create incentives, not disincentives, for its programme units to proactively take a cross-sectoral or multisectoral approach by revisiting the current attribution mechanism.

Recommendation 11. UNDP should enhance institutional support to the regional centres in mobilizing funding at the regional level.

Given the expectation on precarious funding situation of the organization and the regional centres in particular, fund-raising is a critical aspect that needs enhancement. Due to the general lack of regional windows in traditional donor funding, the regional centres could explore non-traditional sources of funding. UNDP should strengthen institutional support to RBAP and the regional centres that would facilitate their fund-raising efforts both from non-traditional sources and through traditional channels.

REFERENCE TABLES

Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries					
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
	Human Development Index (HDI)			Population	Life expectancy at birth
	2011			2011	2011
	Rank	Value	Classification	Millions	Years
South & South-West Asia					
I.R. Iran	88	0.707	High	74.80	73.0
Sri Lanka	97	0.691	Medium	21.05	74.9
Maldives	109	0.661	Medium	0.32	76.8
India	134	0.547	Medium	1,241.49	65.4
Bhutan	141	0.522	Medium	0.74	67.2
Pakistan	145	0.504	Low	176.75	65.4
Bangladesh	146	0.500	Low	150.49	68.9
Nepal	157	0.458	Low	30.49	68.8
Afghanistan	172	0.398	Low	32.36	48.7
South-East Asia					
Malaysia	61	0.761	High	28.86	74.2
Thailand	103	0.682	Medium	69.52	74.1
Philippines	112	0.644	Medium	94.85	68.7
Indonesia	124	0.617	Medium	242.33	69.4
Viet Nam	128	0.593	Medium	88.79	75.2
Lao P.D.R.	138	0.524	Medium	6.29	67.5
Cambodia	139	0.523	Medium	14.31	63.1
Timor-Leste	147	0.495	Low	1.15	62.5
Myanmar	149	0.483	Low	48.34	65.2
North-East Asia					
China	101	0.687	Medium	1,347.57	73.5
Mongolia	110	0.653	Medium	2.80	68.5
D.P.R. Korea	..	..	No HDI	24.45	68.8
The Pacific					
Palau	49	0.782	High	0.02	71.8
Samoa	99	0.688	Medium	0.18	72.4
Fiji	100	0.688	Medium	0.87	69.2
F.S. Micronesia	116	0.636	Medium	0.11	69.0

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Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries (Continued)					
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
	Human Development Index (HDI)			Population	Life expectancy at birth
	2011			2011	2011
	Rank	Value	Classification	Millions	Years
The Pacific					
Kiribati	122	0.624	Medium	0.10	68.1
Vanuatu	125	0.617	Medium	0.25	71.0
Solomon Islands	142	0.510	Low	0.55	67.9
Papua New Guinea	153	0.466	Low	7.01	62.8
Marshall Islands	..	..	No HDI	0.05	72.0
Nauru	..	..	No HDI	0.01	79.9
Tuvalu	..	..	No HDI	0.01	67.2

Note: Countries that were not in the HDI database (the Cook Islands, Niue, and Tokelau) are not in this table.

(a) Rank out of 187 countries and territories where HDI was calculated. Except for HDI, classifications are not official; they are provided to depict the distribution.

Source: UNDP Human Development Index database

Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries (Continued)					
	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)
	GNI per capita	Population below PPP \$ 1.25 a day		Population vulnerable to poverty	Population in severe poverty
	2011	2000-2009			
	Constant 2005 PPP \$	(%)	Classification	(%)	(%)
South & South-West Asia					
I.R. Iran	10,164	1.45	Very low	..	..
Sri Lanka	4,943	7.00	Low	14.4	0.6
Maldives	5,276	1.48	Very low	4.8	0.3
India	3,468	41.64	Very high	16.4	28.6
Bhutan	5,293	26.23	High	17.2	8.5
Pakistan	2,550	22.60	Medium	11.0	27.4
Bangladesh	1,529	49.64	Very high	21.2	26.2
Nepal	1,160	55.10	Very high	15.6	37.1
Afghanistan	1,416

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Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries (Continued)					
	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)	(j)
	GNI per capita	Population below PPP \$ 1.25 a day		Population vulnerable to poverty	Population in severe poverty
	2011	2000-2009			
	Constant 2005 PPP \$	(%)	Classification	(%)	(%)
South-East Asia					
Malaysia	13,685	0.00	Very low	..	..
Thailand	7,694	10.80	Low	9.9	0.2
Philippines	3,478	22.60	Medium	9.1	5.7
Indonesia	3,716	18.73	Medium	12.2	7.6
Viet Nam	2,805	13.10	Low	18.5	6.0
Lao P.D.R.	2,242	33.88	High	14.1	28.1
Cambodia	1,848	28.27	High	21.3	22.0
Timor-Leste	3,005	37.40	Very high	18.2	38.7
Myanmar	1,535	..		13.4	9.4
North-East Asia					
China	7,476	15.92	Medium	6.3	4.5
Mongolia	3,391	22.40	Medium	20.6	3.2
D.P.R. Korea	..	..	
The Pacific					
Palau	9,744				
Samoa	3,931				
Fiji	4,145	..		..	..
F.S. Micronesia	2,935				
Kiribati	3,140				
Vanuatu	3,950	..		33.5	6.5
Solomon Islands	1,782				
Papua New Guinea	2,271				
Marshall Islands	..				
Nauru	..				
Tuvalu	..				

Note: (f): GNI = Gross National Income

(g) – (j): The most recent data available during 2000-2009

(g): PPP = Purchasing Power Parity

(h): Low = 5% and below; Medium = 5.1%-15.0%; High = 15.1%-25.0%, Very high = 25.1% and above

Source: UNDP Human Development Index database

Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries (Continued)

	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)
	Gender Inequality Index		Environmental Performance Index		Net Official Development Assistance Received	
	2011		2010		2009	
	Value	Classification	Value (1-100)	Classification	% of GDP	Classification
South & South-West Asia						
I.R. Iran	0.485	High	60.0	High	0.03	Low
Sri Lanka	0.419	High	63.7	High	1.70	Low
Maldives	0.320	Medium	65.9	Very high	2.35	Low
India	0.617	Very high	48.3	Medium	0.17	Low
Bhutan	0.495	High	68.0	Very high	9.62	Medium
Pakistan	0.573	Very high	48.0	Medium	1.67	Low
Bangladesh	0.550	Very high	44.0	Low	1.26	Low
Nepal	0.558	Very high	68.2	Very high	6.66	Low
Afghanistan	0.707	Very high	..		45.71	Very high
South-East Asia						
Malaysia	0.286	Medium	65.0	Very high	0.08	Low
Thailand	0.382	High	62.2	High	-0.03	Low
Philippines	0.427	High	65.7	Very high	0.19	Low
Indonesia	0.505	High	44.6	Medium	0.22	Low
Viet Nam	0.305	Medium	59.0	High	4.40	Low
Lao P.D.R.	0.513	High	59.6	High	7.24	Medium
Cambodia	0.500	High	41.7	Low	7.68	Medium
Timor-Leste	..		..		9.52	Medium
Myanmar	0.492	High	51.3	Medium	..	
North-East Asia						
China	0.209	Medium	49.0	Medium	0.02	Low
Mongolia	0.410	High	42.8	Low	9.38	Medium
D.P.R. Korea	..		41.8	Low	..	
The Pacific						
Palau	..		..		27.88	Very high
Samoa	..		..		16.10	High
Fiji	..		65.9	Very high	2.51	Low
F.S. Micronesia		42.03	Very high
Kiribati		15.62	High
Vanuatu		16.51	High

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Table A1. Development Challenges in the Asia-Pacific Countries (Continued)						
	(k)	(l)	(m)	(n)	(o)	(p)
	Gender Inequality Index		Environmental Performance Index		Net Official Development Assistance Received	
	2011		2010		2009	
	Value	Classification	Value (1-100)	Classification	% of GDP	Classification
The Pacific						
Solomon Islands	..		51.1	Medium	42.89	Very high
Papua New Guinea	0.674	Very high	44.3	Low	5.28	Low
Marshall Islands		32.05	Very high
Nauru	
Tuvalu	

Note: (l): Very low = 0.15 and below; Low = 0.16-0.25; Medium = 0.16-0.35; High = 0.36-0.55, Very high = 0.56 and above
 (n): Low = 44.0 and below; Medium = 44.1-54.0; High = 54.1-64.0, Very high = 64.1 and above
 (p): Low = 7% and below; Medium = 7.1%-14%; High = 14.1%-21%, Very high = 21% and above

Source: UNDP Human Development Index database

Table A2. Regional Programme Budget and Expenditure by Focus Area, 2008-2011					
Focus area	Budget (US\$ thousands)		Expenditure (US\$ thousands)		Delivery rate (percentage)
PRMDG	43,899	46%	35,027	46%	79%
in which					
HIV/AIDS	10,164	11%	8,902	12%	
Gender	6,284	7%	5,609	7%	
DG	23,165	24%	16,176	21%	70%
CPR	19,062	20%	14,945	19%	78%
ESD	8,700	9%	6,876	9%	79%
Capacity development	2,365	2%	1,870	2%	79%
Knowledge management	848	1%	853	1%	101%
Total	95,422	100%	75,768	100%	79%

Note: Delivery rate is the ratio of the expenditure to the budget.

Source: APRC

Table A3. Number of Regional Centre Staff and Turnover by Practice Area 2009-2011

Practice area	2009 (as of 31 Dec)		2010 (as of 31 Dec)		2011 (as of 31 Dec)		Turnover 2009-2011	
	Core	Non-Core	Core	Non-Core	Core	Non-Core	IN	OUT
PRMDG	27.3	6.7	19	5	15	9	14	-24
DG	10.7	7.3	9	8	7	9	7	-9
ESD	7	3	7	2	7	2	2	-3
CPR	7.85	6.15	5	8	6	7	5	-6
HIV/AIDS	6	1	6	1	5	5	8	-5
Gender	4	1	3	1	2.34	4	5.34	-4
Capacity development	0	6	0	6	0.33	1	0.33	-5
Knowledge management	1	9	3	2	1.33	1	2.33	-10
Total by source	63.85	40.15	52	33	44	38	44	-66
Total	104		85		82		-22	

Note: 'Core' shows the number of staff funded by the regional programme core resources, while 'Non-core' by other funding source, including other UNDP core resources such as the global programme. ESD does not include the GEF funded staff, which is the majority of the EEG staff. Gender includes 2, 3 and 4 joint programme staff in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively

Source: APRC

Table A4. Number of Publications by Focus Area and Type, 2008-2012

PRMDG	Asia	Pacific	Total
Research and policy series	65		65
Advocacy and outreach series	21		21
Tools, guides and briefs series	8		8
Compendia of good practices	1		1
Subtotal	95		95
DG	Asia	Pacific	Total
Research and policy series	31	5	36
Advocacy and outreach series	6	2	8
Tools, guides and briefs series	12	9	21
Compendia of good practices	2	1	3
Subtotal	51	17	68
CPR	Asia	Pacific	Total
Research and policy series	12	2	14
Advocacy and outreach series			
Tools, guides and briefs series	5	3	8
Compendia of good practices		1	1
Subtotal	17	6	23

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Table A4. Number of Publications by Focus Area and Type, 2008-2012 (Continued)			
ESD	Asia	Pacific	Total
Research and policy series			
Advocacy and outreach series			
Tools, guides and briefs series	21		21
Compendia of good practices			
Sub-total	21		21
Other	Asia	Pacific	Total
South-South Cooperation	9		9
Grand Total	193	23	216

Source: APRC; including 26 publications in 2012 (2 in PRMDG, 5 in DG, and 19 in ESD). The classification follows that of the publications database in the websites of the regional centres.

Table A5. Number of Knowledge Networks & Communities of Practice by Focus Area			
Thematic area	Asia	Pacific	Total
PRMDG	4	1	5
DG	3	1	4
CPR	2	2	4
ESD	1		1
Total	10	4	14

Source: APRC records

Table A6. Regional Programme Core/Non-Core Multiplier, 2008-2011			
Focus area	Core resources (US\$ thousands)	Non-core resources (US\$ thousands)	Multiplier (Non-core/core)
PRMDG	19,998	17,285	0.86
in which			
HIV/AIDS	3,018	6,432	2.13
Gender	2,542	4,136	1.63
DG	8,529	8,580	1.01
ESD	4,971	2,370	0.48
CPR	2,930	13,425	4.58
Capacity development	-	1,870	-
Knowledge management	99	753	7.58
Total	36,528	44,283	1.21

Note: With regard to the capacity development practice, projects were funded entirely from cost sharing and allocation from headquarters (which is treated as non-core for the regional programme in this context).

Source: APRC

Table A7. Main Contributors to the Regional Programme

Source	Contributions (US\$ thousands)
Bilateral donors	
Australia	10,153
New Zealand	3,603
EU	2,255
Japan	1,487
CIDA (Canada)	1,054
DFID (United Kingdom)	1,045
Norway	1,042
UN agencies and multilaterals	
UNAIDS	1,042
UNISDR	907
GFATM	871
UNDEF	500
UNFPA	477
UNV	457
UNESCAP	305

Table A8. Expenditures Under Regional and Country Programmes, 2004-2012

Focus area	Total RBAP expenditure (US\$ thousands)	Country programmes (USD\$ thousands)	Regional programme (US\$ thousands)	The share of regional programme expenditure (percentage)
PRMDG	535,615	463,918	71,697	13.38%
DG	489,020	454,036	34,983	7.15%
CPR	438,758	414,324	24,433	5.57%
ESD	292,718	283,113	9,605	3.28%
Total	1,756,110	1,615,392	140,718	8.01%

Source: RBAP, September 2012

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. OBJECTIVE OF THE EVALUATION

UNDP's Evaluation Policy mandates UNDP's Evaluation Office to conduct independent evaluations of regional programmes implemented under the responsibility of UNDP's five regional bureaux. The objectives of the 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, in particularly in the formulation and implementation of the new regional programmes to be approved in 2013 and to start in 2014.
- Provide stakeholders in regional programme countries and among development partners with an objective assessment of the contributions made by the regional programmes.

To achieve the above objectives, the Evaluation Office will conduct these evaluations to analyse the contributions made by the regional programmes during the current programme period, as well as their strategic positioning from the viewpoint of assessing its relevance and responsiveness, and strengths and weaknesses.

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 (Bureau for Development Policy and Bureau for Conflict Prevention and Recovery).
- Regional programmes run by five regional bureaux (respectively for Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, and Latin America and the Caribbean) mainly through its regional centres.
- 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 REGIONAL PROGRAMMES - GENERAL STRUCTURE

Since its inception, UNDP has been extending support to groups of countries at regional and 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 their predecessor regional cooperation frameworks. These regional programmes, as compared to the predecessor 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 the region. In 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 mid-2000s, UNDP developed 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, the regional programme involves 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 by their nature involve more than one country, such as: support to subregional organizations, cross-border initiatives such as to deal with illegal trafficking, or projects covering such a geographical area as a river basin.
- c) **Multi-country activities** that are organized with more than one country, such as: collective training of officials to achieve efficiency gains, or a forum to discuss issues that may be exploratory and premature to be handled on the country basis.

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 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 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 – for instance, an activity to reduce poverty in a country also contributes to poverty reduction in the region and globally.

2.3 REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC 2008-2013

The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific 2008–2011 was established in 2007, and later extended to 2013. It covers the four core

focus areas of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2008–2013, namely: (a) poverty reduction and achievement of Millennium Development Goals; (b) democratic governance; (c) crisis prevention and recovery; and (d) environment and sustainable development.

Overall responsibility for the implementation of the programme rests with the Regional Bureau for Asia and Pacific. The programme is implemented by the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok, and its subregional office Pacific Centre in Suva. Altogether, the programme covers 37 countries in the Asia-Pacific region, where 24 country and multi-country offices⁷⁰ are located. While the Pacific Centre operates through the same framework and mechanism as the main Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, it has a distinct position in the subregion due to the fact that UNDP operates through three offices covering 15 countries among them⁷¹.

For the 2008–2011 programme, the following broad-based programmes⁷² were established:

Poverty Reduction and MDG Achievement Cluster

- Regional Initiative on Human Development Reports in Asia and the Pacific
- MDGs Initiative
- Asia Pacific Trade and Investment Initiative (later absorbed into MDGs Initiative above⁷³)

- MDG Achievement and Poverty Reduction in the Pacific (implemented by the Pacific Centre)
- Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (implemented by the Pacific Centre)
- Asia Pacific Gender Project
- Regional Joint Programme for the Prevention of Gender Based Violence⁷⁴
- HIV, Human Development and Mobility in Asia and the Pacific

Democratic Governance Cluster

- Asia Regional Governance Programme
- Democratic Governance in the Pacific (implemented by the Pacific Centre)
- Regional Initiative on Indigenous People's Rights and Development

Crisis Prevention and Recovery Cluster

- Asia-Pacific Regional Crisis Prevention and Recovery
- Crisis Prevention and Recovery in the Pacific (implemented by the Pacific Centre)

Environment and Sustainable Development Cluster

- Regional Climate Change, Energy and Ecosystem Project⁷⁵

⁷⁰ Fiji multi-country office covers Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Samoa multi-country office covers Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa and Tokelau. Malaysia country office also covers activities in Brunei Darussalam and Singapore.

⁷¹ In addition to the 10 countries covered by the Fiji office and the 4 countries by the Samoa office, the Pacific Centre serves Papua New Guinea.

⁷² In UNDP's online project and financial management system, ATLAS, each of these was termed an 'award', whereas their components were termed 'projects'. However, each of these 'awards' is based on one 'project document' and sometimes called a 'project', in which a 'project' as defined in ATLAS is treated as a component of this broad-based 'project'. This can be a major source of confusion, and one needs to carefully distinguish between these definitions. In this document, the ATLAS 'award' defined by a 'project document' will be called a 'programme'.

⁷³ For 2011–2013, when the programme period was extended from 2008–2011 to 2008–2013.

⁷⁴ Joint programme with UNFPA, UNIFEM and UNV. UNIFEM has now become UN Women.

⁷⁵ The programme in this area covers both Asia and the Pacific, and run mainly by the experts in the Regional Centre in Bangkok.

Within each programme above, a set of 'projects'⁷⁶ were developed with more focused objectives and a set of activities. To effectively manage this process, the regional centre establishes annual work plans to identify specific projects and activities to be undertaken each year.

A substantial portion of activities undertaken under these projects was in the form of technical and expert support provided to country offices and other partners. Such support is termed as 'advisory services' and its main service types are: advocacy; expert referrals; policy advice; research and analysis; resource mobilization and donor relations; substantive product review; support to programme strategy and project formulation; technical advice and backstopping; and workshop and training. During the 2008-2011 period, approximately 5,000 such services were provided. Majority of such services were provided to UNDP's country offices in the region. Though smaller in volume, services were provided also to the governments, regional bodies such as the secretariats of ASEAN, SAARC and the Pacific Forum, and other regional partners such as non-governmental organizations.⁷⁷ UNDP regional bureau has the database system through which the requests for such services are made, the services provided are recorded and some feedback from the recipient parties is also recorded.

The total expenditure of the projects was roughly USD 50 million for the programme period up to mid-2011. A few projects were established during

the previous programme period and carried over to the current one.

Further details on the programme and its activities are found at <<http://asia-pacific.undp.org/index.html>> and <<http://www.undppc.org.fj/>>.

In addition, the evaluators must consult the evaluation conducted by the Evaluation Office on the predecessor programme, the Second Regional Cooperation Framework for Asia and the Pacific 2002-2006, and the Mid-Term Review of Asia-Pacific Regional Programme commissioned in 2010 by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific 2008-2013.⁷⁸

3. SCOPE, METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

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. A list of such programme activities will be provided by the Evaluation Office to the evaluators.

Because some regional programme activities were undertaken through or as a support service to the country programme activities, the contribution by these activities to the realization of intended outcomes could be assessed only in conjunction with the associated country programme activities.

⁷⁶ 'Projects' as defined in ATLAS. However, the project documents are defined at the programme (award) level. The programme may start with some projects, and later add other projects during the implementation period.

⁷⁷ Also in the list of recipients of such services include UNDP headquarter bureaux, other UN agencies, bilateral donor agencies, and so on, but these services are not of interest to this evaluation.

⁷⁸ There is a paucity of evaluation reports on these programmes and projects. Only a few evaluations on environment projects were conducted for this programme period. At the same time, as the activities of the regional programme are often closely linked to the country programme activities, the evaluation reports concerning the corresponding country programme will be sought as a part of data collection activities.

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

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 evaluators will examine the stated outcome; 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 mandate⁷⁹; 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 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 evaluators will identify the various factors that can explain the performance. Even though regional programmes are implemented in a wide range of contexts, the evaluations are 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 partnerships (with civil society, private sector, regional intergovernmental bodies, parliaments, international development partners, etc.) to improve its performance?
- **Gender:** Did the regional programme undertake adequate gender analysis to ensure more effective performance?
- **Capacity development:** Did UNDP adequately invest in, and focus on, national capacity development to ensure sustainability and promote efficiency?
- **Project/programme design:** Has UNDP applied an appropriate mix of modalities (e.g. regional public goods, subregional issues, multi-country interventions, technical support to country offices, etc.) to maximize performance in view of regional needs?
- **Knowledge management:** Are the knowledge products (reports, studies, etc.) delivered by the regional programme and regional 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.

⁷⁹ This refers mainly to UNDP Strategic Plan 2008-2011 (extended to 2013).

Each evaluation team will adapt this matrix to the specific regional context by identifying and incorporating additional issues and questions.

5. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The evaluation team will use, *inter alia*, the following methods to collect and analyse data. They are provided in the logical sequence below but the timing of activities can overlap.

Comparative analysis of the programme intent and the implementation

- Conduct a comparative analysis of the programme as designed in the programme document and 14 project documents⁸⁰, and the implementation as presented in the annual work plans, regional centre's annual reports and Results Oriented Annual Reports⁸¹, to assess *inter alia* the relevance of activities implemented.
- Conduct interviews (regional centre staff, selected partners) to examine the process in which the activities were identified for implementation, to identify *inter alia* the factors affected the relevance.
- Compare the results reported for the activities against the programme and project results framework and draw preliminary conclusions on the performance of the programme.

Quality assessment of project outputs

- Conduct quality assessments of the main project products, such as reports, studies and tool kits.
- Use the quality assessment to inform the assessment of the performance, *inter alia* on the relevance and effectiveness dimensions.

Media analysis

- Analyse the media coverage of main products and activities collected or disseminated by the regional centre on major reports and advocacy activities to inform, *inter alia*, the assessment of the effectiveness of the activities.

Quantitative analysis and sampling of advisory services, and qualitative analysis of the feedback

- Conduct a quantitative analysis of the advisory services, based on the list of services provided⁸², in terms of such factors as service types, service lines, client types and countries.
- Conduct an analysis of feedbacks⁸³ to provide preliminary assessments.
- Produce a sample set of services to further examine. The sample set should be roughly in proportion to the distribution of the population in terms of service types, service lines, client types and countries but needs to cover all service types and all of the 10 programme outcomes. It should also include services provided to regional and national partners in the programme countries.⁸⁴ The sampling could favour activities for which the serviced country office activities are identifiable and to which the feedback is provided by recipients.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ See the list of programmes (each one with a 'project document') in Section 2.3.

⁸¹ The documents will be provided by the Evaluation Office.

⁸² Data on all services will be provided by the Evaluation Office.

⁸³ The feedback will be collected from the service record database with a support from the Evaluation Office.

⁸⁴ This includes governments, regional organizations (e.g. secretariats of ASEAN, SAARC and the Pacific Forum), and non-governmental organizations.

⁸⁵ This may produce sampling bias. However, having such a bias is preferred to random sampling since the purpose of this sampling is to collect evidences of the contribution of the services.

Analysis of secondary data on associated country programme activities

- Identify programme activities delivered through country programme activities from the annual work plans, regional centre's annual reports and Results Oriented Annual Reports.
- For the sample set of advisory services, identify associated country programme activities where applicable.
- Examine readily available information on the results achieved by these country programme activities such as from their websites and other reports.
- Scan the existing evaluation reports (ADRs, country office evaluations) to collect their findings and assessments on the performance of the activities and services.

Identification of primary data collection needs and methods

- Based on the analyses of the secondary data above, identify the information gaps and the needs for the primary data to validate or complement the secondary data. This should cover programme activities delivered both directly (e.g. Human Development Reports, workshops) and through country office activities (e.g. tool kits or guidance provided for country projects), as well as the sample advisory services to both country offices and other national or regional partners.
- Identify counterparts and stakeholders to interview with support of the task manager and the regional centre, and from the advisory service records. This includes both in-person interviews to be conducted in field visits and telephone/Internet interviews to be conducted in other locations.

Primary data collection

- Map the primary data collection needs into countries, and design country visit plans to achieve maximum coverage while taking into account the need to cover all programme outcomes in depth. The country visits could cover up to 12 countries (including home countries of members), but need to fit within the time and budget constraints⁸⁶. Each team member who visits a country needs to cover activities in all clusters, and familiarize himself/herself on those activities.
- Develop interview questions based on the types of activities/services and the types of the stakeholder to be interviewed. The questions need to be designed to allow comparative analysis of the relative value of different types of activities and services, and to allow identification of factors affecting the performance.
- Develop the format for the team member to report back on the primary data collected.
- Collect primary data through in-person and telephone/internet interviews as planned above, and report the results back to the team.

Analysis of survey results

- The Evaluation Office will conduct surveys of country offices for all regions with a standard set of generic questions. Use the survey results to further inform the assessment.

Data analysis

- Conduct the data analysis to produce substantiated findings and assessments for each activity and service, identifying factors affecting the performance.
- Analyse the findings to identify common factors affecting the performance of the programme, and draw some general conclusions.

⁸⁶ The design of field visits will be done in close consultation with the task manager.

Validation and feedback

- Present the preliminary assessments and general conclusions to the regional centre for factual verification and further validation.
- Develop the full first draft report to which each member will take the lead in drafting the part under his/her responsibility.

5.2 THE DATA COLLECTION PLAN

As described above, the evaluation team must prepare a plan for data collection, prior to conducting the primary data collection. This must be reviewed by the regional centre and agreed to by the task manager. The plan should contain:

- The activities for which the primary data will be collected
- Secondary data sources consulted for each activity
- Primary data sources (e.g. interviewees) for each activity
- Interview questions for each types of activity and stakeholder
- Country visit plans, and coverage of activities in country visit

5.3 OUTCOME OF THE DATA ANALYSIS

As the data are collected, the evaluation team will engage in the analysis of the data. The result of the data analysis should be structured as follows:

- The findings, namely corroborated facts and statements (by activity)
- Assessments, identifying the factors that led to the assessments made (by outcome and by evaluation criteria)
- Conclusions, general statements on the value and performance of the programme

addressing broadly the evaluation questions, and underlying factors and features of the programme that led to such conclusions

- Preliminary recommendations

6. PROCESS

a) Desk study

Each evaluation team member must first conduct a desk study of relevant materials to proceed on the preliminary secondary data analysis. A set of main UNDP documents and information about the programme will be provided by the Evaluation Office for this purpose. The team member should also consult other relevant sources of information such as documents found in UNDP websites.

b) The first mission to the regional centre location

After the preliminary desk study, the evaluation team, including the task manager, will come together in Bangkok (where the regional centre is located) for two weeks with a view to deepen the understanding of programmes and projects through interviews with the regional centre staff, collect additional materials and further the secondary data analyses, discuss the preliminary findings from the secondary data analysis, and prepare the data collection plan.

c) Primary data collection

Once the data collection plan is reviewed and revised as required, the team will start collecting primary data following the plan. This will involve country visits as set out in the plan, as well as interviews through telephone and other distance-communication means. After each country visits, the team member will circulate the interview results provided in the agreed format.

- d) Data analysis and the second mission the regional centre location

When sufficient data are collected, each team member will start analysing them in the area of his/her responsibility, and prepare preliminary outcomes of the analysis. The team will get together in Bangkok for one week to complete the data analysis, identifying the common factors and issues, and general conclusions.

- e) Validation and feedback session with the regional centre

The team will make the presentation to the regional centre (and other stakeholders if appropriate) on the outcomes of the data analysis, including preliminary findings, assessments and conclusions, with a view to solicit the feedback and further validate them.

- f) First draft

Based on the data and the analysis, as well as from the feedback at the validation session, the evaluation team will prepare the first draft of the report. The first draft will be reviewed by the Evaluation Office and an external reviewer for its quality and the team may need to revise it accordingly.

- g) Stakeholder reviews and the final draft

Once the Evaluation Office thus clears the report, the draft will be provided to the regional bureau for written comments. The team will revise the report based on those comments, while recoding the changes made in an audit trail, to prepare the final draft.

The final draft will be presented to the members of UNDP Executive Board in its informal session. After the necessary adjustments are made on the report, it will be published by the Evaluation Office.

Prior to the presentation to the Executive Board members, a stakeholder meeting may be held – if there is an appropriate opportunity – for presentation and feedback.

7. MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

7.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Evaluation Office will conduct and publish the evaluation, providing necessary materials and methodological guidance to the evaluation team, as well as the quality assurance of the report through its established methodology. The Evaluation Office will cover all the costs associated with this evaluation.
- The evaluation team will plan and undertake the evaluation activities on behalf of the Evaluation Office, prepare the draft reports and provide associated materials, and report to the Evaluation Office through the task manager.
- Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific, the Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, the Pacific Centre and country offices in the region will facilitate the evaluation by providing all the necessary information and documents, as well as logistical support to the evaluation team as may be required.

7.2 COMPOSITION OF THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team will consist of six members, including one team leader and a task manager from UNDP Evaluation Office. The team leader will be responsible for coordinating the preparation of the evaluation plan, the draft reports and the presentations. The task manager will act as the co-leader for the team, providing methodological guidance and supporting the conduct of the evaluation and the drafting of the report.

Each member of the team⁸⁷ will be responsible for taking the lead in the evaluation of one programme cluster⁸⁸. Given the distinct position of the Pacific Centre in the subregion, where UNDP operates without the country presence in most of the countries⁸⁹, one team member will focus on the programme operated by the Pacific Centre in collaboration with other members in charge of thematic clusters.

Except for the task manager, the team members will be in principle selected from the region, including the team leader. The team will be assisted by a research assistant and a programme assistant in the Evaluation Office. Only when deemed necessary, the team may further involve in-country researchers to collect specific information from the countries.

7.3 RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH TEAM MEMBER

Responsibilities and deliverables by each team member will be provided in the addenda to this terms of reference.

1. Deliverables

The deliverables of the evaluation team comprises the following:

- The data collection plan
- The evaluation report
- The briefs of the report to the Executive Board and for publicity materials
- Presentations to the regional bureau, to the Executive Board members, and others as required

The main text of the evaluation report will be 60-80 pages, excluding annexes. The team should

submit the drafts in English and must follow drafting guidelines provided by the Evaluation Office. The report will be structured as follows:

- 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 (assessments by programme outcomes)
- 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

2. Time-frame and travel

A tentative time-frame is provided below. It will be adjusted in consultation with the regional centre and the evaluation team members.

- Recruitment of the evaluation team – January 2012
- Inception phase – January to March 2012
 - Two-week Bangkok mission in March 2012
- Main evaluation phase – April to June 2012
 - One-week Bangkok mission – June 2012
 - Country visits by individual evaluation team members to be decided
- Report preparation phase – July to October 2012
 - Submission of the first draft – end July 2012
 - Submission of the final draft – end September 2012

⁸⁷ Including the team leader but excluding the task manager.

⁸⁸ See Section 2.3 for the clusters. One member will be responsible for the Pacific programme, while others cover the thematic clusters.

⁸⁹ The Pacific Centre serves the subregion of 15 countries covered by three country or multi-country offices of UNDP.

ANNEX 2.

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ANNEX 3.

DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

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ANNEX 4.

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

TO THE EVALUATION OF THE REGIONAL PROGRAMME FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (2008-2013)

CONTEXT, BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS

The regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2008-2013, was approved by the Executive Board in decision 2008/8 at its first regular session 2008. The regional programme document is framed around four broad themes: (a) poverty reduction and achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); (b) democratic governance; (c) crisis prevention and recovery; and (d) environment and sustainable development. The overarching goal is to promote regional initiatives for achieving the MDGs.

The evaluation of the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific (DP/2013/xx) examined the results achieved through the 14 thematic programmes under the regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, and the complementary technical support services provided to country offices and other national or regional partners, as defined in the regional programme document (DP/RPD/RAP/1). The evaluation further took into account changes made over time by the Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific (RBAP), including the institutional reform of its regional centres undertaken in 2010.

The contribution of the programme to the development outcomes was assessed according to a standard set of evaluation criteria used in all regional programme evaluations (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability), as well as criteria to examine not just what was delivered but also how it was implemented. The

evaluation used a combination of desk reviews of material, field visits to nine selected countries and interviews with various stakeholders, including extensive use of online interviews and a cyber-metric analysis commissioned by the UNDP Evaluation Office to gauge the use of the regional programme's knowledge products on the Internet.

The evaluation concluded that, despite the constraints of operating in an extremely diverse region, the RBAP regional programme was highly relevant, had addressed critical regional development challenges and operated efficiently, ensuring programme delivery consistent with RBAP-defined 'regionality' principles, which are unique to the region. The evaluation also assessed that "the regional programme has made important strides to incorporate gender mainstreaming into its policy, programming and implementation. Across focus areas, the regional programme mainstreamed a gender dimension well in both the design and implementation of its projects, as well as in its support to country offices". Lessons from this experience will be carried into the next programme cycle, 2014-2017.

The evaluation also concluded that the RBAP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre in Bangkok and the Pacific Centre in Suva have implemented and made important contributions to the achievement of regional programme results and have provided highly valued technical and advisory services, especially by the UNDP country offices. The evaluation also concluded that the development of a parallel programme for the Pacific provided more efficiency gains than losses.

ANNEX. Key recommendations and management response

<p>Evaluation recommendation 1 RBAP should reconceptualize the regional programme as the instrument playing an important leveraging role within the overall architecture of the UNDP delivery mechanism of development results.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The ongoing regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2008-2013, was aligned with the current UNDP Strategic Plan, 2008-2013, towards achieving thematic practice-based outcomes. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will also be aligned to the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, but more specifically from a regional context. The new regional programme will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priority regional challenges, and to support and bring added value to country programme results.</p>				
Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming.	2014-2017	RBAP, Asia-Pacific Regional Centre, Bangkok (APRC) and Pacific Centre, Suva		
1.2 Increase synergies between the regional and country programmes to ensure more targeted subregional responses, in particular through the integrated work plan preparation process and through more regular consultations with the APRC and Pacific Centre management boards and ongoing annual engagement dialogues.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 2 RBAP should create a framework for shared responsibilities and mutual accountability between the regional centres and country offices for development results at the country level to be achieved by regional programmes activities or by country programme activities supported by the regional centres.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. Preparation for the new regional programme is taking place through close consultation with country offices, national partners and other regional and subregional stakeholders to enhance ownership of the regional programme, especially by country offices. RBAP will ensure that subsequent project designs under the new regional programme, 2014-2017, are tailored to further enhance linkages and added value to country office programmes, while at the same time ensuring mutual accountability towards results between the regional and country programmes.</p>				
2.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
2.2 Formulate regional programme through close consultation with country offices and other relevant stakeholders at the national and sub-regional levels to further improve linkages with country programmes.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
2.3 Increase synergies between the regional programme and country programmes through more regular consultations with APRC and Pacific Centre management boards, ongoing annual engagement dialogues, etc.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
<p>Evaluation recommendation 3 RBAP should seriously explore ways in which to use an issues-based approach for the regional programme in order to address key development challenges in the region, and to further encourage cross-practice work within the regional centres and in their support to country programmes.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The recommendation for an issues-based approach is strongly supported as it strengthens cross-practice approaches and draws together opportunities for better integrating tools, such as Solutions Exchange and South-South cooperation, into the mode in which the regional programme is delivered. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priority regional challenges. An issues-based approach also provides the opportunity for greater flexibility when responding to emerging issues and evolving development challenges, in particular the potential new directions that may emerge from the conclusion of consultations on the MDG post-2015 agenda. Ongoing cross-practice work in APRC and the Pacific Centre, which the evaluation concluded was a 'thriving practice', will be continued and further strengthened through feasible and relevant institutionalization in order to continue supporting coherent, effective interventions at the regional and country levels.</p>				
3.1 Adopt issues-based approach for the new regional programme.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
3.2 Review and identify feasible mechanisms to institutionalize ongoing rich cross-cutting practice in the regional centres.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
3.3 Enhance the APRC/Pacific Centre service tracker, and other annual engagement mechanisms with country offices, in order to better reflect effective provision of cross-practice advisory services.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 4 The regional centres should continue to seek appropriate regional or national partners to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the regional programme contribution.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable. RBAP recognizes that such partnerships will be at the foundation of the design of interventions and that in all cases it will be vital that the UNDP niche and involvement is defined early in the process. APRC and the Pacific Centre will continue to focus on initiating new and strengthening ongoing regional and national partnerships to ensure the effectiveness and the sustainability of regional programme contributions and results.</p>				
4.1 Formulate partnership building strategy for the new regional programme document, with a strong focus on identifying strategic sub-regional and national level partners.	2014	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
4.2 Reflect evaluation recommendations in developing regional programme regional projects.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 5 The regional centres should introduce, in the engagement policy with country offices, regular monitoring of progress made and results achieved by the regional programme initiatives and technical support rendered to the country offices.</p>				

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response initiated. This recommendation is in line with the RBAP focus on ensuring that regional programmes complement country programmes, that country programmes are designed in a way to provide space for follow-up on advocacy and policy support initiatives supported initially through the regional programme, and that there is mutual accountability of results between regional and country programmes in relevant programme areas.</p>				
5.1 Adjust the new regional programme formulation process to ensure stronger country office consultation and participation during conceptual and design phase.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
5.2 Take measures to enhance mutual accountability for results and to ensure targeted support to countries as part of the corporate integrated work plan/results-oriented annual report exercises, and engagement dialogues with country offices in the region.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 6 The regional centres should define knowledge management as one of the core mandates of its experts.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, will be developed to give appropriate attention to defining knowledge management as one of the key mandates of the work of the regional centres.</p>				
6.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme for Asia and the Pacific, 2014-2017, and in subsequent programming.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
6.2 Design a knowledge management and communication strategy that is responsive to regional and country office needs, and that is geared to capture and disseminate good practices.	2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 7 The regional centres should further enhance the outreach of their knowledge products and contents, particularly at the national level in the region.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable; response already initiated. To facilitate the use of knowledge management as a tool of programme delivery and effectiveness, the regional centres will enhance the outreach and use of their knowledge products through the identification of appropriate national partners, such as research institutions, and the translation of relevant knowledge products into national languages and its wide dissemination using different media and formats, such as social media, e-learning and video clips. Furthermore, the design and development of knowledge products will include a comprehensive communications and knowledge management strategy that ensures that the key elements and recommendations of the relevant product are brought to the attention of national and regional policy-makers and stakeholders.</p>				
7.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme, 2014-2017.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
7.2 Identify relevant focus countries and national partners for key regional knowledge products to foster their dissemination and use through different media and other formats.	2014-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 8 UNDP should seek ways to establish programming and funding arrangements that ensure coherence of the programme of the regional centres in Asia and the Pacific.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and partially acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. Together with other relevant UNDP bureaux, such as the Bureau for Development Policy, RBAP will review the present programming and funding arrangements of the regional centres to analyze and better understand their impact on the effectiveness and efficiency of the work of the regional centres.</p>				
8.1 To contribute to corporate work on establishing programming and funding arrangements of the regional centres, study the present programming and funding arrangements of RBAP regional centers to inform next steps at the corporate level.	2013-2014	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 9 UNDP should introduce in the programming framework the means for the regional programme to come up with, pursue, test and apply innovative and issues-based ideas and approaches that reflect priorities and emerging issues in the region.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. The new regional programme, 2014-2017, for Asia and the Pacific will be issues-based, focusing on a limited number of strategic areas in order to address priorities and emerging issues in the region. The regional programme will continue to be informed and guided by RBAP regionality principles, which provide the rationale for the regional programme, the use of which is unique to the region.</p>				
9.1 Reflect evaluation recommendations in the new regional programme, 2014-2017.	2013	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
9.2 Ensure the new regional programme outcome areas and focus are informed by the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017, as well as RBAP regionality principles and assessment of the development challenges in the region.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC and Pacific Centre		
<p>Evaluation recommendation 10 UNDP should create corporate recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issues-based work, and introduce a mechanism to properly attribute results achieved across practice areas.</p>				
<p>Management response Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017.</p>				

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Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status
10.1 To contribute to corporate work on creating recognition and incentives for cross-practice and issues-based work, continue to support and strengthen RBAP cross-practice work through coherent, effective interventions at the regional and country levels.	2013-2017	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		
Evaluation recommendation 11 UNDP should enhance institutional support to the regional centres by mobilizing funding at the regional level.				
Management response Relevant and acceptable. This recommendation has broader corporate implications and will be addressed in the context of the new UNDP Strategic Plan, 2014-2017. RBAP recognizes the importance of a strong partnership and resource mobilization strategy for each regional centre that is responsive to changing development partner interests.				
11.1 Develop a resource mobilization strategy for the new regional programme document, in order to complement corporate efforts to enhance institutional support to regional centres.	2013-2014	RBAP, APRC, Pacific Centre		

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.



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