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ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS **GABON**

EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION



HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION
efficiency COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sus
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FO
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness
DEVELOPMENT responsiveness NATIONAL OWNER
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP effectiveness COORDINATION
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FOREWORD

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) is one of the main areas of work for the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The ADR aims to provide systematic, independent analysis of progress in the key areas of UNDP intervention in the countries it supports.

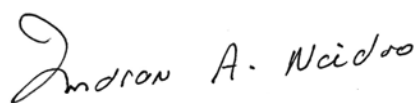
This ADR was conducted in partnership with the Government of Gabon, with the aim of consolidating the ownership of evaluation results by national partners and, consequently, strengthening its credibility and usefulness. The evaluation process was led by a team of national and international assessors and overseen by an evaluation manager from the IEO. This approach allowed both the Government and the IEO to ensure that norms and standards for assessments, such as independence, impartiality and methodological rigour, were respected.

The assessment showed that the UNDP programme in Gabon is strategically relevant and in alignment with the country's development priorities, as set out in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the 'Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon' (PSGE) on the one hand, and the UNDP strategic plan and positions on the other. However, operationally, programme relevance is weak in places. Moreover, results have been increasingly compromised by decreasing UNDP technical capacity. As an upper middle income country, Gabon is seeking to restructure its international cooperation and align its partners even more

closely with its specific development needs. This will continue to have an impact on the UNDP position in the development landscape.

The conclusions and recommendations of this study should enable UNDP to strengthen its effectiveness and strategic position in Gabon. Having had the opportunity to take stock and identify what has worked or not over the last few years and why, this study can offer recommendations on the role UNDP might play in the future. The IEO sincerely hopes that this evaluation can support greater UNDP efforts to support the Government of Gabon and national partners, with a view to increasing the country's human development levels.

This assessment was made at a very appropriate time, coinciding with the Gabon strategic planning process and innovative processes for a more secure and sustainable future. Following the adoption of the sustainable development goals, and with the current review of Gabon's national development policies as part of its status as an upper middle income country, we hope that this assessment will provide even greater insight into the UNDP strategy.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acronyms	ix
Executive Summary	xi
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1 Scope of the Assessment	1
1.2 Evaluation Process and Approach	2
1.3 Evaluability and Limitations	3
Chapter 2. National Context and Development Challenges	5
2.1 Physical and Human Context	5
2.2 Institutional Framework	5
2.3 Political Context	6
2.4 Macroeconomic Framework	6
2.5 Socio-economic Environment and MDGs	7
2.6 Development Challenges: National Strategies and Policies	10
2.7 Support for Development Partners	11
Chapter 3. UNDP Responses and Strategies	13
3.1 Cycle 2007-2011	13
3.2 Cycle 2012-2016	15
3.3 Programme Management	16
3.4 UNDP Resources and Expenditure	17
Chapter 4. UNDP Contribution to Gabon's Development Results	21
4.1 Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to Gabon's Development Results (Effectiveness)	23
4.2 Evaluation of the Quality of UNDP Contributions	34
4.3 Explanatory Factors	43
Chapter 5. UNDP Positioning	45
5.1 Strategic Relevance	45
5.2 Positioning in Terms of Capacity-building	47
5.3 Capacity to Build on Strengths	47
Chapter 6. Conclusions and Recommendations	49
6.1 Principal Observations	49
6.2 Recommendations	52
Annexes	
Annex 1. Summary of Explanatory Factors	55
Annex 2. People Consulted	57
Annex 3. Documents Consulted	59
Annex 4. Outcome Clusters Covered by the Thematic Reports	61
Annex 5. Terms of Reference	63
Annex 6. Management Response to ADR Recommendations	79

Tables

Table 1. Gabon indicators and information	5
Table 2. Millennium Development Goal indicators	9
Table 3. Budgetary expenditure per sector as a percentage of nominal GDP (2005-2009)	11
Table 4. UNDP Country Programme for Gabon (2007-11) outcomes and financial data	14
Table 5. Country Programme for Gabon (2012-2016) outcomes and financial data	15
Table 6. Total expenditure per donor (2007-2014)	19
Table 7. Outcome clusters covered by thematic reports	21

Figures

Figure 1. Economic growth in Gabon (1961-2013)	7
Figure 2. HDI trends in Gabon in context (1990-2013)	8
Figure 3. Incidence of poverty	8
Figure 4. Official development assistance trends	12
Figure 5. ODA contributions to Gabon by donor (2004-2013)	12
Figure 6. Budget and expenditure (2008-2013)	17
Figure 7. Expenditure by main donors (2007-2014)	18
Figure 8. Expenditure by thematic area (2004-2014)	19
Figure 9. Indicators for the statistical system in Gabon	26

ACRONYMS

ADB	African Development Bank
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
ANIF	National Financial Investigation Agency
ANPN	National Agency for National Parks
ARTGOLD	Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance
CNLCEI	National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
DG	General Statistics Directorate
EGEP	Gabonese Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Survey
FCFA	Central African CFA Franc
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GNI	Gross national income
GPRSP	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IGA	Income-generating activities
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IPT	Intermittent preventative treatment
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
LLITN	Long-lasting insecticide-treated nets
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIC	Middle income country
NSDS	National strategy for the development of statistics
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PACLEI	Project in support of the National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment
PPP	Purchasing power parity
PRONAGUP	National Programme for Shared Urban Management
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

PSGE	Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon
RBM	Results-based management
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SNDS	National Statistical Development Strategy
TRIDOM	Conservation of Transboundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon
UN	United Nations
UNCHRD	United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa
UNCT	United Nations country team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNS	United Nations System
UNTA	United Nations Programme of Technical Assistance
USD	United States Dollar
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This ADR (Assessment of Development Results) is an independent evaluation conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2015. It assesses the UNDP contribution to the development of Gabon in general terms over the two most recent UNDP programming cycles (2007-2011 and 2012-2016). Recommendations are made for future UNDP programme strategies in Gabon, and in particular for the next programming cycle. The ADR reviewed the UNDP strategy and performance in Gabon in terms of the 2007-2011 and 2012-2016 programmes and action plans. The ADR team endeavoured to understand the contributions made over the two cycles, in terms of effectiveness (including cross-cutting issues of promoting gender equality and poverty eradication), and the quality of activities according to the criteria of relevance, efficiency and sustainability.

PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS

The key observations about the programme results, positioning and influence factors are shown below, organised according to actual contributions and their quality.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Effectiveness

The programme has made strategic and operational contributions in areas of:

- **Environment:** with improvements in the management framework and instruments. Following an institutional assessment carried out in the context of the Second Communication on Climate Change, the National Climate Council was set up, followed by specific plans and strategies for critical resources, including wetlands, coastal areas and land allocation.
- **Governance:** with the development of global and sectoral strategies for steering the economy and general governance policies, and greater impetus for decentralisation through a dedicated strategy and substantial support for local government capacity.
- **Poverty:** at the strategic level, building capacity to orient policies in favour of the most deprived (operationalising and monitoring the MDGs) and improving the resilience of the poor, particularly in the area of health where indicators for the prevention and treatment of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS have improved.
- **Gender:** at the strategic level, contributing to the creation of a national sectoral policy, and at operational level with projects succeeding in including a large proportion of women in their target group: for example 60% of women among the 5,000 people impacted by the 14 community projects funded by the ARTGOLD (Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance) project.

QUALITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Relevance

The programme is strategically relevant as all of its constituent parts align perfectly with the country's development priorities as set out in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE) on the one hand, and the UNDP strategic plan and positions on the other. However, whilst there is general evidence of operational relevance in that the programme brings appropriate solutions, there are areas of weakness. The household waste collection project in the less developed urban areas of major towns is inappropriate as it increases the wealth gap making poorer populations pay for the waste collection service that residents of affluent town-centre neighbourhoods

do not pay for. The fact that ARTGOLD is currently only active in the five wealthiest provinces also raises problems from the point of view of a pro-poor approach, which should be an integral part of all UNDP strategies.

Efficiency

There are real signs of efficiency in the programme. The use of international UNDP management standards contributes to ensuring a good cost-benefit ratio, and the fact that the programme is chosen by a range of partners to implement parts of their investment strategies illustrates management efficiency. The programme has been the framework for delivering resources from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). It has also managed funds from Shell-Gabon for operationalising the Ndougou health department. The State, at central and local government levels, allocates significant resources to UNDP in order to take advantage of its technical capacity to deliver on investment. Although these experiences are evidence of a degree of programme efficiency, conversely the failure of some of them is a sign that efficiency is being eroded. UNDP has lost GEF and Shell-Gabon funding in part because the added-value of the programme frameworks was no longer meeting expectations.

Sustainability

Sustainability faces definite threats, and is weakened by institutional instability. Frequent changes in administration, in an environment where institutional memory is weak, creates a situation where incoming governments have to start from scratch. This restricts the commitment and willingness of national stakeholders to capitalise on the achievements of the programme, which, objectively, is seen as a donor intervention that brings with it personal benefits. Notwithstanding, institutional achievements to which the programme has contributed are gradually bedding down in sectors such as the environment. However, in poverty eradication and the health sub-sector, the achievements of the GFATM are deteriorating, with indicators for the prevention

and treatment of targeted diseases on the decline. The suspension of Gabon as a recipient of these funds was a clear sign that the strategic capacity that UNDP had tried to establish in the sector was unable to thrive. Two evaluations over two successive semesters concluded that the country results were no longer sufficient, and the information system for monitoring them even less so.

Positioning

UNDP positioning is adequate in terms of the strategic themes of governance, poverty reduction and natural resource management. It is in these focus areas that the added-value offered by the agency is acknowledged. Yet the performance of this positioning has become increasingly hindered by two factors. Firstly, by the office's dwindling technical capacity, which resulted in it losing the management of GEF and Shell-Gabon resources; and secondly, by the fact that Gabon, now an upper middle income country, wants to restructure its cooperation relationships and align its partners even more closely with its specific development needs.

The reputation of UNDP, and the comparative advantages attributed to it, has greatly contributed to the programme substance. This positive reputation is based on proven expertise in the focus areas of governance, the environment and poverty reduction, and has enabled the office to raise programme funds from three types of partners. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was the main programme donor for a large part of cycle I. UNDP capacity in funding applications and portfolio management enabled it to become the main beneficiary of GFATM in Gabon, managing grants on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the country. From this position, UNDP has greatly contributed to recording public health indicators. In a more localised way, the same situation has prevailed with Shell-Gabon, whose funding UNDP used to support the health department of Ndougou, where oil sites operated by this company are located.

UNDP also drew support for its activities in the environment sector in Gabon from the Global

Environment Fund. Here again, the agency's technical expertise enabled successful attainment and management of funding throughout practically the whole of cycle I of the programme. The best institutional outcomes were achieved on this basis, in terms of thorough background analysis for the Second National Communication on Climate Change. Subsequent management frameworks and tools for the sector have contributed to bedding down improved management capacity.

Finally, the recognised added value of UNDP has enabled the office to position itself not just as a key technical partner for the country, but also as a recipient of state funding to deliver projects devised in partnership with national counterparts¹. The State is practically the only donor for all governance work under the programme. The Anti-corruption and Anti-money Laundering Strategy, developed in the previous cycle and beginning implementation in the current cycle, is entirely state-funded. Although UNDP allocates funds to the project 'Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance' (ART-GOLD), most of the funding for this activity in support of decentralisation comes from the Gabon State budget. In addition, some local governments allocate a portion of their investment budget to the programme.

However, the high proportion of state funding for the programme also hinders implementation. Unfortunately, this financial assistance is being implemented with a degree of uncertainty. First, there are problems of timescales. The state budget is not operational until the end of the first quarter of the year, and in some years state partnerships are implemented later than that. The ARTGOLD project almost had to recall field staff because state funding was delayed. The PACLEI (Project in support of the National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment) also experienced delays in getting off the ground (launched last May). Over the last year, these interruptions in the availability of

state funding have been exacerbated by a drop in oil revenues. In the last year, the price of oil has fallen by half, placing a burden on the public finances of a country where oil makes up 50% of the budget and 80% of export income.

The re-categorisation of Gabon as an upper middle income country (MIC) affects the programme in a variety of ways. Firstly, sources of official development assistance which have traditionally funded development have dried up, although the needs have not, with significant gaps remaining particularly in social services and infrastructure. Traditional donors are not stepping into the breach precisely because of the MIC status. As such, the programme has to find alternative funding to complement national budget support, the uncertainties of which are set out above.

The continuous depletion of capacity in the UNDP country office has ultimately undermined its value and diminished the resources of the programme. Recently the office has seen a significant haemorrhaging of staff, with retirements and contracts coming to an end, many of whom have not been replaced. At the time of this assessment, the strategic staff consisted of the resident representative, an economic advisor, two technical advisors and a programme assistant. Operations have been slimmed down with some roles redirected to regional offices, which offer remote assistance.

This situation has resulted in a depletion of internal capacity, with negative impact on the programme which in this context has, for example, seen the funding from the Global Environment Facility transferred to the World Bank. Two national counterparts (the Environment Ministry and the Ministry for the Economy and Finance) suggested that this was due to a view that UNDP had lost key staff and technical capacity in the environment sector, and insufficient responsiveness and initiative on the part

1 The Gabonese Government's contribution to funding UNDP programmes significantly increased between cycle 2007-2011 and cycle 2012-2016, from 3% to 10% of CPAP resources, source Atlas (see Chapter III).

of UNDP. Contributing to this was a period of instability of management with the succession in a short time period of three resident representatives (including an intern).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reassess the intervention context to that of a middle-income country

As an upper middle income country, Gabon is increasingly clear on its particular development and development cooperation needs. In-depth consultations should be organised with the government, at political and technical level, and with civil society, to determine the best entry points and possible impact of UNDP cooperation.

2. Restructure the country office

The UNDP country office is currently losing responsibility for the management of funds, including GEF and Shell-Gabon, due to the continuous depletion of its technical capacity (low staff numbers with inadequate profiles). On the basis of the conclusions of the previous recommendation, new remits for cooperation need to be defined, and relevant staff profiles identified. In this way, taking into account current budget restrictions and the need to attract state funding more effectively, greater numbers of local staff can be recruited with the highest standards of skills and productivity, based on clearly defined criteria.

3. Refocus the programme at a strategic level

There have been many failures in the programme's operational interventions, such as the lack of impact of income-generating activities and direct funding to associations in phase I of ARTGOLD, anecdotal evidence of the unequal impact of waste collection services, and inconclusive operationalization of the Ndougou health department. For each new project, the country office should focus its efforts at the strategic level, providing services such as research, organising

stakeholders, capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. Operational aspects can be delegated to a national implementing agency, supported by a United Nations agency with expertise in the particular field.

4. Improve monitoring and evaluation of the programme

A very small number of evaluations have been conducted over the 2007-2015 period; and joint reviews with the government have become increasingly rare in recent years. This makes it difficult to detect problems quickly enough to resolve them. In the absence of a monitoring and evaluation unit, a member of the office team must be given responsibility and accountability for this function; drawing up and delivering an overall annual monitoring and evaluation plan.

5. Use state funding as leverage for the development of national capacity

Where UNDP has handed management of grants from GFATM over to the State, these resources were quickly suspended on the grounds of inadequate capacity and results. To get national partner agencies to a point where they can implement activities themselves, UNDP needs to conduct a specific analysis of their capacity requirements, and systematically plan and implement relevant capacity building using appropriate techniques, whilst involving them in the financial management of projects.

6. Develop and implement a strategy to win back resources and funding

In recent years, the country office has lost partners (GEF, GFATM and Shell-Gabon) and needs to win them back, whilst also building new relationships. Building on the previous recommendations, with stronger, relevant strategic focus and technical capacity, UNDP should build a more systematic approach to recovering funding relationships, with a regularly evaluated ad-hoc plan and appropriate institutional communication, with buy-in from the whole office.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Assessment of Development Results (ADR) for Gabon was conducted in 2015 to review the strategy and performance of UNDP Gabon throughout the 2007-2011 and 2012-2016 country programme cycles and action plans. The ADR team reviewed the former cycle to better understand the effectiveness of actions implemented by UNDP and identify any outcomes, and the current cycle to assess the quality and scope of the process.

The ADR is an independent evaluation conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It assesses the UNDP contribution to development of the country in general terms, in relation to the criterion of effectiveness, and the quality of this contribution through the criteria of relevance, efficiency and sustainability. Recommendations are made for future UNDP programme strategies in Gabon and in particular for the next programming cycle.

1.1 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

Over the last decade, in line with the country's development priorities and within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), UNDP has set out its interventions in Gabon around two successive programming cycles: 2007-2011 and 2012-2016.

Cycle 2007-2011 included three areas of intervention in line with national priorities, the UNDP strategic plan, and UNDAF:

- Poverty reduction and pursuing the millennium development goals (MDGs).
- Promoting good governance.
- Disease control.

Gender was considered to be cross-cutting and present in every part of the programme. The importance of national capacity-building and promoting good governance both at central and local/ community level was highlighted. National implementation was chosen with a view to building capacity for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the selected projects and programmes.²

Cycle 2012-2016 consists of two main strands:

- Strengthening economic, democratic and environmental governance.
- Promoting the well-being of populations and increasing the participation of all in growth.

The intervention strategy for both areas focuses on developing capacity and ownership of results to strengthen sustainability. Promoting participation in building economic growth and the diversification of sources of growth will enable the institutions responsible for promoting the private sector to play their role effectively. The programme also gives strategic support to a range of actions to promote completion of the decentralisation process.³

The change in status of Gabon to upper middle income country has had an impact on the coop-

2 Country Programme for Gabon (2007-2011).

3 Country Programme for Gabon (2012-2016).

eration framework with UNDP. Despite the fact that the country continues to experience significant development gaps, and will fail to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, this new status restricts the country's access to official development assistance funding. This makes external resource mobilisation all the more difficult for UNDP, and makes the State an even more important source of funding for its programme.

The UNDP Gabon strategy and performance were evaluated from two perspectives.

First, analysis related to programme activities in the three areas of intervention: poverty eradication, governance and natural resource management. Performance was evaluated against evaluation criteria under the following categories:

1. Evaluation of the UNDP contribution to Gabon's development results:
 - Effectiveness of UNDP activities in terms of achieving the objectives set.
2. Evaluation of the quality of the UNDP contribution:
 - Relevance of UNDP projects and programmes in terms of existing development needs as set out in national priorities and as felt by populations;
 - Efficiency of UNDP activities in terms of the balance between results achieved and the utilisation of human and financial resources;
 - Sustainability of results.

Second, the ADR evaluated the strategic positioning of UNDP in Gabon, highlighting the role played by the agency in the local cooperation arena, and the specific strategies it pursued to support Gabon's development efforts. The positioning and strategies of UNDP were analysed

taking into account both the organisation's mandate and the country's development priorities. This involved systematic analysis of the context and policies in the areas of poverty reduction, governance and the environment, without losing sight of cross-cutting themes such as gender, human rights and capacity building.

1.2 EVALUATION PROCESS AND APPROACH

The ADR was conducted in Gabon in accordance with the ADR guidelines and the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development Results, as well as standard evaluation practice. For each aspect of the programme, the ADR presents its observations and assessment based on all of the criteria listed above and responding to questions raised in the evaluation matrix⁴. The process also evaluated the way in which various factors may have affected UNDP performance.

The evaluation was conducted by an independent team made up of a project manager and evaluation specialist at the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office in New York, an international evaluation consultant, a team leader and two national consultants. This team was initially supported by a research assistant at the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office and an administrative assistant at the UNDP country office in Libreville. The scope of the assessment was determined by the Independent Evaluation Office following a preparatory mission in the field organised at the end of February 2015. The evaluation framework and methods were established based on UNDP frameworks but also on discussions with the Regional Service Centre for Africa. At the start of the assessment, preliminary consultations were also carried out at central level by UNDP in New York. Lists of documents reviewed and people interviewed by the ADR team are included in the annexes.

4 More information on how criteria were developed is available in the ADR Handbook.

In the field, a total of twelve projects were reviewed, that is all projects implemented in the two cycles covered by the assessment. The portfolio is small due to the size of the country office which itself is explained by the context of a middle income country where development receives limited international official development assistance. These projects have been placed into four clusters of outcomes, the programme impact on which has been observed. The evaluation team visited projects in three out of the country's nine provinces: Estuaire, Ogoué maritime and Woleu-Ntem. These three regions make up the western part of the country and for the most part are on the Atlantic coast. This part of the country is the most densely populated, which justifies why development projects are more concentrated there than in other parts of the country where populations are generally quite dispersed.

Several groups of stakeholders were met as part of the primary data collection process: (i) national administrations, (ii) local administrations, (iii) civil society organisations, (iv) direct beneficiaries, and (v) technical and financial partners. Three forms of interview were used: (i) individual interviews, (ii) group interviews and (iii) focus groups with beneficiaries on project sites.

The secondary data used were taken from a range of sources, collated as follows:

- UNDP methodological guidelines,
- UNDP/ UN strategic cooperation documents (MDGs/UNDAF/CPD/ CPAP),
- Gabonese strategic documents (PSRP, PSGE, sectoral documents),
- programming documents from CPAP projects (annual workplans),
- CPAP project evaluation documents, and
- other UNDP and Gabonese documents on development cooperation.

The main data collection process in Gabon took place between 18 May and 6 June 2015. This

field phase gave way to the analysis phase which ended with the delivery of the first interim report at the end of June. The evaluation team gave initial observations and undertook preliminary analysis of the mission, first at the country office, then by teleconference. Triangulation methods were used to prevent any information sources taking precedence. The increasing need to take into account secondary data (reports, studies and approved statistics) was taken into account as set out in the previous paragraph.

1.3 EVALUABILITY AND LIMITATIONS

The ADR is a particular kind of exercise. It involves collecting primary and secondary data and drawing on it to conduct an analysis which highlights UNDP contributions to the country's development. Attention is paid not to activities, but to the outcomes produced by these in the country. As such, the ADR differs from other evaluations such as the mid-term review. Whilst the latter is an operational review centred on a current programme, the ADR establishes a longer-term perspective by focusing on the long-term added value in terms of development produced by cooperation.

Analysis was carried out before and during the inception mission in order to understand the constraints and opportunities involved in data collection. This process is used as a basis for identifying data collection methods and helps to give an initial idea of ADR requirements for data collection in terms of resources and time. The Gabon country office has not evaluated outcomes but has carried out a very small number of project evaluations which were used as inputs for analysis. They are limited in number and as such limited the *evaluability* of the country office's development activities. The four evaluation reports below were used.

- Final evaluation of the project Conservation of Transboundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (TRIDOM); 2014.

- Cycle 2007-2011 mid-term review, 2010.
- Final evaluation of the project Shared Urban Management of Solid Waste in Libreville; 2009.
- Final evaluation of the Fourth Round of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria 'Malaria part' Gabon; 2008.

The evaluation report is broken down as follows:

1. an introduction setting out the context and methodology for the evaluation (Chapter 1),
2. a presentation of the development context and challenges in Gabon (Chapter 2),
3. a review of UNDP responses to this situation (Chapter 3),
4. a presentation of the results observed in terms of contributions to the country's development (Chapter 4),
5. an analysis of UNDP strategic positioning (Chapter 5), and
6. the main conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 6).

Chapter 2

NATIONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

2.1 PHYSICAL AND HUMAN CONTEXT

Gabon is a central African state located on the Equator, along the western coast, between latitudes 2°30' N and 3°55' S. It shares a border with Equatorial Guinea in the northeast, with Cameroon in the east and with Congo Brazzaville in the south and has 800km of Atlantic coastline to the west. Gabon is a highly forested country, with almost 22 million hectares (approximately 80% of its area). Gabon has a population of 1.8 million for an area of 267 667 km², according to the latest census, giving a low population density of 6 inhabitants per square kilometre. The majority of the population is concentrated in the major urban centres (Libreville, Port

Gentil, Franceville, Moanda, Oyem etc.), which are home to over 80% of Gabonese people. Table 1 provides some of the basic information and demographic indicators for the country.

2.2 INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Gabon is a secular republic which achieved international recognition in 1960. The current Constitution arose out of the National Conference on 26 March 1991 and replaces the 1961 Constitution which was partially revised in 1975. It has been amended many times since, most recently through law 047/2010 dated 12 January 2011. Executive power is held by the President of the Republic, who is Head of State and

Table 1. Gabon indicators and information

Key indicators	Data
Population	1.8 million
Land area	257 670 km ²
Main towns	Libreville, Port-Gentil, Franceville, Oyem, Lambaréné
Official language	French
Religions	Christianity (85 %), Islam, Animism
Population under the age of 15 (% of total)	38.5 %
Population aged between 15 and 64 (% of total)	56.5 %
Population over the age of 65 (% of total)	5 %
Urban population growth (annual %)	2.7 %
Population growth rate (annual %)	2.4 %
Population density (people per square kilometre)	6.5
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	39.1
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	56.1
Maternal mortality rate (per 1,000,000 live births) (2013)	240
Fertility rate (births per woman)	4.136
Life expectancy at birth (years)	63

Sources: UNDP Gabon; World Development Indicators (2014)

appoints a Prime Minister who is Head of Government. Legislation is passed in a bicameral system: a lower chamber with 120 members and a senate with 102 members.

The country is subdivided into several administrative entities, of which only two are local entities governed by elected assemblies. Nine provinces are divided into departments, those departments into districts and the districts into cantons. Decentralised powers only exist at departmental and municipal levels, with the devolved power approach still prevailing over actual decentralisation. A decentralisation law passed in 1996 and currently being amended has yet to result in any real change. Governors, prefects and sub-prefects are appointed and represent the President of the Republic and his administration locally, to exercise legal oversight over any legal acts by departmental and municipal elected representatives, but in reality they have an influence that extends far beyond this legal requirement. The country has a bulging administration to say the least, with some 90,000 officials. At the same time, decentralised government has limited human resources dedicated to promoting local development.

2.3 POLITICAL CONTEXT

With only one brief interval, the country has been governed by the same political party since 2 December 1967, although since the 1990 National Conference several opposition parties have shared power as part of a full multi-party system established in the Constitution. The presidential elections which are regularly called and won by the incumbent party, are the subject of repeated protests by opposition parties. This fosters a highly polarised and generally hostile political climate, characterised by repeated socio-economic crises and disturbances. The parties do not agree on the biometric electoral register used. Its reliability is contested by opposition parties and members of civil society, and some have even brought legal proceedings against its technical operator.

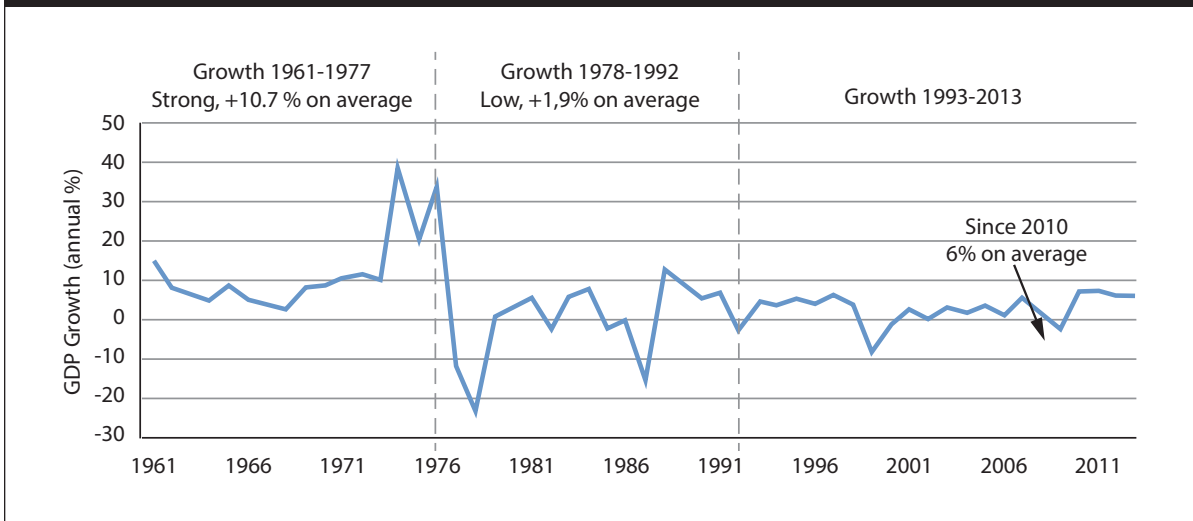
2.4 MACROECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

Gabon is an upper middle income country. With a per capita gross national income of 12,521 USD in 2014, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ranks it as the third wealthiest African country according to this indicator. Gabon owes this status mainly to its oil resources, on which its economy is heavily reliant. The oil sector accounted for 46% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013, whereas the service sector accounted for 35.3%, industry 13.1%, and agriculture and forestry 5.6%. The oil sector contributed 83.3% of the value of exports and 51.2% of state revenues in 2013. The same domination by the oil sector was observed in 2014. In 2015, state revenues from the oil sector fell due to a drop in oil prices to an estimated 586 billion FCFA, less than half the 1,226 billion FCFA received in 2014. Manganese and timber rank second and third among products exported by Gabon with 10% and 4.2% of total exports respectively for 2013.

In light of the current climate of falling global natural resource prices and dwindling national oil reserves, this dependency on oil in a country with many other resources is weakening the Gabonese economy. This situation, combined with a policy of major works begun with the arrival in power of the current Head of State, produces significant challenges for the public finances. In 2013, for the first time in fifteen years, the country recorded a total budget deficit estimated at almost 2% of GDP and, excluding oil revenues, a budget deficit of 24.4%.

Nonetheless, the economy is showing some signs of expansion with a GDP growth rate of 5.5% in 2011 and 5.6% in 2013. With the current fall in global oil prices, the country is subject to severe budgetary pressures. According to the World Bank, economic growth should decelerate in 2014 and fall below the initial forecast of 6%, particularly due to budget cuts under the 2014 Finance Amendment Law. However, it should not fall below the 5% which could be reasonably forecast as average growth over the short and medium term, given the improvement observed in the yield

Figure 1. Economic growth in Gabon (1961-2013)



Source: Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (2012); World Bank (2014)

of major oil fields and renewed vigour in non-oil sectors (extraction, processing, and construction).⁵

In 2005, debt was still high and amounted to 50 % of GDP. Servicing of foreign debt had a negative impact on public investment. This indicator has improved significantly, in particular with the early repayment in 2007 and 2008 of the Paris Club debt, amounting to 1.5 billion dollars. In 2014, foreign debt amounted to more than 25% of GDP, a ratio which is far below the maximum prescribed by the Economic Community of Central African States. Today, any external resources that might affect this indicator are systematically subject to an “opportunity visa” issued by the Presidency. Cooperation programmes already signed by donors have come to be cancelled and the resources returned because this opportunity visa was not obtained.

2.5 SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT AND MDGS

Classified an MIC since 2010, the 2014 Human Development Report ranked Gabon 112th out of a total of 187 countries, with a Human Development Index (HDI) of 0.674, well above the

average in Sub-Saharan Africa (0.502), and above medium HDI countries (0.614). In terms of progression, Gabon saw its HDI increase by 0.21% between 1990 and 2000 and 0.5% over the 2000-2013 period, a much smaller increase than in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole (0.52% and 1.37% respectively over the same periods) and medium HDI countries (1.09% and 1.17%).

Gabon has an above average position in Sub-Saharan Africa for each HDI dimension: life expectancy at birth is 63.5 years compared to 56.8 years, mean years of schooling is 7.4 years compared to 4.8 years, and income per capita is 16,977 USD expressed in purchasing power parity (PPP) compared to 3,152 USD. When compared with the performance of medium human development countries, they have longer life expectancy at birth (67.9 years), but fewer mean years of schooling and lower per capita income than Gabon (5.5 years and 5,960 dollars expressed in PPP).

The poverty rate increased from 27% in 1990 to 33.5% in 2005, before falling slightly to 30% in 2014. Thus, over the period 1990-2014, poverty increased overall, despite strong growth, social measures aimed at the most vulnerable

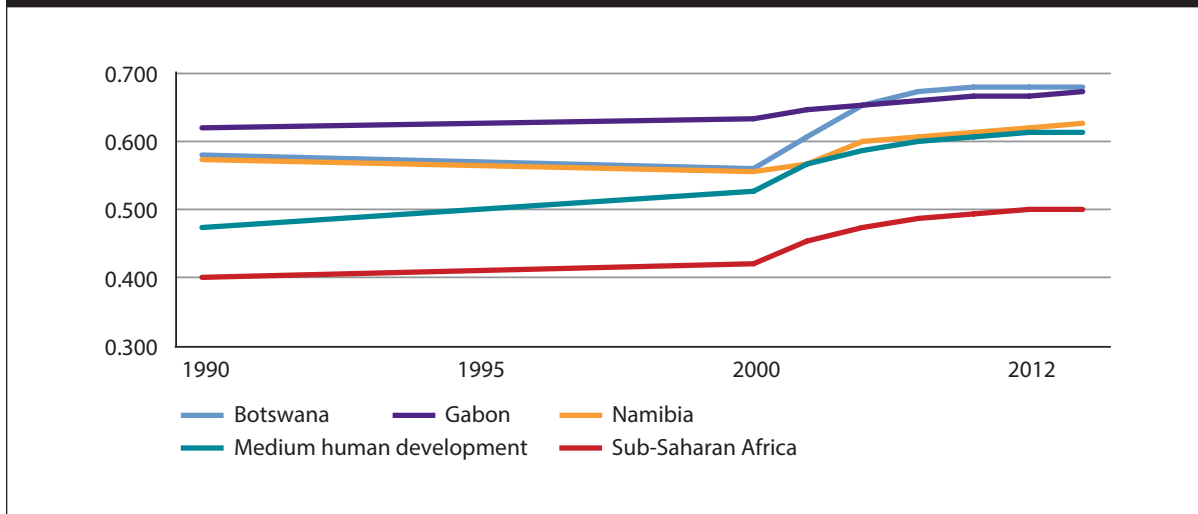
⁵ <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gabon/overview>

and increased social welfare since 2010. The total unemployment rate stands at 20.4% and youth unemployment at 36%.⁶ Almost 74% of unemployed people live in urban areas. Unemployment among women (40%) is twice that of men (20%).

Progress towards most MDG targets, summarised in table 2 below, remains inadequate. Low population density in some areas hinders

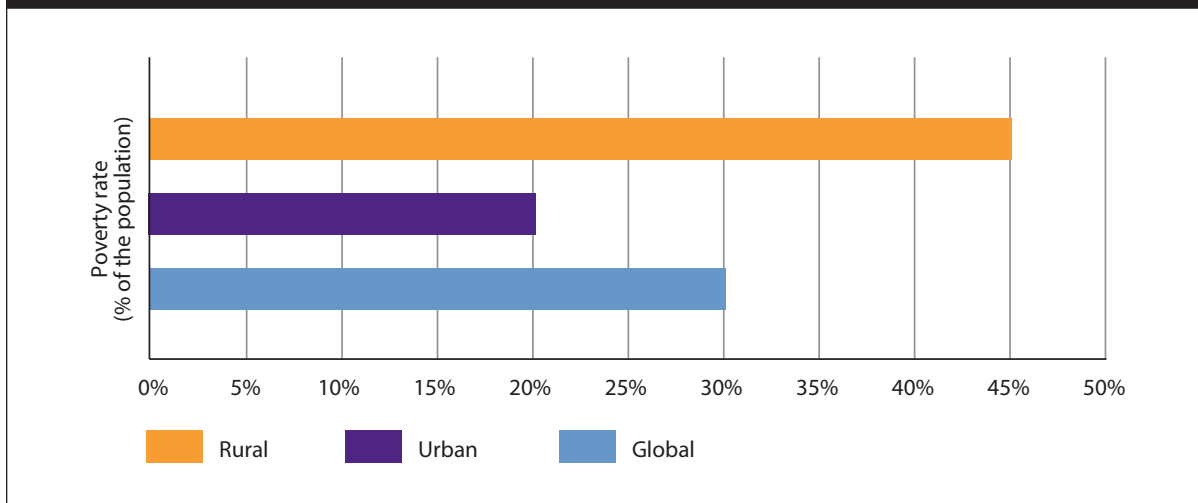
the distribution of, and access to, social infrastructures, in particular education, health, water and sanitation. As for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1), one third of Gabonese people live under the national poverty line. For education (MDG2), net enrolment stands at 96.4% but the education system is still experiencing a low internal rate of return with both high repetition rates and low primary completion rate.

Figure 2. HDI trends in Gabon in context (1990-2013)



Source: UNDP, Human development index (2013)

Figure 3. Incidence of poverty



Source: Human investment strategy 2013, Gabon/Presidency

⁶ National Employment and Unemployment Survey, 2010.

In the fields of child and maternal health (MDGs 4 and 5), the trend is encouraging but inadequate. For 2012, the under-five mortality rate was 65 deaths per 1,000 live births and the maternal mortality ratio stood at 133 deaths per 100,000 live births. For MDG 6, Gabon has reduced the spread of HIV/AIDS, with the infection rate falling from its peak of 8.1% in 2000 to 5.2% in 2009 and 4.1% in 2012.⁷

In terms of environmental sustainability (MDG 7), Gabon remains a reference in terms of the proportion of land and marine areas protected

(19.2%). Gabon's thirteen national parks cover 11% of its forest area, while lagoon and marine ecosystems are protected by regulations controlling their exploitation⁸. Deforestation levels are low, due to low demographic pressure given the small population and very high rates of urbanisation. Nevertheless, sanitation is still a problem for many households, with only 37.8% of people having access to suitable sanitation.⁹ For MDG 8, as explained above, Gabon has sustainable levels of debt and is today striving to enter into development cooperation frameworks that preserve this viability.

Table 2. Millennium Development Goal Indicators

Selected MDG indicators	Year 1	Year 2
MDG 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger		
Proportion of the population living on less than \$1.25 (PPP) per day (%)	4.8 (2005)	
Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption (%)	11.7 (1991)	< 5 (2013)
MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education		
Net enrolment ratio in primary education (enrolments per 100 school-age children)	92.1 (1997)	
MDG 3: Promote gender equality and empower women		
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education	1.00 (1992)	0.97 (2011)
Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament (%)	13.3 (1990)	15.0 (2014)
MDG 4: Reduce child mortality		
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	92.7 (1990)	56.1 (2013)
MDG 5: Improve maternal health		
Infant mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	380 (1990)	240 (2013)
MDG 6: Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases		
HIV prevalence (# of new HIV infections per year per 100 people aged 15-49)	0.88 (2001)	0.10 (2012)
Number of deaths from tuberculosis per 100,000 inhabitants	41 (1990)	44 (2012)
MDG 7: Ensure environmental sustainability		
Proportion of land area covered by forest (%)	85.4 (1990)	85.4 (2010)
Proportion of the population with access to safe drinking water (%)	79.4 (1994)	92.2 (2012)
MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development		
Internet users (per 100 inhabitants)	0.0 (1990)	9.2 (2013)

Source: mdgs.un.org (2014)

⁷ UNDP Gabon; www.ga.undp.org/content/gabon/fr/home/countryinfo/

⁸ Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon, Vision 2025 and Strategic Orientations 2011-2016.

⁹ <http://www.ga.undp.org/content/gabon/fr/home/mdgoverview/>

2.6 DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES: NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND POLICIES

Gabon has become increasingly aware of the fragility of its economic model and is striving to take a more diversified approach to development, embracing the private sector and with a greater focus on alleviating poverty through growth. The 2006 Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP) was drafted with this in mind, and aimed to reduce poverty by 4 points by 2010, based on a 4% increase in GDP in real terms. This was hugely ambitious, given the average growth of 1.7% achieved by the country in the previous year. The implementation of the GPRSP ultimately came up against political instability towards the end of the regime of the second President of the Republic, combined with the “absence of a structured consultative mechanism between the Government and donors; and weaknesses in preparing operations in the lending programme.”¹⁰

With the arrival in power of the new Head of State, a new strategic cycle was developed. Whereas the GPRSP was the result of close collaboration between international partners and the State, the State produced the summary programme document alone. Entitled ‘Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon’ (PSGE), the stated aim was:

By placing the human at the heart of its development, Gabon Emergent intends to achieve sustainable development and prosperity for all by 2025. Emergence will be based on an educated, open and tolerant population and will result in a growing middle class, which will be majority group by 2025. It will introduce a living environment that will offer each citizen the maximum of opportunities to take responsibility for supporting themselves and achieve fulfil-

*ment. Emergence will also be reflected in the quality of institutions, with the building of a major democracy which places an emphasis on safeguarding human rights and the rights of citizens, social stability, promoting high quality political dialogue and a strong feeling of belonging to the Gabonese state, over and above any ethnic considerations. It will take the form of greater regional and international reach, with Gabon fulfilling its role as the powerhouse of regional integration and as the global model of the green economy.*¹¹

The Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon has three main strands:

- i) consolidating the foundations of emergence;
- ii) developing the pillars of emergence; and
- iii) shared prosperity.

At the request of national counterparts, UNDP has assisted with developing and incorporating a human development dimension in the PSGE.

From a more operational perspective, the PSGE pursues emergence and human development through structural transformation of their productive infrastructure, with key policy objectives including:

- i) industrialisation of commodities;
- ii) developing high added-value services;
- iii) developing a green economy to better harness and preserve the country’s potential in this area; and
- iv) strengthening reforms to improve the business environment so as to attract more direct foreign and domestic investment.

Against this backdrop, the quality of economic and democratic governance remains a particular challenge, clearly understood and stated as such in the document:

10 <http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Gabon%20-%202011-2015%20Country%20Strategy%20Paper.pdf>

11 Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon – Vision 2025, strategic direction 2011-2016, July 2012.

Table 3. Budgetary expenditure per sector as a percentage of nominal GDP (2005-2009)

Sector	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Average 2005 – 2009
Education	2.9	3.0	3.2	3.1	3.8	3.2
Health	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0	1.4	1.2
General services (including sovereignty expenditure)	6.7	6.0	6.1	5.9	7.5	6.4
Public works	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.5
Social security safety net	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6	0.5

Source: General Reports of the Court of Auditors; World Bank (2012)

It is about putting in place a development administration with the ability to effectively support PSGE ambitions; eliminating the bottlenecks in public action and fighting against the corruption that plagues the effectiveness of public resources. Strong actions must be targeted at the most vulnerable. It is about clearly identifying where they are and what their needs are. In this context, the national statistical apparatus must be strengthened as an essential link in the results-based management of development.¹²

According to the World Bank, “a major challenge for Gabon remains the effective use of its oil resources to diversify its economy, improving its basic social services and infrastructure, while accumulating financial savings that will enable the country to avoid sudden and sharp cuts in public spending once the oil resources have been used up.”¹³

Analysis of the budget breakdown between 2005 and 2009 shows that, until recently general services (non-productive expenditure), including sovereignty expenditure, have absorbed a large proportion (up to 30%) of the national budget. Moreover, this situation is accompanied by frequent overshooting of the budget approved by Parliament. All of this has a negative impact on spending on infrastructure and productive sectors, which is generally below the budgeted amounts.

In this way, the development gap is widening in the country: for example, public expenditure on education for the period accounts for 3.2% of GDP, compared to 4% for sub-Saharan Africa and 5.8% for countries with income levels similar to that of Gabon (World Bank, 2012).

2.7 SUPPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

Given Gabon’s status as an upper middle income country, official development assistance (ODA) remains proportionally low. At 77.3 million US dollars in 2012, since 2002 it has been fluctuating between less than 1% and 1.6% of GDP (OECD figure). ODA is targeted at funding economic infrastructure, health, the environment and education. Indeed, efforts to internalise these types of resources in the overall state budget can be observed. Whereas just 22% of ODA was incorporated in this way in 2007, this ratio had risen to 92% in 2010, according to OECD statistics.

Over the same period ODA became increasingly fragmented, which is possibly a factor in reduced effectiveness, at least under certain thresholds. An OECD report on Gabon noted that, “No practical measures have yet to be taken to improve the complementarity of efforts by donors and the division of work at country-level. Nevertheless, spontaneous initiatives in

¹² <http://www.ga.undp.org/content/gabon/fr/home/post-2015/mdgoverview.html>

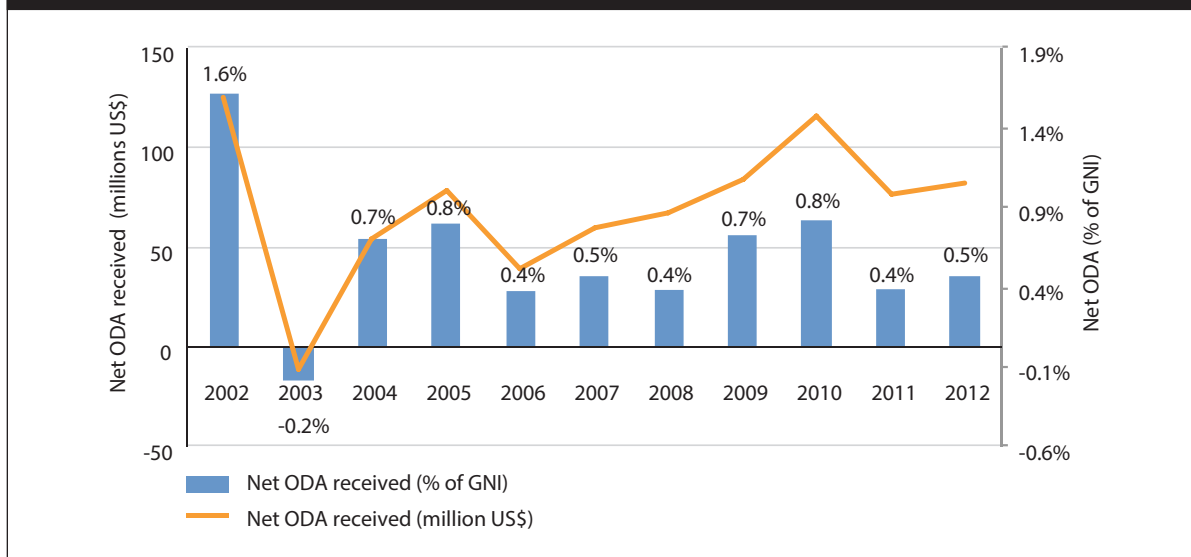
¹³ World Bank Gabon Public Expenditure Review (2012).

this direction can be observed, although they are not systematic in nature.”¹⁴

Between 2004 and 2013, a total of three donors (France, European Union and Japan) provided 84% of ODA to Gabon. Of the bilateral partners, France is by far the largest donor contributing around 63% of ODA over the same period, which

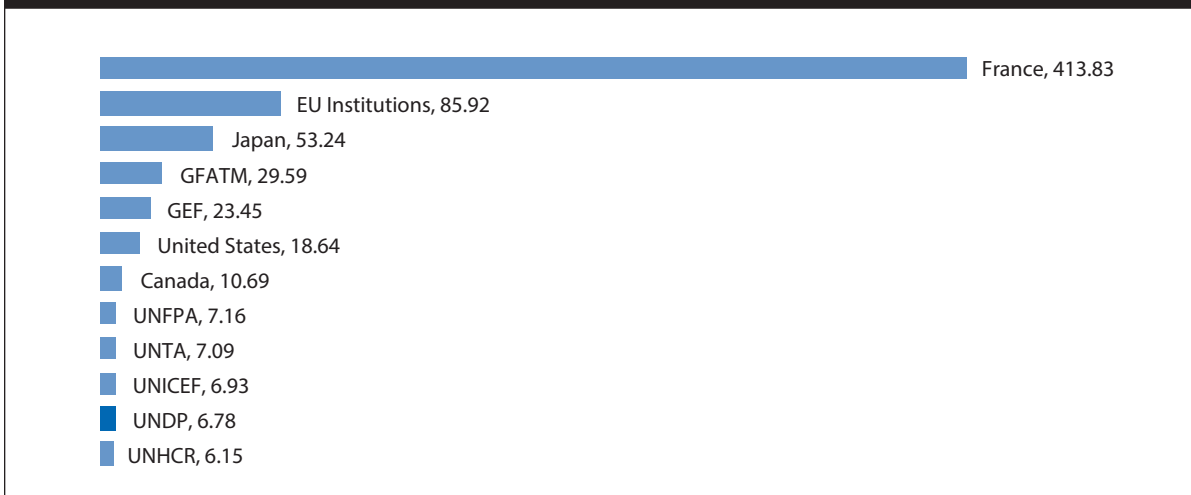
translated to an average 50 million Euro in annual assistance, essentially in the form of debt swaps/cancellation and new lending under the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. As Gabon is considered to have the means to fund a significant portion of its own development, the French Development Agency has been able to increase its volume of lending (France, Foreign Ministry)¹⁵.

Figure 4. Official development assistance trends



Source: WDI (2014)

Figure 5. ODA contributions to Gabon by donor (2004-2013) US\$ million



Source : OECD/Query Wizard for International Development Statistics(QWIDS) (2014)

14 Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration – Country Chapters, Gabon (2011): <http://www.oecd.org/fr/cad/efficacite/Gabon%205.pdf>

15 <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/gabon/la-france-et-le-gabon/>

Chapter 3

UNDP RESPONSES AND STRATEGIES

UNDP has been present and active in Gabon since November 1974. Since 2001, five-yearly United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) have been drawn up, providing fresh impetus for cooperation between countries and agencies within the United Nations system, under the leadership of UNDP. The resident representative of UNDP also acts as the resident coordinator for operational activities of the wider United Nations in Gabon. Poverty alleviation and sustainable human development are the principal objectives of interagency cooperation, through actions in the areas of governance, HIV/AIDS and the environment.

In 2001, the UN agencies represented in Gabon were: UNDP, World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), World Food Programme (WFP) and United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Outside of the United Nations, the IMF, World Bank and African Development Bank (ADB) were also represented. The Office of the Resident Coordinator oversaw collaboration between the Government and UN agencies not represented in Libreville, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). UN-Habitat, the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa

(UNCHRD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), are also involved in implementing UNDAF 2012-2016, though not present on the ground.

Over the last decade, in line with the country's development priorities and the UN-wide UNDAF, UNDP has set out its activities around two successive programming cycles: 2007-11 and 2012-16.

3.1 CYCLE 2007-2011

This cycle included three areas of intervention, in line with national priorities and the UNDP strategic plan, and was part of the UNDAF for the same period:

- poverty reduction and pursuing MDGs,
- promoting good governance, and
- disease control.

Gender was considered to be cross-cutting and as such present in every part of the programme. It also highlighted the importance of developing national capacity and promoting good governance both at central and local/ community levels. National implementation was chosen with a view to building capacity for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the selected projects and programmes.¹⁶

Specific activities through which the 2007-2011 programme was implemented are described below. These are taken from the mid-term review, triangulated through interviews with programme leads and technical advisors in post at the time of the evaluation.

16 Country Programme for Gabon (2007-2011)

Table 4. UNDP Country Programme for Gabon (2007-11) outcomes and financial data

Thematic areas	Country Programme Document (CPD) outcomes	Budget CPD (USD)	Expenditure 2007-2011 (USD)
Achievement of MDGs and poverty reduction	Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented.	1,800,000	1,509,215
	The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased.	1,100,000	7,138,804
	The most deprived and vulnerable population groups gain access to basic social services.	3,650,000	0
	Total	6,550,000	8,648,019
Promoting democratic governance	The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved.	4,605,000	1,898,771
	Local and community dynamics, including decentralised cooperation, are promoted.	4,975,000	0
	An efficient operational monitoring system is set up.	1,600,000	6,044,844
	Total	11,180,000	7,943,615
Responses to HIV/AIDS/malaria/tuberculosis	Target populations know how to prevent HIV infection.	650,000	0
	Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased.	9,800,000	10,595,003
	Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria.	7,900,000	12,736,729
	Epidemiological monitoring and information management are improved.	600,000	0
	Total	18,950,000	23,331,733
Grand total		36,680,000	40,405,595*

Source: CPD 2007-2011, Atlas

* Total expenditure includes 482,229 USD not allocated to a CPD outcome

1. Disease control programme: Funded by The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, this was a major activity for the country office in the area of health and included the following projects: HIV Round 3, Malaria Round 4, Malaria Round 5/phase 1, Malaria Round 5/phase 2 and HIV Round 3/Therapeutic continuity. It sat within the Ministry of Health, accounted for over half of the portfolio resources and covered the whole country.
2. Poverty eradication and support for MDGs and the PSRP: In addition to strategic support for monitoring the MDGs and PRSP, this included the programmes ARTGOLD/Local Development/Gabon, the Joint Food Security Project (HCR, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP) which covered 4 out of 9 regions and in which UNDP was responsible for income-generating activities, and a gender project.
3. Programme in support of South-South and decentralised cooperation: Sitting within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and supporting structures within the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, Francophone and Regional Integration of the Gabonese Republic, this programme covered the period 2008-2011 (*Prodoc*, May 2008). It oversaw cooperation between Gabon and other emerging countries, as well as between local government authorities in Gabon and with countries of the North.
4. Waste management project: This project sat with the Environment Ministry and accom-

panied the rolling out of a local strategy for waste collection in less developed neighbourhoods with limited access and was restricted to the city of Libreville. The results led to the Government deciding to roll the strategy out to other regions, accompanied by a follow-on project of the same name in the current cycle.

5. National Good Governance Programme: Funded by UNDP, this was the framework for supporting the State in setting out its key governance strategies. As a strategic programme, it was on a national scale and sat within the Ministry for the Economy. Its main outputs were a national action plan, a decentralisation strategy, and an anti-corruption and money laundering strategy, the subject of a dedicated project in the current cycle (PACLEI).
6. Support for the environment sector: A bundle of project activities enabled UNDP to support the Government in formulating its environmental policy instruments and producing its regular mandatory sectoral reports: 1st and 2nd Communications on Climate Change; Climate Change Adaptation, Biodiversity,

Waste Management (the predecessors of the three projects of the same name in the current cycle). All of these activities were funded by the Global Environment Facility, and have given rise to communications and the national climate change adaptation strategy. All of these sat within the Environment Ministry.

3.2 CYCLE 2012-2016

The current cycle has two main strands: 1) contributing to strengthening economic, democratic and environmental governance; and 2) promoting the well-being of populations and increasing the participation of all in growth.

In both of these areas, the intervention strategy focused on developing capacity and ownership for more sustainable results. Participation in greater economic growth, and diversification of the sources of growth defined by the Government, encourage the institutions responsible for promoting the private sector to play their role effectively. Moreover, UNDP strategically supports a range of actions to promote completion of the decentralisation process.¹⁷

Thematic area	UNDP/ CPD outcomes	CPD Budget (USD)	Expenditure 2012-2014 (USD)
Economic, democratic and environmental governance	The national statistical system produces quality information on monitoring of MDGs.	9,353,000	340,105
	The population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development of human capital.		18,105,456
	Total	9,353,000	18,445,561
Poverty reduction, fight against HIV/AIDS, emancipation of women	Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being.	10,530,000	1,429,542
	The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services.		2,665,800
	Total	10,530,000	4,095,342
General total		19,883,000	22,854,269*

Source: CPD 2012-2016, Atlas

* Total expenditure includes 313,365 USD not allocated to a CPD outcome

17 Country Programme for Gabon (2012-2016)

In operational terms, the current cycle includes the specific projects below, all of which are continuations of projects from the previous cycle, with one exception (Forestry Service Payment project):

1. ARTGOLD had reached mid-point at the time of the ADR. It promotes decentralisation and local development and covers five of the country's nine provinces. Jointly funded by UNDP and the State, and sitting within the Ministry for the Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development (which oversees the project at national level), it builds on a previous phase and has already undergone a mid-term review.
2. The project commonly known as PACLEI, supports the National Commission to Fight against Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI) and the National Financial Investigation Agency (ANIF) to implement the anti-corruption strategy. As it is strategic in nature it covers the whole country and is in the launch phase (2014-2017). It is funded by the State and officially sits within the Ministry for the Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development, though in reality the management staff of the two supported institutions (CNLCEI and ANIF) oversee the project at national level, with the Chair of CNCLEI providing national leadership. It is based on a previous phase, the main output of which was an ad-hoc national strategy which is being implemented in the current phase.
3. Conservation of Transboundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (TRIDOM) works to conserve biodiversity in two of the country's nine provinces. It is funded by the Global Environment Facility and led nationally by the Environment Ministry. It is in the process of being wound down.
4. The waste management project focuses on waste collection solutions in less developed urban areas in three of the country's nine provincial capitals (Libreville, Port Gentil and Oyem). After the success of an initial

phase which targeted Libreville, national partners requested for the project to be rolled out to other regional capitals. It is managed by the Environment Ministry and funded by UNDP and the State. It came to an end in 2015 after four years of implementation (2012-2015).

5. The 3rd Communication on Climate Change is in the process of being launched and follows previous phases (1st and 2nd Communications). It is part of a dynamic of strategic support for the country to honour its international commitments to monitor its environmental profile. As a strategic project it covers the whole country, is managed by the Environment Ministry and funded by the Global Environment Facility.
6. Capacity-building in support of the MDGs/SDGs focuses on building capacity to pursue and monitor the country's commitments to human development indicators. It is in its third year and will come to an end in 2016 (2013-2016). As a strategic activity, it covers the whole country, is managed by the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development, and funded by UNDP.
7. Forestry Service Payment project promises an innovative approach to sustaining environmental resources through the sustainable management of the Mbé River dam, with the development of an environmental service payment mechanism. It operates in one region (Médouneu), is managed by the Environment Ministry, and is funded by the Global Environment Facility.

3.3 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The management of programmes by the UNDP country office has improved over the last two programme cycles. A review of two audits of the office from 2005 and 2009 shows that efforts have been made to improve the quality of management of human and financial resources in UNDP Gabon. However, some programme management problems persist.

The 2009 report of the audit of operations in 2007 and 2008, gives an overall rating of ‘partially satisfactory’, although performance in programme management is deemed ‘unsatisfactory’. Weaknesses in project management and monitoring were identified and recommendations made. However, given the high number of project documents currently unavailable in Atlas, and of project evaluations not carried out, it appears that these audit recommendations have not been carried out. Those project documents which are available in Atlas are generally in Word (.doc) format, making it difficult to tell whether the projects have been approved and signed with the Government or other partners. Moreover, the mission was unable to reconcile the list of projects on Atlas with those actually implemented on the ground in the 2007-2015 period.

The country office has a total of 22 staff members, 12 of whom are UNDP employees, two of whom are United Nations volunteers and 8 service contractors. There are six international staff members. The office is made up of a resident representative/ resident coordinator, a UN programme coordination specialist, an economic advisor, five programme staff members (including two volunteers) and 14 operational support staff (finance, administration, secretaries, drivers).

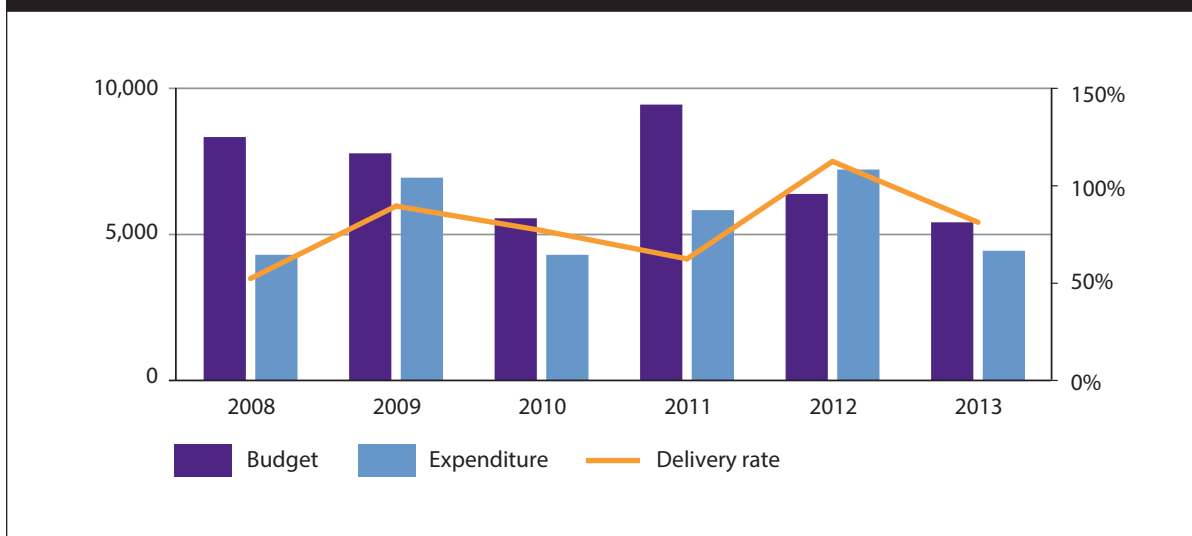
The country office is currently working on 12 projects (with expenditure recorded in 2014) and has 14 projects with the status ‘on-going’ in the Atlas system. Total spending on these projects was 3,823,730.49 USD in 2014.

Around 64% of this amount corresponds to two projects, which also account for 68% of spending for active projects between 2004 and 2014, and 35% of all projects combined. Out of a total 47 projects implemented over the last two cycles (from 2007 to 2014), 23 (49%) are under national execution, although the spending allocated to these projects only amounts to around 37% of the total. This falls slightly when taking into account current projects in 2014, as five out of the 14 active projects are under national execution, accounting for around 35% of spending for the year, according to sources taken directly from Atlas. The country office pointed out that, for this cycle, all projects have come under national execution (the last project, POSDN, ended in December 2014).

3.4 UNDP RESOURCES AND EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure between 2007 and 2014 stood at 51.4 million USD. The budget is relatively stable over the two cycles. The delivery rate

Figure 6. Budget and expenditure (2008-2013)



Source: Executive snapshot, (January 2015)

(actual against budgeted spending) is tending to improve over time, although there is a spending gap when comparing the project table to the Atlas Snapshot.

RESOURCES

UNDP development programme funding comes primarily from five main sources: The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Japanese Government, the Gabonese Government and UNDP internal resources. These five account for 93% of UNDP spending over the two cycles. Significant changes from one cycle to another should be noted:

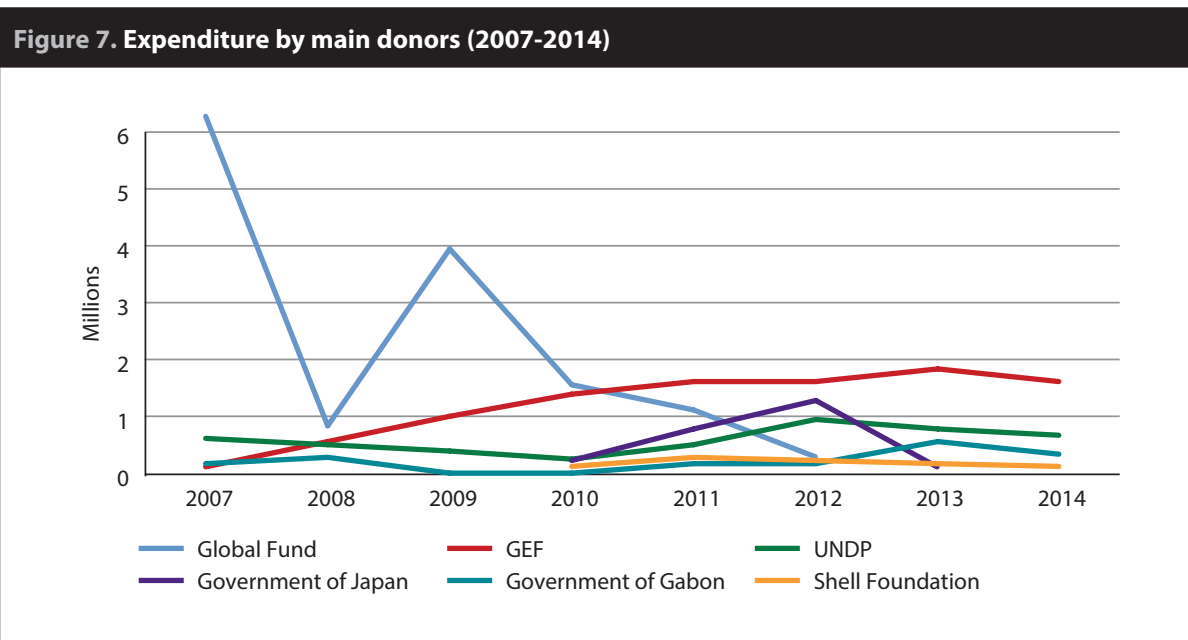
- The GFATM, which accounted for 57% of total spending from 2007 to 2011, only accounts for 3% in the current cycle. There was no GFATM funding between 2013 and 2014.
- The proportion of funding from GEF has doubled from 20% of resources in the previous cycle to 45% in the current cycle.
- The Gabonese Government contribution to UNDP programmes has increased from 3% to 10%.

- The bilateral contribution of the Dutch Government has fallen at a constant rate since 2007, before ultimately disappearing in 2013-2014.

The UNDP contribution to funding its development programmes has remained relatively stable, though increasing since 2012. UNDP committed 4.7 million USD of its own resources, around 68.5% of which from TRAC, 18% from development effectiveness funds (BSB), 7% from the RR Engagement Fund, 3.3% from OR Service Fees and 3% from the Country Co-Financing fund.

EXPENDITURE

UNDP activities have evolved considerably over the two terms. Although programmes fit into roughly the same thematic areas, the categorisation has changed from one cycle to the next. Nevertheless, drawing on a provisional project list, it is possible to estimate spending by thematic area over the two cycles. Figure 8 shows us that expenditure over the 2007-2011 cycle was mainly allocated to the fight against HIV/AIDS, and this has been falling at a relatively constant rate since. Spending on governance has increased considerably, becoming the largest expenditure item by the end of 2007-2011.



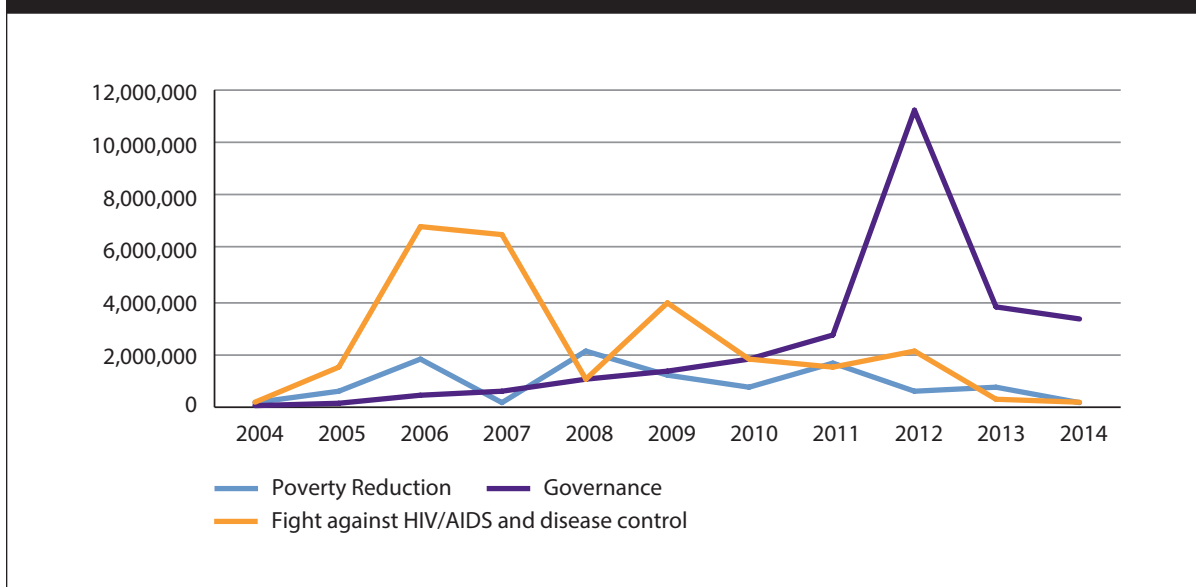
Source: Atlas (2015)

Table 6. Total expenditure per donor (2007-2014)

Donor	Total expenditure
The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria	14,062,073
Global Environment Facility	9,903,045
UNDP	4,731,614
Government of Japan	2,452,468
Government of Gabon	1,839,839
Shell Foundation	990,904
Government of the Netherlands	553,920
United Nations	473,076
UNAIDS	157,513
African Development Bank	136,614
Montreal Protocol	103,396
UNFPA	6,676
UNICEF	6,676
United Nations Volunteers	1,379
Total	35,419,192

Source: Atlas (2015)

Figure 8. Expenditure by thematic area (2004-2014)



Source: Atlas (2015)

Chapter 4

UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO GABON'S DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

This chapter determines how and to what extent the UNDP office in Gabon has contributed to tackling the country's development challenges. Contributions are assessed by focus area, based on the assessment criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Through the two programming cycles covered by this ADR, UNDP in Gabon has had three areas of focus: poverty eradication, governance and sustainable

resource management. The management of the portfolio has changed from one cycle to another and with it the structure of specifically targeted programme outcomes.

As such, in order to develop impact continuity across the programme for the 2007-2016 cycle, the team developed a methodological approach to restructure the logical framework around the

Table 7. Outcome clusters covered by thematic reports

Thematic areas	Outcome clusters/ thematic reports	Specific outcomes covered over 2007-2016 cycles	Indicative budget
Poverty eradication	1. National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened.	Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented (07-11)	1,134,231
		The national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs (12-16)	421,842
	2. Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened	The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased (07-11)	8,337,330
		Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being (12-16)	1,475,842
		The population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development of human capital (12-16)	20,126,500
		Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased (07-11)	11,612,702
		Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria (07-11)	9,227,834
The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services (12-16)	1,840,489		
Promoting good governance	3. The quality of public institutions and their management capabilities are strengthened, both at central and local levels	The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved (07-11)	2,188,158
		Local and community dynamics, including decentralised cooperation, are promoted (07-11)	ARTGOLD I & II resources
Environmental management	4. National environmental management capabilities strengthened	An efficient operational monitoring system is set up (07-11)	8,221,856

following outcome clusters (see table 7 for how this corresponds to the specific outcomes targeted in the two CPAPs):

- i) National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened.
- ii) Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened.
- iii) The quality of public institutions and their management capabilities are strengthened, both at central and local levels.
- iv) National environmental management capabilities are strengthened.

For the purposes of this ADR, activities within the portfolio have been allocated to these four outcome clusters as follows:

- i) National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened:
 - Strategic support in monitoring the MDGs and PRSP (cycle I)
 - ARTGOLD/local development/Gabon, I (cycle I)
 - Gender project (cycle I)
 - National capacity-building/Implementation and monitoring of MDGs (cycle II)
 - ARTGOLD II (cycle II)
- ii) Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened:
 - Disease control programme funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (cycle I)
 - Operationalising the Ndougou Health Department (cycle II)
 - ARTGOLD/local development/Gabon, I (cycle I)
 - Joint food security project (HCR, FAO,

WHO, UNICEF and UNDP), covering four regions. UNDP was responsible for income-generating activities (cycle I)

- Waste management project
 - ARTGOLD/local development/Gabon, II (cycle II)
 - Payment for forestry services (cycle II)
- iii) The quality of public institutions and their management capabilities are strengthened, both at central and local levels:
 - National good governance programme (cycle I)
 - ARTGOLD/local development/Gabon, I (cycle I)
 - Environmental governance: 1st and 2nd Communication on Climate Change, adaptation to climate change
 - ARTGOLD II (cycle II)
 - PACLEI, project in support of the National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment (cycle II)
 - Environmental governance: 3rd Communication on Climate Change
 - iv) National environmental management capabilities are strengthened:
 - 1st Communication on Climate Change (cycle I)
 - 2nd Communication on Climate Change (cycle I)
 - Waste management project (cycle I)
 - Adaptation to climate change (cycle II)
 - Payment for forestry services (cycle II)
 - 3rd Communication on Climate Change (cycle II)
 - Conservation of Transboundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (TRIDOM)

4.1 EVALUATION OF THE UNDP CONTRIBUTION TO GABON'S DEVELOPMENT RESULTS (EFFECTIVENESS)

4.1.1 POVERTY ERADICATION

Outcome 1: National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened.

Over the 2007–2011 cycle, UNDP contributed to the publication, launch and dissemination of the 2006 MDG report (for that year but carried out during the period under review). It also supported the development of a ten-year MDG plan, including a funding and implementation strategy.¹⁸ In 2010, UNDP provided technical and logistical assistance to Gabon's Strategic Planning Directorate to draft its third report on monitoring progress towards achieving the MDGs¹⁹.

Following the end of the 2007–2009 cycle of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), UNDP conducted advocacy at the highest levels of the Gabonese administration in favour of drawing up a new PRSP. The Government then requested the support of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), under UNDP leadership, to draft a memorandum of economic and social policy (the so-called Economic and Social Policy Letter). This document identifies the main social and economic development priorities in Gabon over the five year period between 2012 and 2016. Although drafted by the Government itself, the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon was also part of this dynamic.

UNDP carried out capacity-building with managers responsible for developing a macroeconomic thematic group bringing together government and technical and financial partners in steering committees for different reports

such as the MDG Monitoring Report and the National Report on Human Development. At the request of the Gabonese authorities, UNDP in partnership with UN-Habitat has implemented the 'Project for the Formulation of a National Strategy for Housing and Urban Development in Gabon'²⁰. Over the 2012–2016 cycle, UNDP worked with partners including UNICEF, UNFPA and other stakeholders from the UN system, to support the work of the following surveys:

- National Employment and Unemployment Survey in 2010
- Gabonese Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Survey (EGEP) in 2010
- Demographic and health survey (EDS) in 2012
- General Population and Housing Census in 2013

However it should be noted that, given the funding available (340,105 USD), UNDP interventions have been limited primarily to the strategic level and advocacy. In any event, the project 'Support for Capacity-building in the Programming and Implementation of Development Programme and Projects in Gabon' (ARC-OMD) has helped to build capacity among statistics officials and supported the implementation of a pilot in the Minimum Statistical Programme for Health, for which 80 data managers were trained in Libreville and Tchibanga. This work was approved by the Secretariat-General of the Health Ministry and plans are under way to roll out the approach across Gabon.²¹ Following strategic planning workshops for UNDAF, CPD and CPAP, more advocacy was carried out for the new Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (launched in 2012) to include a monitoring and evaluation framework with an emphasis on statistics.²²

18 ROAR 2008.

19 ROAR 2010.

20 ROAR 2011.

21 ROAR 2012.

22 ROAR 2012.

UNDP has remained at the forefront of advocacy for a national statistical system, making strong recommendations for this, particularly in the 2013 MDG Monitoring Report. As of 2014, a requested analysis of institutional capacity for the implementation of the National Statistical Development Strategy (SNDS) had yet to be carried out. This was expected to produce an updated mapping of the needs of the sector, but the Government has focused on pursuing the implementation of the strategic strands of the SNDS: i) beginning the process to draw up a statistics law; ii) publishing a decree for the creation of statistics directorates in the sectoral ministries; and iii) pursuing major statistical projects such as the General Population and Housing Census and the Demographic and Health Survey.

In the first years of the previous cycle, the programme invested in a statistics system for the health sector, with assistance from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM). GFATM attaches a great deal of importance to the quality of data to enable adequate monitoring of the progression of indicators in its programmes. Under UNDP management the statistics system was made operational, but it would appear that capacity was not sufficiently viable to enable national partners to replace UNDP as the main beneficiary and GFATM suspended Gabon in part because its data were no longer consistent. UNDP may not have been in charge long enough to successfully transfer the skills that might have prevented the country from being suspended as soon as it took over responsibility as main beneficiary.

UNDP also strengthened the capacity for results-based development management (RBM) of 37 national focal points, and produced a results-based management handbook. A survey on the

post-2015 agenda collected data from 2,040 people. The MDG Monitoring Report, drafted in 2013, was circulated in 2014 to encourage greater ownership of MDG-related challenges. The UNDP country office supported Gabon to draft its report on the implementation of Beijing +20.²³ In 2015, UNDP continued its advocacy for analysis of the capacity of the national statistical system and carried out a final evaluation of the achievement of MDGs in Gabon.²⁴

At local level, the project 'Support for Thematic and Territorial Networks for Governance and Local Development' (ARTGOLD/Gabon) has helped the local governments of five provinces to develop their planning capabilities, resulting in the participating departments and municipalities producing a Local Development Plan with a pro-poor focus. Finally, projects implemented under the Communications on Climate Change include an important component covering the collection, processing and analysis of data on MDG 7, relating to the environment.

In terms of UNDP contributions to actual changes in the national system, there has been a slight improvement in national capacity for the consolidation of institutions that make up the national statistical system. Gabon launched a process to develop a National Statistical Development Strategy (SNDS) in 2007, to respond to statistical requirements for strategic planning of national development.²⁵ The process resulted in the creation of a National Statistical System to coordinate statistical services. Gabon conducted a second Demographic and Health Survey (EDS) in 2012 which enabled a significant increase in the proportion of MDG indicators based on recent (2 years) and representative data. Similarly, a general population census was conducted at the end of 2013 and will produce its first statistics in 2015. In December 2014,

23 ROAR 2014.

24 ROAR 2014.

25 Gabonese Government, "Pourquoi le Gabon a-t-il besoin de statistiques fiables?", Direction générale des statistiques, Ministère de l'Économie, du Commerce, de l'Industrie et du Tourisme, May 2010, http://www.paris21.org/sites/default/files/gabon_whystatistics_may2010.pdf

the Government took measures to set up a central directorate for statistics within each ministry.²⁶ The Education Ministry has conducted a survey which will allow education indicators to be updated.²⁷ Finally, with the support of ARTGOLD, local programming capacity for producing specific regional data are beginning to be developed.

Nevertheless, the availability and quality of national data remains poor (see Figure 9). Gabon has lower scores than the average for sub-Saharan Africa in the World Bank's ranking for methodology, sources and periodicity. The methodology score has increased since 2004, and particularly since 2007, probably due to the implementation of SNDS. However the general score has fallen due mainly to the performance on indicator source data.

This stagnation is confirmed by the failure to produce several major surveys over the last 15 years. The last Gabonese Poverty Assessment and Monitoring Survey (EGEP) was conducted in 2005. A second EGEP,²⁸ due in 2010, has not been produced owing to a lack of resources which also conceals a lack of strategic capacity and will. The data on the General Statistics Directorate (DGS) website is, for the most part, incomplete or out of date.²⁹ An online search for statistics returns error messages or non-existent pages. DGS activity reports available online stop in 2006 or 2007, which suggests a lack of transparency in terms of the available information.³⁰ The IMF characterises the deficiencies in national data as "shortcomings in the accuracy, reliability and adequacy of periodicity and timeliness for certain data, as well as consistency between datasets."³¹ Finally, Gabon has been suspended from

GFATM due to inadequate results and inconsistent sectoral data.

The factors behind these shortcomings are varied. At the structural level, resource shortages prevent the production of quality statistics, which further limits demand and resources. This vicious circle³² continues, despite efforts since 2007 to build a national statistical system and to mainstream a statistical culture in sectoral administrations. Excessive dependency on donors persists, which further weakens the capacity and demand for funding statistics. At the same time, analysis of health sectors, official aid mechanisms and the challenges of human development are often carried out by external consultants, reducing incentive to build national capacity. Statistics personnel lack training, career prospects and motivation. Donors and the private sector tend to attract the most competent staff with the highest salaries.

Finally, the programme's achievements should be considered alongside contributions to outcome 1 by UNDAF stakeholders other than UNDP, including UNECA, ILO, WHO, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO and above all the World Bank. The World Bank is active in several areas, and through its Country Cooperation Strategy (2012-2016) aims to support the development of data, including a new survey on household spending. In the statistical sector, the World Bank directly funded a project for the development of a national statistics strategy between 2007 and 2010. In its projects with sectoral administrations, the World Bank funds systems and data sets to provide information for the national statistical system (e.g. national biodiversity data sets).

26 ROAR 2012.

27 ROAR 2014.

28 ROAR 2012.

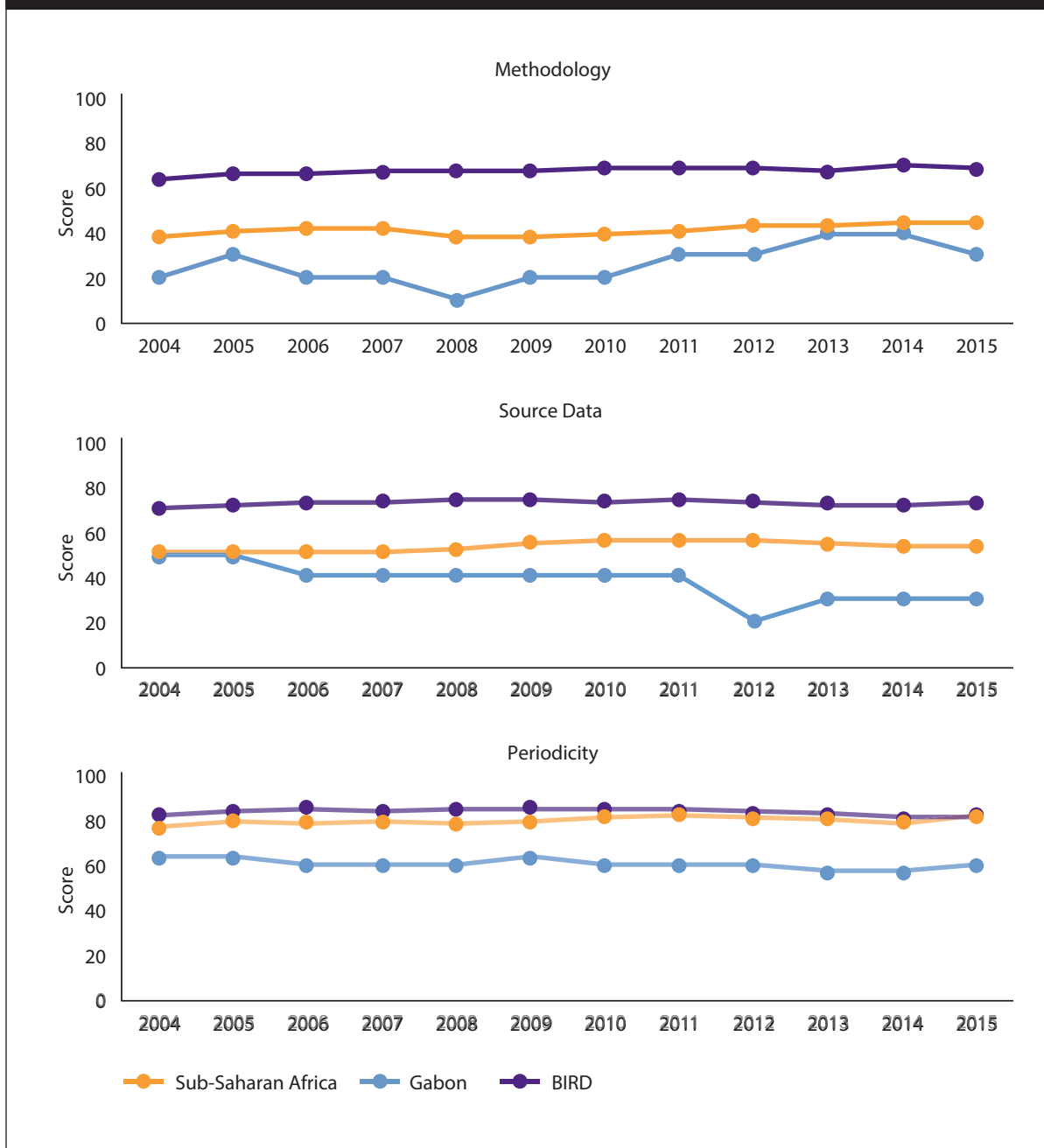
29 www.stat-gabon.org

30 Survey data can however be found on the World Bank's websites.

31 <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/scr/2013/cr1355.pdf>

32 World Bank, Building Statistical Capacity to Monitor Development Progress.

Figure 9. Indicators for the statistical system in Gabon



Source: World Bank

Outcome 2: Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened.

Programme interventions that contribute to outcome 2 generally cover both cycles of the programme. These are ARTGOLD, PRONAGUP/

household waste management, the food security/microcredit strand and health development actions funded by Shell and GFATM. To these interventions, all of which are split into two phases over the two cycles, should be added environmental service payments, although project delays mean that there have been no results as yet.

These various interventions should contribute to the outcome through three categories of indicators, relating to income-generating activities and the development of both technical and strategic capacity to improve the profile of public health.

In terms of income-generating activities, out of 40 intended micro-projects aimed at 300 female and male heads of household in the focus areas, only 16 were recorded in 2011. In terms of capacity-building at the grassroots, ARTGOLD Gabon has set up a community radio station in Okondja (2010). However, this important communication and community development tool was not yet operational during the evaluation mission in May 2015. Of 100 members of grassroots organisations who were expected to be trained in techniques for the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of community development micro-projects, only 50 were actually reached (2011). At the institutional level, ARTGOLD was initially intended to support the training of 20 local elected officials and 20 experts. According to reports, in 2010 a total of 25 members of provincial and local working groups had been trained and were contributing to drawing up local development plans in their areas.

Given the limited scope of UNDP interventions, which are mainly pilots, the impact of programme operations on eradicating poverty, particularly through income-generating activities and grassroots capacity-building, remain of little significance. The impact on the strategic capacity of decentralised bodies is more visible, even though ARTGOLD, which oversees this work, is currently only active in five provinces, which are those least affected by poverty. Notwithstanding this reservation, ARTGOLD is beginning to have an impact on local governments, as evidenced by the fact that two local governments visited by the mission had allocated 25% of their investment budget through the ARTGOLD mechanism. In one of these, implementation had already started through investment projects visited by the evalu-

ation mission, while in the other implementation was still being planned.

The outcomes of resilience activities that are directly funded by the programme and target populations directly seem very limited with no evidence of true success stories. The vast majority of interventions observed on the ground by the evaluation mission were obvious failures, generally due to the fact that the beneficiary grassroots organisations did not have strong enough capacity or focus on community development. They tended to be characterised by self-interest and it seems likely that some were even formed on an ad hoc basis to seize resources before disappearing³³.

Public health is one area where the programme has recorded significant results, even though the activities that have underpinned these achievements are otherwise problematic for various reasons. Locally, in the Ndougou department, supported by the Gamba health centre, the programme has managed to contribute to raising awareness of diseases, particularly AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, and significantly improved treatment rates. On a national scale, through its management of GFATM resources for Gabon, UNDP contributed to improving the country's performance in combating malaria, tuberculosis and HIV, in terms of prevention and treatment of those already infected.

In the case of malaria, the detailed statistics available relate to the beginning of the period under consideration, when UNDP was still acting as main beneficiary and had full responsibility for the implementation of GFATM resources. After the Government became the main beneficiary, UNDP only provided support for the purchasing function. The proportion of households with long-lasting insecticide-treated nets (LLITN) increased from 20% in 2006 to 70% in 2008. The proportion of under-fives with LLITNs, which stood at 18% in 2006, increased to 55% in 2008 and for pregnant women, was raised from 19.8%

33 There are a few welcome exceptions to this general rule: a market gardening micro-project in the area of Port-Gentil, the resourceful women of Ntoum, or the information centre in the same community.

in 2006 to 36% in 2008. An integrated campaign for the distribution of LLITNs contributed to these levels of coverage.

Indicators for malaria treatment were also positively affected. The fever/ malaria infection rate for under-fives in the last two weeks fell to 36.1% in 2008, from 61.7% in 2006. In 2008, 48% of children with fever/malaria received antimalarial treatment, compared with 41.3% in 2006. In 2008, 44% of children with fever/malaria received antimalarial treatment within 24 hours of the onset of fever, compared with 30.5 % in 2006.

Malaria indicators subsequently underwent a period of uncertainty coinciding with the hand-over of management of GFATM resources from UNDP to the Health Ministry. The proportion of households with LLITNs increased slightly to 73% in 2010 compared with 70% in 2008, but the use of LLITNs by under-fives fell to 52% in 2010, compared with 55% in 2008, and increased by only 2 points for pregnant women (38% in 2010 compared with 36% in 2008). The rate of use of intermittent preventative treatment (IPT) slumped in 2010, with 62% for IPT, 1.27% for IPT 2 and 3% for IPT 3. The figures for IPT 1 were 63.5% in 2008 and 66.2 in 2006, whereas IPT 2 reached 50.3% in 2008³⁴, compared with 42% in 2006.

In the HIV/AIDS strand, in 2011 the number of people living with HIV who were receiving an anti-retroviral treatment ranged from 8,865 to 8,768, constituting a programme success rate of between 95% and 103%. Again in 2011, the number of orphans and vulnerable children aged 17 and under whose household received support for their care stood at 7,602, 85% of the target set by the GFATM programme in this area³⁵. More significantly, the HIV infection rate continued to fall, from 5.2% in 2009 to 4.1% in 2012.

The mission was unable to access any evaluation report on tuberculosis³⁶. In any case, the performance described above did not stop GFATM from terminating its programme in Gabon, precisely due to the inadequacy of results in the period where the Health Ministry replaced UNDP as implementing agency and main beneficiary. Two successive evaluations have highlighted the inconclusive results whilst noting inconsistent data.

Gabon's access to GFATM resources is of particular interest for examining the effectiveness of the UNDP programme. The effectiveness of the project was conclusive while it was implemented by UNDP as main beneficiary and implementing agency, but deteriorated when responsibility was removed from UNDP (partially because UNDP retained a role in awarding the contract). Conversely, the overall effectiveness of UNDP can be called into question because it clearly did not develop sufficient national capacity in the area to prevent the suspension of the country when the Government became the main beneficiary. As main beneficiary, UNDP had responsibility to prepare the handover to the national counterpart, building capacity for effective replacement of UNDP as beneficiary. It would seem that UNDP was not the main beneficiary for long enough to successfully transfer viable expertise to the national counterpart.

4.1.2 GOVERNANCE

The Programme focused its actions on contributing to improving the operational framework of national institutions, the development of local and community dynamics through the strengthening of decentralisation, and support for public management capacity. This was done mainly through promoting the development of modern programming and management tools.

34 Source: Final evaluation of the Fourth Round of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria 'Malaria part' Gabon; 2008.

35 Source: Final report of the Eighth Round/ Phase I of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, HIV/AIDS part; Gabonese Ministry of Health; March 2013.

36 The programme's national coordination was asked for the reports on the three parts and only the reports for the two parts given here were provided in response.

The National Good Governance Programme, (PNBG) adopted by the Government in 2008, is a major result to which cycle I of the programme made a significant contribution. This strategic partnership aimed to strengthen institutional governance, consolidate democracy and the rule of law, give impetus to institutional reform, support the clean-up of public finances, improve the business climate by securing investment, fight corruption and give new impetus to decentralisation. In addition, UNDP contributed to drawing up an action plan for the implementation of the National Good Governance Strategy. It helped to operationalise the executive secretariat of the PNBG, set up by the Government, rolled out a capacity-building programme and supplied the body with vehicles and computer hardware.

To support implementation and extension of the National Good Governance Programme, a strategy to combat unlawful enrichment and money laundering was developed. This was a flagship UNDP intervention in the area of governance for the 2012-2016 cycle. The programme made significant efforts to support the implementation of this strategy, which has yet to produce any outcomes as it was launched in May 2015.

The evaluation showed that these strategic tools were developed through an effective and participatory process. The programme made its expertise available to national counterparts, particularly through its network of experts at local, regional and international levels, whilst encouraging the engagement of all relevant national bodies, whether public administrations or civil society organisations.

As part of a more thematic approach, UNDP also contributed to producing strategic tools and management frameworks for a range of sectors. Working with the UNFPA, between 2008 and 2009 UNDP supported the Government to produce a national policy on equality and gender equity through a participatory approach. A sectoral justice programme was also developed to provide the relevant ministerial department with strategic support. The Ministry for Foreign

Affairs was supported to draw up an international cooperation framework with significant scope for South-South partnerships. Finally, with UNDP support, the National Ombudsman was able to develop a sectoral strategy for its services.

The environment sector is an important aspect of governance in Gabon, and as such in cycle II, the programme chose to embed the environment theme in the governance cluster. Gabon is a bastion of global biodiversity and in this respect has considerable responsibilities, both in terms of the management of natural resources and reporting to the international community. As a result of UNDP support, Gabon issued its Second National Communication on Climate Change. This overview gave rise to the rollout of significant frameworks and tools for governance in this area. The setting up of the National Climate Council, the drawing up of the National Action Plan for the Environment, the National Climate Plan, the National Strategy on Biodiversity and the National Land Allocation Plan, which is the ultimate by-product of the work conducted as part of climate change analysis, are all part of this momentum.

UNDP support has also produced tangible results in the area of decentralisation. Action by UNDP has enabled the country to develop a decentralisation and devolution strategy, the added value of which is recognised by public stakeholders at the highest levels. For the first time, Gabon has a tool to manage its decentralisation and devolution process on the basis of a common analysis. Until then, modest changes were made in the sector without direction or evaluation of past actions, arising from the personal convictions of the portfolio lead. The ARTGOLD project, the medium through which support is given to this sectoral strategy, dedicated most of its efforts in cycle II to developing local government capacity. In the five provinces it currently covers, departments and municipalities have developed local development plans, valuable frameworks for developing a degree of budgetary efficiency in relatively prosperous areas, but still ineffective in terms of public investment.

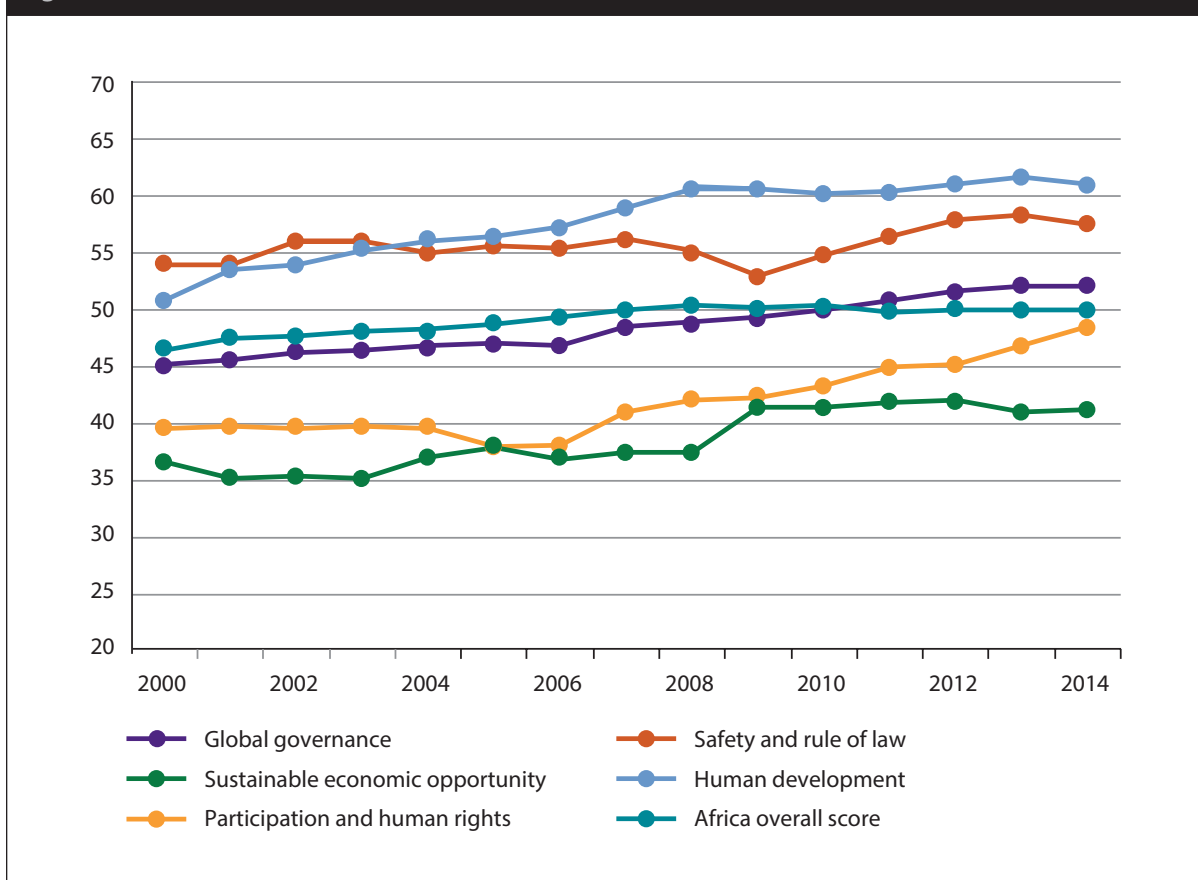
The programme has systematically supported the development of strategic frameworks and management tools, as well as a range of capacity-building processes aimed at state officials and members of civil society who use them. Through ARTGOLD, over 300 elected officials and grassroots stakeholders have come together in provincial and local working groups to be trained in drawing up local development plans and in implementing and monitoring local public investment. At the central level, particularly as part of support for the operationalisation of MDGs, dozens of officials from the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Planning, and other sectoral ministries, have been trained in target-based budgeting and results-based management. More strategically, the experiences of ARTGOLD have inspired the Ministry of the Interior to rewrite the decentralisation texts submitted to Parliament.

The programme has supported the dedicated unit for coordination of foreign aid attached to the Prime Minister's office to modernise and develop appropriate management tools. The mission observed that, although this unit was a governmental entity with full status, led by a senior official, it was UNDP support which enabled it to operate fully and properly. The programme supported the offices, helped to draft regular reports on development cooperation and circulated its publications.

Have UNDP investments in these various areas, along with efforts by other active stakeholders, led to significant change in the country's governance?

A few encouraging signs are emerging in the management of public finances. The macroeconomic framework is being consolidated. Debt has become more sustainable, having fallen to

Figure 10. Ibrahim Index of African Governance 2014



25% of GDP, compared with 50% in 2005. The level of alignment of external resources and their incorporation in the national budget have increased significantly from 22% in 2007 to 92% in 2012. And yet in general terms, Gabon still has a long way to go to improve its position in the relevant international rankings. It ranks 27th out of 52 countries for the quality of its global governance in the 2013 Ibrahim Index of African Governance. Gabon's overall score is 51, which is just below the average for Africa (51.5). As figure 10 shows, the country is above all hindered by its scores on 'Participation and Human Rights', and 'Sustainable Economic Opportunity', which remain low.

Gabon fares better in regional comparisons, ranking second for the Ibrahim Index of African Governance in Central Africa, behind Sao Tomé and Príncipe. One of the few governance indicators where Gabon has a higher score than emerging countries with comparable per capita income is that of political stability. But, alas, the socio-political disturbances of December 2014 show that this advantage is extremely fragile.³⁷

The other stakeholders of the UN system likely to have contributed to governance outcomes in Gabon are: the World Bank, ILO, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), UNFPA and UNICEF. The World Bank's commitment is particularly strong. Alongside the United Nations, the European Union is also addressing the issue of good governance in its programme for Gabon. Specifically, capacity-building in the public sector is addressed, particularly through two points of application: support for governance of public finances, and support for the services of the national authorising officer³⁸.

4.1.3 ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Analysis of the programme's environmental effectiveness shows different profiles for the two cycles. All of the stakeholders met considered the achievements of the 2007-2011 cycle to be of major added value for the country, whereas the 2012-2016 cycle is unanimously considered to have had poor results to date.

In the first cycle, UNDP had the status of key country partner for the environment, and for part of this period was managing the resources of the Global Environment Facility. With its support, Gabon issued its Second National Communication on Climate Change with the subsequent establishment of the National Climate Council. The National Action Plan for the Environment was also drawn up, as well as a national biodiversity strategy. The National Climate Council gave the country a national climate plan, and the National Land Allocation Plan is another by-product of the significant work to analyse climate change.

Other, more localised tools relating to critical sites or environmental dimensions have been developed. The National Strategy on Coastal Adaptation to Climate Change and the creation of a coastal observatory (not yet operational) are examples. The implementation of the TRIDOM project to conserve transboundary biodiversity between Gabon, Congo and Cameroon, which had been pending for ten years, has also, to an extent, been facilitated as part of this framework.

The 2011-2016 cycle has had mixed results. Several initiatives have been conducted but without the same effectiveness as the previous cycle. The national counterpart argues that UNDP has seen a clear reduction in its technical capacity, with

37 http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/12/20/gabon-des-manifestants-reclament-le-depart-du-president_4544324_3212.html

38 EU Programme in Gabon 2008-2013 https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/csp-nip-gabon-2008-2013_fr.pdf

repercussions on the quality of the programme, which the office itself confirms in an interview with the evaluation mission. There have been a multitude of delays in this new phase.

The 3rd Communication and the payments for environmental services around the River Mbé project are typical in terms of the delays which prevent them from achieving expected results. The 3rd Communication suffers from a difficult relationship between the national project directorate and the UNDP office, which is accused of not being responsive and diligent enough regarding disbursement requests from national counterparts. The decision by the new office management to call on the Government to restructure allowances to cover the UNDP project manager's expenses did not improve this situation.

The Mbé Project has had five slow years, with the only outputs to date being the local management committees (which were initially contested by UNDP who considered that women were not sufficiently represented), and a study to restrict exportation of timber and streamline management of this resource through a quota mechanism. In cycle II, the TRIDOM project was affected by internal conflicts between implementing agencies (UNDP and UNOPS) and the National Agency for National Parks, with the latter claiming responsibility for aspects of the project on the grounds that its area of intervention had become a park.

The shared management of household waste programme, launched in cycle I, was rolled out to more large towns in cycle II. This made it possible to set up a pilot to pre-collect waste in the towns of Port-Gentil, Libreville and Oye, and contributed to improving the living standards of populations in less developed neighbourhoods for the duration of the project. Members of beneficiary associations across the three sites were given capacity building on the concepts of IEC (information, education and communication), the environment, and the process for sorting and collecting household waste.

But these outcomes are very limited as, again, the mission found that project implementation had been disjointed. The associations at the forefront of pre-collection processes did not have access to the resources set out in the project design. After several years they were still awaiting 60% of their operating budget. The intervention is funded by state resources which the Government has been struggling to provide since financial adjustments were imposed to offset loss of revenue caused by the drop in oil prices.

Overall, the second programme cycle suffered from the consequences of the underperformance described above: UNDP has lost confidence of the national counterpart for the delivery and management of Global Environment Facility funds, while the Environment Ministry now looks to the World Bank for the management and implementation of these resources.

Alongside UNDP and the Government, the main stakeholders active in outcome four, and therefore liable to have contributed to it, are the World Bank and the FAO. The French Development Agency is also very active in the area of the environment in Gabon, particularly in the sectors of forestry, sustainable peri-urban agriculture and water and sanitation. Finally, the European Union also tackles environmental issues in its Gabon programme.

4.1.4 CROSS-CUTTING CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1.4.1 Gender

The UNDP programme has no staff dedicated to gender, nor a gender focal point. It has not given staff training on gender, according to the results-oriented annual report (ROAR) 2014. As such, it has not specifically invested resources in this area. The office states that it does not have joint gender programming with UN-Women, though joint investment with UNFPA has been observed in the previous cycle in support of drawing up the country's gender strategy.

The operationalisation of this gender strategy remains an open question, and continues to be a

burning issue in Gabon³⁹. Various forms of violence and customary practices involving emotional abuse continue to affect women, even if local barriers prevent them from being documented. These include: early marriage (legal age of 15), servitude in widowhood, wife inheritance, and restrictions on freedoms, property and movement for women married under customary law.⁴⁰

However, on an operational level, achievements in favour of women have been observed in thematic projects. Under the ARTGOLD project, 14 community projects in the areas of education, health, hydraulics and income-generating activities have improved the living standards of some 5,000 people, 60% of whom are women. Around 120 jobs have also been created for women, compared with 20 for men, which is a form of operational focus on gender.

The project to operationalise the Ndougou health department has had a local impact on women's health: 80% of women who gave birth in the department of Ndougou had a full IPT during pregnancy. Coverage rates for vaccinations against all antigens among pregnant women and infants aged 11 months and under have reached 90%.

In 2014, overall UNDP capacity-building efforts reached 562 national stakeholders, mostly staff of national institutions. 20% of these, i.e. over one hundred people, were women who were trained to exercise their responsibilities more effectively and contribute to improving the operations of national and local institutions.

Under the household waste management project, the office reports that some 3,215 households are involved in pre-collection in Libreville, Port

Gentil and Oyem, but does not break this down by gender. However, in Africa, the management of household waste traditionally falls to women suggesting that this project necessarily involves a lot of women.

These results show that gender is officially embedded in the projects in the portfolio, though in practice is impeded by the inertia of the environment. In interviews, the subject is often dismissed by programme stakeholders with comments such as: "In this area, we can't do more than the environment allows", meaning that you can seek better representation of women in a given entity, but objectively there are proportionately far fewer eligible women than men and there is no choice but to make do.

At the level of programme management, some do take the initiative to check that stakeholders do indeed want to go as far as the environment allows. For example, the list of grassroots groups nominated as implementing partners for the 'Payments for Environmental Services around the River Mbé' project had to be redrawn after UNDP rejected it on the grounds that it did not involve enough women.

4.1.4.2 Pro-poor approach

The pro-poor approach is a permanent marker of the programme, although more or less visible depending on whether the strategic or operational levels are considered. At the strategic level, the focus is on institutional capacity, and the poor are taken into account through the development of the technical capacity to address their needs, making them visible in national policies. At the operational level, the programme ensures that it directly reaches the

39 The country officially had a female temporary Head of State for a brief period (10 June -16 October 2009) between the death of the second President and the inauguration of his elected successor. In the current presidential term, the number of female ministers has fallen until, following the latest reshuffle, only 5 out of 33 were women (15%) compared with 7 under the previous government. Representation in the parliamentary chambers is also very low, even if progressing slowly from one parliament to another. The upper chamber has 18 female senators, i.e. 18%. At the National Assembly, the number of women increased from 11 in 2001 (9.24%), to 15 in 2006 (12.5%), then 17 in 2015 (14.7%).

40 <http://www1.unece.org/Portals/awro/Publications/21VAW%20in%20Africa-A%20situational%20analysis.pdf>

poorest, although this rule of engagement has been found wanting in two cases: the ARTGOLD and PRONAGUP projects.

The Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance (ARTGOLD) project is unusual in that it is operational in the provinces least affected by poverty in Gabon (in statistical terms). Though the reasons behind this choice are known⁴¹, the fact remains. On the other hand, the targeting of the household waste collection project is effectively pro-poor in geographical terms, focusing on less developed neighbourhoods of large towns and cities. However, it is based on a strategic approach which inflicts a sort of 'double penalty' on the poor, making them pay for a service that the inhabitants of wealthier town centre neighbourhoods do not pay for, as their waste is collected by a national operator with a public service contract.

4.1.4.3 Human rights approach

No strategic mainstreaming of human rights in the programme has been observed. For example, there is no systemic human rights content for the many capacity-building processes aimed at central and local levels. The programme has contributed to the implementation of a joint project on food security targeting a refugee population, coordinating the funding of micro income-generating activities. The ARTGOLD project also funded the Port-Gentil federation of disability associations.

4.2 EVALUATION OF THE QUALITY OF UNDP CONTRIBUTIONS

4.2.1 RELEVANCE

4.2.1.1 Poverty eradication

Strategic relevance: At the strategic level, relevance refers to the alignment of interventions with corresponding national strategies. Underly-

ing UNDP interventions is a pro-poor approach, developing national capacity to design, implement and monitor policies, strategies and programmes aimed at the poor. This is a national priority for Gabon.

The contrast between aggregate national wealth (12,521 USD in 2012⁴²) and the actual living standards of the general population reveals that the country has problems in terms of wealth distribution. As such, public administrators need to design steps to ensure that economic and social services reach an ever greater number of poorer people.

The issue of wealth distribution has been recognised and addressed in various generations of the strategic planning framework, particularly the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP) and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE), the instruments in place for the UNDP programme cycles under review.

The 2007-2009 GPRSP focused on four strategic pillars: (i) Promoting strong, sustainable growth to benefit the poor, (ii) improving infrastructure, (iii) improving the access of populations to basic social services, and (iv) improving governance, clearly recognising the need to prioritise reaching the most deprived populations.

The 2012 PSGE sets out a vision for 2025 based on tackling three major challenges: (i) accelerating economic growth and diversifying sources, (ii) reducing poverty and social inequalities, and (iii) ensuring the sustainable management of resources. Here too, the need to better target the poorest populations to ensure they benefit from the fruits of growth is clearly stated.

In light of the above, the UNDP country programme is very relevant, with long-term objectives which include contributing to national capacity to

41 The targeting is ultimately the responsibility of national authorities, and takes into account the fact that these provinces are the most populated, thus allowing outcomes to be felt on a significant scale.

42 UNDP, Human Development Report (2013)

design, implement and monitor pro-poor policies. This objective is in line with others developed and stated by the national counterpart in its main development programming frameworks.

Operational relevance: Operational relevance refers to the programme's capacity to roll out programming activities that offer appropriate solutions. In other words, whether the projects implemented in this area have provided appropriate solutions to capacity issues faced by institutional or individual beneficiaries. The answer to this question varies according to different interventions.

Key tools for UNDP programme interventions for poverty eradication are the PRSP and MDGs, and this support is targeted at national institutions which require assistance in this area. The responsibility for these instruments previously sat in the planning directorate of the Ministry of Economy. However, following the disappearance of this directorate they are currently coordinated by a ministerial advisor, the former director of planning. The General Directorate for Poverty Eradication has been in existence since 2002, and has developed proven legitimacy to act as an anchorage point for the UNDP programme in this area. However, it has been difficult to embed these instruments more widely.⁴³

The Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance (ARTGOLD) project is another key tool for poverty eradication programming, running through both cycles. The project provides decentralised authorities in five provinces with capacity in technical programming, and for developing, implementing and monitoring local development actions. It also builds the resilience of populations in these areas directly, through income-generating activities and access to basic social services.

Although relevant in this respect, this is somewhat undermined by the fact that the project is not active in the poorest provinces of Gabon. UNDP programme managers state that the choice of provinces was made by the government, possibly affected by political considerations, but also by the fact that they are the most highly populated provinces and as such have the potential for a greater number of outcomes. These considerations might justify the choice of location, but put into question the project's relevance to poverty eradication objectives.

A third operational framework relating to poverty eradication, with an impact on outcome two, is the approach of income-generation activities applied in three field projects: joint food security; household waste collection in less developed neighbourhoods of major towns; and payments for environmental services around the River Mbé. The first of these, on food security, targeted refugees as the most vulnerable, and was a joint intervention by five United Nations agencies: UNHCR, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP. Payments for environmental services, which is in the planning phase, is an interesting innovation which aims to provide the local community with a means of controlling access to natural resources, reducing free, easy and wasteful exploitation.

Within this cluster of income-generating activities, only the waste management project has low or no relevance to poverty eradication objectives. Under this initiative, poorer urban populations have had to pay for the collection of their waste, a public service offered to town centre districts without any charge or new taxation. It would have been more relevant to arrange for this service to be provided for free by the public contractor, who does not make any effort to expand the service into less developed urban areas.

43 As a communication published on the UNDP-Gabon Facebook page shows, this ministerial body still demonstrates ignorance of what the UNDP programme is doing in this area; stating that: "A delegation from the General Directorate for Poverty Eradication (DGLCP) visited the UNDP Gabon premises on 31 March 2015 with the aim of discussing the possibility of a partnership which will enable the two entities to work together to accelerate poverty eradication in Gabon." (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/PNUD-GABON/116172755246115?fref=nf>)

The health sector project, funded by rounds 5 and 6 of GFATM, has demonstrated particular relevance on the ground by offering widespread solutions for public health, enabling the national health system to be delivered more effectively to remote and poor populations. However, the Shell-Gabon funded Ndougou health project, despite having proven results, was considered unsuited to its environment by the majority of stakeholders consulted. The project runs a medical centre, which was not up to standard, and is not in a position to take over running itself. This raises a question over the technical legitimacy of UNDP to implement such an intervention, rather than taking responsibility for operational management and handing over technical implementation to an agency such as WHO.

4.2.1.2 Governance

Strategic relevance: At the strategic level, the objective to build Gabonese institutional capacity is in line with national development priorities. As an upper middle income country with an average per capita income of over 12,000 USD, Gabon's social indicators still resemble those of much poorer countries. Such a distortion, which is synonymous with low capacity for redistribution, also signals real problems in terms of the quality of governance.

Analysis of the key limitations is set out in the national decentralisation and devolution strategy:

“the weakness of governmental coordination (silos and insufficient communication between government departments); the lack of continuity in the implementation of public policies (highly mobile senior management, erosion of State authority); the dispersion of resources and the ineffectiveness of a State producing and distributing wealth and, as such, taking care of everything; excessive centralisation of administrative power resulting in relatively cumbersome processes, longer decision-making times, inappropriateness of such decisions as in

most cases they are taken in the capital and are disconnected from the realities on the ground where they are to be implemented; the lack of streamlining in the organisation of national public services, which get bogged down in operational matters to the detriment of the design and monitoring and evaluation of policies and regulations; the instability of administrative structures reporting to one ministry, then another, with changes to the ministerial team; the imprecise and inconsistent allocation of functions; the lack of standards and procedural handbooks; insufficient human resources, which, in addition, are poorly managed (lack of provisional staff management, officials demotivated and disempowered; the paucity of material resources etc.)”⁴⁴

Governance is also stated as a major development challenge in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon, the instruments in operation over the period under review. One of the four pillars of the 2007-2009 PRSP is improving governance, clearly recognising the need to prioritise reaching the most deprived populations. The PSGE, for its part, gives governance as one of the four foundations on which the country must build its emergence.

In total, the governance outcome proves highly relevant for the country in strategic terms. It covers issues, the seriousness of which national institutions are aware, and which the authorities have placed high on the national development programming agenda.

Operational relevance: Whether the specific governance projects have been appropriate solutions to the capacity problems faced by institutional or individual beneficiaries depends on the intervention in question. The National Good Governance Programme, implemented in cycle I, was a practical solution welcomed by stakeholders as it supported institutions to produce a

44 National decentralisation and devolution strategy (2014 – 2018).

national strategy on issues of governance. In cycle II, the project in support of the fight against illicit enrichment and money laundering has taken over from this, positioning itself as a framework for supporting the implementation of the strategy.

ARTGOLD is a project running over the two cycles which ties into both poverty eradication and local governance. It has provided decisive institutional support for local government with fledgling structural capacity. In addition, the questions raised above about the relevance of its territorial targeting are less relevant to the area of governance as the provinces targeted are wealthy local authorities in need of management tools to effectively channel their resources towards local development.

Finally, interventions in the area of environmental governance, through support for drawing up the national communications on climate change, have also been of major operational relevance. They have contributed to enable the State to comply, at least partially, with its obligations to report to the international community on the state of the country's natural resources.

4.2.1.3 Environment and natural resource management

Strategic relevance: Developing natural resource management and environmental conservation capacity is a strategic issue for this country, which is a bastion of biodiversity. Gabon is covered by a large area of forest, some twenty-two million hectares (85% of the country). The Government has drawn up a National Strategy and Action Plan for Biological Diversity, the first action of which focuses on *in situ* conservation, with thirteen national parks covering almost 11% of the country and a national agency (ANPN) responsible for their management.

Transboundary protected areas have also been established under the auspices of the Network of Protected Areas of Central Africa. Another action involved the review of the list of endangered species. Gabon has put in place funding for conservation initiatives, including the forestry fund, forestry taxes and the fiduciary fund. These

financial instruments are intended to favour the implementation of a policy of rational management of ecosystems. Concerns relating to the management of biodiversity have been incorporated into sectoral and intersectoral policies through legislative and regulatory provisions.

The management context below shows the extent to which Gabon is making the environment a top national priority and consequently assesses any support offered in this respect. In order to better ring-fence such support, this priority is high on the agenda in the country's reference documents for development strategies: the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon.

The first of the four pillars of the GPRSP, entitled 'Promoting strong, sustainable and pro-poor growth', makes the sustainable management of resources an integral part of any policy aimed at economic growth. As for the PSGE, the first of four challenges to be met for the economic and social emergence of the country also relates to sustainable development. In sum, the UNDP country programme has proven strategic relevance, setting the bar high in terms of building the country's capacity in the areas of the environment and natural resource management.

Operational relevance: To assess whether the specific projects aimed at operationalising outcome 4 on environmental management capabilities are taking the right approach for the country, it is necessary to review the areas of intervention that make up the environment cluster portfolio. The cycle of national communications on adaptation to climate change is perfectly in line with the country's needs and obligations to regularly document this issue and report to the international community in order to have access to common resources for environmental management.

The project promoting payments for environmental services is also relevant, embracing an approach to natural resource management which rejects free use as a driver of waste. Setting up this intervention was cumbersome operationally,

creating inertia which has resulted in the project getting significantly behind schedule. There are repeated misunderstandings between UNDP and the operator on the ground⁴⁵, another international organisation supported by a local organisation with insufficient managerial autonomy.

The two most recent projects in the environment portfolio raise serious doubts in terms of their relevance. As explained above, the collection of household waste in less developed districts of major towns, in effect creates a 'double penalty' for already vulnerable populations. The TRIDOM project for the conservation of transboundary biodiversity between Gabon, Congo and Cameroon, was implemented based on a logical framework set out ten years earlier and has been subject to no adaptations to take into account changes in the environment since. In the meantime, the area of intervention of the project has become a park and ANPN has been founded to offer consistent leadership on TRIDOM. This has created inertia, indeed conflict, resulting in immobilisation that is damaging to the project.

4.2.2 EFFICIENCY

4.2.2.1 Poverty eradication

- **Outcome 1:** National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened.
- **Outcome 2:** Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened.

Efficiency can be gauged by the relationship between the results obtained and the resources committed. Results relating to outcome 1, presented in the sections above, came from the programme's most substantial commitment of resources. In general, the poverty eradication portfolio has received 48% of UNDP resources across the two cycles, primarily due to resources

from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Human resources at country office level remained modest, though the national counterpart had some additional staffing. Most projects have a national director and an assistant, paid a monthly flat-rate.

In terms of outcome 1, robust management frameworks and tools were delivered, which does demonstrate efficiency. However, questions can be raised about the viability of this. According to stakeholders interviewed, despite all of the capacity-building received by the administration under the MDGs and the GPRSP, the national planning exercise for the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon was carried out by an external service provider. This resulted in the omission from the draft paper of the human development dimension, and subsequent UNDP support for the Government to incorporate it, developing a study to inform a national human investment strategy (December 2013).

Other signs of limitations to programme efficiency in terms of strategic pro-poor capacity building can be seen in the management of GFATM resources. While UNDP was the main beneficiary, the health statistics system was strengthened enough to offer proper support to sub-programmes, but it quickly deteriorated when the Health Ministry took over responsibility. This suggests that national capacity building results are not viable enough to enable national counterparts to take over from UNDP. The role of UNDP as the main beneficiary on behalf of the country was in part to prepare it for taking over the same responsibilities when the time came. The failure of this handover, even though it may be due to the fact that UNDP was not able to retain management for long enough to build national capacity, still reflects negatively on past UNDP management.

45 The dispute which lost the project the most time was related to the UNDP rejection of the operator's rate of remuneration. Recently, the UNDP also rejected the organisational framework on the ground, claiming that women do not play a big enough role in the grassroots organisations that underpin it.

The project to operationalise the Ndougou Health Department project is another test in terms of programme management efficiency. Funded by Shell-Gabon at an average of 700,000 USD per year, this project has been split between management at the local level in Gamba and centrally in Libreville, with communication between the two often leading to long delays in decision-making and implementation. As an example, six months after the end of the project, Shell has still not been informed what UNDP is going to do with the project equipment⁴⁶. As a consequence, Shell is in the process of implementing the second phase of this project directly, having transferred a member of staff from one of its overseas sites to oversee it.

The efficiency of operational management, whilst in line with UNDP ethical standards, shows signs of weakness. The response times of administrators are usually described as long by national counterparts, resulting in project delays. This is due to a reduced workforce in the country office, with a succession of staff leaving in recent years and not being replaced. The national counterpart can also be slow to take initiative, contrary to what should be expected of it in the case of national execution. Stakeholders from national counterparts regularly mentioned compensation as a factor in the lack of motivation and commitment of government middle management.

4.2.2.2 Governance

After poverty eradication, the governance cluster is allocated the most resources, at 29% of the consolidated budget over the two cycles. The proportion of the budget would be greater if including the 16% allocated to the environment, which is part of the governance cluster in the current cycle. Environmental governance is often referred to in the same way as economic and political governance.

Flagship governance projects are the completed good governance project and its follow-up project

in support of the fight against illicit enrichment, and the two phases of the project Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance (ARTGOLD).

These two interventions are considered show-cases for UNDP in Gabon, emblematic of its reputed efficiency in the implementation of development strategies. Both are funded by the State, which allocates its own resources to UNDP in order to benefit from its expertise and comparative advantages in this area. Specifically in the case of ARTGOLD, the project is gradually reproducing this pattern at the local level as local authority partners allocate up to 25% of their budget to ARTGOLD to increase the effectiveness and speed of their own implementation. This is clear evidence that decentralised entities are significantly convinced of the efficiency of UNDP management.

Although this situation reflects well on UNDP effectiveness and efficiency in managing public investment, it also regularly undermines this effectiveness and efficiency, particularly in times of public spending constraints. The context of falling oil prices is leading to contractions in the state budget, which is no longer able to pay partners sufficiently and on time for the projects allocated to UNDP.

4.2.2.3 Environment and human resource management

The environment focus area accounts for 16% of resources over the two programme cycles covered by this assessment. This proportion is decreasing following the loss of resources from the Global Environment Facility, an event which divided the programme's record on the efficiency of environmental management into two parts.

For almost all of cycle I, the country office was considered a leader on the environment by the Government and civil society. It had high quality human resources and was able to draw on

⁴⁶ The steering committee project closure meeting was held on 30 January 2015.

pre-allocated resources at regional level. It acted as a leading technical advisor for the Government and managed Global Environment Facility funding on the country's behalf. In this context, UNDP successfully produced the Second Communication on Climate Change, undertaking research into the different aspects of the country's environmental profile. This work led to the development of key management instruments for the sector such as the National Climate Council, plans for the management of wetlands and other coastal areas and the Land Allocation Plan. In the opinion of all parties, this period was characterised by a high level of efficiency both at the level of the national counterpart and within the UNDP country office.

Between 2011 and 2012, the country office lost human resources for the sector, and capacity on environmental issues was reduced. The evaluation team observed that, at the time of the mission, the office did not have any staff members with an environmental profile. The last staff member who retired was not replaced by someone with a sufficiently technical profile. The Government did not feel that it was receiving enough qualitative support and decided to withdraw the management of Global Environment Facility aid from UNDP. This opened up a period of reduced efficiency beginning in 2012 and continuing up to the present, to the point where, in some projects, the office has had to refund donor money due to non-compliant management.⁴⁷

4.2.3 SUSTAINABILITY

4.2.3.1 Poverty eradication

- **Outcome 1:** National capabilities for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened.
- **Outcome 2:** Socio-economic capacities of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened.

Poverty levels in Gabon are inconsistent with the country's status as an upper middle income country. This contradiction makes the sustainability of technical and operational achievements in the area of poverty eradication all the more crucial. A range of sustainability profiles are taking shape in this context.

The country's system of economic and social statistics continues to be heavily reliant on support from development partners. As set out in section 5.1 on effectiveness, Gabon has not been able to update its structural surveys within the appropriate time-frame. For example, in the health sector the country's access to GFATM resources was suspended, owing in part to inadequate baseline data.

In terms of outcome 1, the strategic capacity for developing policies and programmes, intimately linked to the capacity for producing quality data, does not seem to be any more embedded in the national institutions which receive regular support from the UNDP. The development of the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon was sub-contracted to an external provider, suggesting that the technical achievements of the participatory process for producing and managing pro-poor growth management strategies and pursuing MDGs have not been embedded. The National Decentralisation Strategy, approved over a year before this mission, is languishing on the shelf owing to a lack of commitment by the Council of Ministers to adopt it.

At local level, the local development plans produced with the support of ARTGOLD-Gabon, as well as the training that preceded and followed them, developed critical expertise for local authorities to turn the wealth of social investments on the ground into positive outcomes for their people. However, building this capacity at local level faces a number of pitfalls. Incomplete

⁴⁷ In the Operationalisation of the Ndougou Health Department project, for example, Shell-Gabon asked for the return of project resources used to make undue staff payments.

decentralisation policies mean that local authorities are still heavily reliant on central government. Without sufficient autonomy they cannot properly direct the capacity achieved. The fact that they allocate part of their investment budget to UNDP, whilst a positive sign in terms of the agency's effectiveness and efficiency, also betrays a persistent lack of confidence in their own abilities. The skillsets of the majority of local elected officials still seem insufficient for them to strengthen their autonomy in the near future.

In terms of outcome 2, the most significant results were achieved in the area of access to health, through GFATM aid on a wide scale, and Shell-Gabon funding in the Ndougou department. National directors of GFATM and the specific strands of HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as the team of the medical centre in Gamba, were unanimous that the completion or suspension of these programmes had resulted in a deterioration of the specific indicators that they had helped to raise. The exception was the AIDS strand, precisely because it benefited from GFATM support for a transitional system which enabled it to retain safeguarding credits and ensure service continuity despite the country's suspension.

Other programme actions to promote resilience of the poor were not conducted on a sufficient scale to show sustainable results. The income-generating activities (IGA) managed by UNDP as part of the joint food security project, were the responsibility of one staff member working on refugee issues. The IGA sections of the first phase of ARTGOLD, also limited in terms of targets but with substantial resources, generally failed because the grassroots organisations leading on them were not sufficiently institutionally viable or focused on community engagement. The pre-collection of waste pilot, which was also an IGA strategy, had little impact on the ground due to a conceptually incoherent project design (making the poorest pay for a service that the wealthiest receive for free), and implementation has been weak (60% of collection operator fees unpaid).

Outcome 2, on the resilience capacity of the poor, is supported by a range of stakeholders liable to have contributed to the results reviewed above. Within the United Nations these include:

- ILO – youth employment, back-to-work measures, combating HIV/AIDS, social protection and health and safety at work;
- UNESCO – education for all;
- UNFPA – improved access of women and adolescents to reproductive health services, including family planning and the prevention of HIV/AIDS (infrastructures and information);
- UNICEF – social policies and services in support of deprived children and their mothers; and
- UN-Habitat – national, regional and local capacity-building to develop and monitor the National Strategy for Housing and Urban Development.

4.2.3.2 Governance

In the area of governance, the sustainability of results can be broken down to distinguish between the national strategic level and the local decentralised level, and with a specific focus on environmental governance. At the central level, it is the perspectives that are taking shape regarding support for programming services and other information systems in relation to the National Good Governance Programme, the National Anti-Corruption and Money Laundering Strategy and economic governance. At the local level, it is the extent to which supported local authorities are willing to take over the ARTGOLD project, and how achievements embedded in environmental governance over a long period have motivated and strengthened the sector.

One positive point applicable to both levels is the fact that the State already has a significant presence and resource allocation in this area. An important issue facing most development projects, of who will continue to pay after they have ended, is not really relevant here as UNDP is

already working for the most part with resources directly from the State. As such, there is no risk related to budget continuity, other than cyclical budget constraints like the current ones caused by the drop in oil prices. The outlook for sustainability, understood as structural budgetary viability, is therefore rather positive.

In terms of strategy and content, the participatory approaches promoted in national activities to support decentralised bodies in local, democratic and economic governance, also help to ensure sustainability. They tend to create a greater consensus on sensitive subjects, though ownership of processes is still limited at both levels.

At the central level, the viability of capacity-building processes suffers from insufficient motivation on the part of public sector staff. The team met with several Gabonese civil servants whose interest in projects appeared to depend on the pecuniary benefits they could derive from them. In this respect, UNDP has been criticised for the new ministerial ruling regulating and capping allowances for project coordinators and assistants, which it is seen to have instigated. There is also a form of operational discontinuity which undermines the sustainability of institutional achievements. Frequent changes in political and technical staff within the administration, with new arrivals tending to start from scratch, has resulted in poor institutional memory.

The disaster of the loss of Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria resources illustrates these shortcomings. As main beneficiary, UNDP had set up a sectoral statistics system which produced data of sufficient quality to meet GFATM standards. As soon as management was transferred to the national counterpart, health statistics collapsed, causing the suspension of the country following just two half-yearly evaluations, the second having concluded that the data was inconsistent. Here, the scenario is one of non-viable, unsustainable achievements.

At the local level, local elected officials and their centres of responsibility showed far greater pas-

sion and commitment. This political will is even leading some local authorities to embed the programme in their investment strategy, using it as a means to stamp out bad practice in the Gabonese decentralised system, where local authorities fight with central management to negotiate budgets and take a very long time to execute them. In May 2015, for example, the authorities visited by the ADR team were still executing their budget from 2013. For them, allocating up to 25% of their investment budget to partnership with UNDP is based on the calculation that this will speed up execution of the budget from central government.

Incidentally, the above considerations show that the limitations of the decentralisation policy in Gabon have an objective impact on the sustainability of achievements in terms of local governance. With all the will in the world, local authorities have difficulty taking ownership and capitalising on their capacity because they lack autonomy and, in terms of money, are continuously at the mercy of central government.

In the specific area of environmental governance, the prognosis for sustainability could not be more positive. Interventions and achievements have long been embedded and, above all, the sector has developed meaningful governance frameworks, such as the National Climate Council. The decision by government partners to transfer management of the GEF fund from UNDP to the World Bank, claiming that UNDP was not effective enough in this area, is no doubt the sign of a degree of maturity.

4.2.3.3 Environment and natural resource management

The ownership and sustainability of environmental outcomes from UNDP interventions is mixed. Some project achievements could be continued and consolidated following the end of UNDP funding, in particular in the area of climate change where results are sustained through instruments that benefit from the support of other partners and the State. The level of ownership in the sector is satisfactory.

Achievements which emerge as sustainable benefits for the sector and country include: the National Climate Council; The National Strategy on Coastal Adaptation to Climate Change; the Land Allocation Plan; the Coastal Observatory (Gabon Bleu); the mainstreaming of climate change issues and adaptation in the new law on the environment; the restoration of 250m of beach in Cocobeach, Libreville and the Sub-regional Anti-poaching Strategy

These achievements fall within the scope of environmental governance, for which the prognosis for sustainability, as set out in section 4.2.3.2 above, appears more positive. Due to long term support from its partners, and UNDP in particular, the sector's policy frameworks and tools are well embedded. The sector is increasingly aware of where it wants to go and shows its maturity by choosing the roles it wants to assign to its various partners. As already stated, this growing maturity was behind the decision to transfer Global Environment Facility aid from UNDP to the World Bank.

However, sustainability is less certain for other projects in the sector: the 3rd Communication, River Mbé (payments for environmental services) and pre-collection of household waste in less developed districts. The first two have experienced significant delays which have prevented any results. As such, analysis of their sustainability can only assess the potential inferred from the quality of their implementation processes. Unfortunately, the ADR team observed the two projects to be very strained, with misunderstandings between the partners (UNDP and national implementing or coordinating partners). Such a climate is not conducive to robust, sustainable results.

The household waste collection project in the urban ghettos of Libreville, Port Gentil and Oyem has had little visible impact in the areas visited by the team. Instead, the team encountered a high degree of bitterness on the part of participating community associations, with regards to resources promised by the programme, 40% of which they were yet to receive. This general observation was confirmed at the Oyem site,

where collection activities are continuing led by the same highly proactive association which manufactures the barrel bins itself and installs them in client homes.

Overall, the viability of this intervention was undermined by its conceptual approach, which required the most deprived in large cities to pay for the collection of their household waste, whilst wealthy residents of city centre districts have their waste regularly removed by the public contractor without any other form of payment than the municipal household waste tax which everyone, rich and poor, is meant to pay. For the inhabitants of less developed urban areas covered by the project, the association's bill and this local tax constituted a double penalty.

4.3 EXPLANATORY FACTORS

A few key factors, summarised in a dedicated table (Annex 1), emerged as having influenced the programme's implementation and results. The strategic reputation of UNDP, and its robust comparative advantages in the focus areas of governance, poverty and the environment, resulted in:

- substantial fundraising from GFATM, Global Environment Facility, State budget (PACLEI, ARTGOLD), Shell-Gabon; and
- actual contributions to promoting governance, poverty eradication and management of the environmental sector.

Negative factors attributable to UNDP are:

- continuous erosion of the country office's technical capability;
- dispersion of operational activities where UNDP has no proven comparative advantage;
- not enough of a joint approach with United Nations thematic agencies; and
- weakness of the monitoring and evaluation function, including the reduction in number of joint reviews with government.

Their impact on programme results can be summed up as follows:

- Reduced effectiveness of financial resources: the GEF Fund and Shell-Gabon resources, in particular, were lost.
- Failures which discredit the programme and the country office: such as the case of operationalisation of the health department of Ndougou.
- Increased risks to operational activities where relevant United Nations agencies were not sufficiently called upon: such as in the case of health operationalisation in Ndougou.
- An absence of warning capability: this would have made it possible to spot negative trends in time to correct them.

In terms of the national counterpart, the quality of political support from the Government, and the fact that it is providing the programme with substantial resources, are factors that had a positive impact on results. The negative factors and events attributable to the national counterpart are:

- the decision to transfer the GEF funds from UNDP to the World Bank;
- budgetary constraints due to the fall in oil revenues;

- the quality of national administrative staff (fixed pecuniary expectations from the projects); and
- institutional instability with frequent institutional and staff changes.

The negative consequences for the programme and its results are summarised as follows:

- reduced UNDP programme commitment to the environment sector, despite being a historic partner;
- reduced programme results due to the late release and insufficient quantity of public financial resources;
- lack of commitment and results from national counterparts working on the projects, who expect personal gain from the programme; and
- recurrent loss of capacity, due in particular to the turnover of staff employed by the programme.

Finally, Gabon's status as an upper MIC raises challenges for the UNDP programme, in particular to adapt to the specific new needs of the Gabonese domestic environment.

Chapter 5

UNDP POSITIONING

5.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE

UNDP supports Gabon in its development in the three strategic areas of poverty eradication, governance and sustainable natural resource management. The two programme cycles under review are deeply embedded in these themes, along with cross-cutting issues which are the markers of the United Nations. The positioning and effectiveness of these are examined in the last section of this chapter.

In terms of governance and natural resource management, the approach has been to develop strategic capacity, an area where the country office has established legitimacy, given its profile and expertise in the area. The programme's intervention broadly involved helping the parties to come together to develop analytical capacity, set out strategies for intervention, and implement appropriate institutional frameworks for building effectiveness in the area.

Emphasis should be placed here on the building of capacity for context-specific knowledge and analysis. One high-level state interviewee argued that, in the area of decentralisation, successive changes to the national legal framework had not been informed by any analysis of the past. For the first time, he claimed, the new decentralisation strategy supported by UNDP included this invaluable aspect of research. The same approach is behind the support that UNDP gave for the national statistical system. On the ground, the ARTGOLD project also helps to ensure that local development plans are developed on the basis of local data collected in advance.

UNDP action in the sector of the environment, particularly in terms of environmental governance, shows similar relevance. In-depth analysis

of resources on climate change was carried out with the Second National Communication, and is in the process of being updated with the Third Communication launched in the current cycle. This work bolstered management capacity in the sector, by helping to implement appropriate tools: whether institutions such as the National Climate Change Council; or tools such as the various plans drawn up by the country (for wetlands, coastal areas or land allocation).

In the environment cluster, the project on household waste collection demonstrates a will to implement work of uncertain relevance to UNDP. Beyond giving impetus to the management framework, this project has supported an activity of waste collection which lacked conceptual coherence. The programme would have remained within the UNDP strategic position if it had limited itself to promoting a sustainable mechanism between: the municipalities, who receive a waste collection tax; the contractor, who operates the collection service corresponding to this tax; and the associations responsible for pre-collection in districts that contractors are unable to access with their vehicles.

In the area of poverty eradication, the specific positioning in support of national capacity for developing policies and management instruments which better take into account the interests of the poor is particularly relevant, given the profile of the country with contradicting income and social development indicators. As stated repeatedly in the body of this report, Gabon is an upper middle income country with a per capita income of over 12,000 USD. In statistical terms, these income levels are explained by an environment generously endowed with natural resources and with a small population. However, social well-being indicators do not reflect this, a sign

that the country is faced with problems of wealth distribution. UNDP support to build the capacity of the government to reach the most deprived more effectively is thus crucially relevant.

Alongside the development of strategic capacity, there are operational activities intended to improve the resilience of populations. GFATM resources were executed in this context, managed by UNDP and with technical implementation supported by national sectoral bodies. The Health Ministry set up operational units for implementing the AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis strands, and for the coordination as a whole.

However, in the case of the Operationalisation of the Ndougou Health Department project, UNDP directly implemented the actions funded by Shell-Gabon. This partner was dissatisfied with this service and decided to implement the new project phase itself. The country office was criticised for not having run the project smoothly, even though results were achieved on public health indicators in the area. Local management in Gamba felt held back by the lack of responsiveness of UNDP in Libreville, which might be explained by the absence of a dedicated technical member of staff.

This type of direct operational intervention demonstrates a typical temptation to be avoided. Without specific technical resources to manage the intervention in Libreville, it would have been wiser to put forward a sister agency, such as WHO which has a team of public health staff in Libreville, to implement the work. The same problem was observed by the team in other operational health interventions, such as equipping the health centre of Ntoum. “We asked for a delivery bed and we were brought an examination table, which is not the same thing at all”, a midwife told the team, raising questions about the appropriateness of UNDP implementing this type of inter-

vention rather than putting forward the agencies with the relevant expertise at their core.

Alongside its strategic activities, UNDP is also fulfilling its role to assist the Government in coordinating development cooperation. In this respect it is the main source of support for the Aid Coordination Unit set up in the Prime Minister’s office, which regularly drafts and circulates reports on development cooperation in Gabon. However, several respondents noted a general refocusing of this institutional coordination which, they say, is moving from a technical role towards a more strategic and political level. In other words, the direct relationship between the country office and political authorities (presidential and ministerial) has been visible, to the detriment of communication with administrations who implement political decisions. The balance between the two levels seems to have been better in the first cycle than the second.

Public sector managers perceive a loss of pace in the intensity of their relations with UNDP, explained to a degree by the repeated loss of programme content, illustrated by the transfer of management of GEF funds from UNDP to the World Bank. There have also been difficulties in implementing political decisions secured by UNDP, generally due to delays in disbursement of resources committed to the programme.

In terms of relations between United Nations agencies, coordination has been maintained through a regular meeting of agency heads at strategic level, and with the UN country team (UNCT) at operational level. However, the very low number of genuinely joint programmes⁴⁸ identified by the team suggests that these relationships are more official than genuinely productive. Management of the migration of all agencies to a new office site is emblematic of the difficulties experienced by the system in this respect⁴⁹.

48 A current food security project and an older project on gender.

49 A group migration which is scheduled regularly, and just as regularly postponed, leaves the agencies feeling so powerless that one told us that, due to the lack of any real consensus on the subject, they had taken the decision to go alone to save on the rent that they had been paying needlessly for a number of months since the building that had been made available for free had been up and running.

Another highly symbolic anecdote experienced by the team took place in the medical centre of Ntoum, a few dozen kilometres from Libreville. Noticing on the wall a list of several UN agencies sponsoring the Centre, the assessors asked if these partners came to see them together, to which they were given the unambiguous response: “never”. It is precisely to this health facility that the UNDP delivered examination tables rather than obstetric beds, no doubt due to a lack of technical expertise. Yet this is expertise which UNFPA, WHO or UNICEF all possess, all of whose logos were present as sponsors, but who do not necessarily know who is doing what in this medical centre located just half an hour by road from the capital.

5.2 POSITIONING IN TERMS OF CAPACITY-BUILDING

Capacity-building is the backbone of the UNDP programme, at central and local levels. It runs through the three strategic components of governance, poverty eradication and the environment, due to the real need for capacity across the board in the country. Resources exist in abundance, but there is not the sufficient capacity to turn them into a source of well-being for the people.

Capacity-building takes a range of forms in the programme, in particular:

- Building the capacity of existing structures by providing them with equipment and training their staff;
- Assistance to create new institutional frameworks to manage emerging issues, at central and local levels;
- Support to assess situations based on consistent data;
- Assistance to develop policies and strategies; and

- Assistance to implement and monitor policies and strategies.

In the environmental sector in particular, genuine improvement in management capacity has been observed. Management frameworks and tools are being implemented and becoming more robust, to which the programme undoubtedly contributed in the previous cycle as acknowledged by various staff interviewed at the lead ministry.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said of the whole of the programme’s capacity-building strategy which suffers from substantial inertia. Processes are established with difficulty, primarily due to institutional instability: structures change regularly, as do staff. The replacement of technical management under the authority of the ministerial cabinet, not to mention the possibility of administrative restructuring, mean that achievements evaporate, with new structures and staff taking time to rebuild them, particularly in an environment with poor institutional memory⁵⁰.

Another significant issue is the relationship between staff and their projects, which is generally too self-serving to be genuinely effective. This attitude is parasitic, affecting the results of interventions, particularly in terms of the allowances expected by officials in exchange for their commitment. In this respect, complaints were made to UNDP for having instigated a ministerial decree to streamline these allowances.

5.3 CAPACITY TO BUILD ON STRENGTHS

In strategic terms, the programme focuses on three areas (governance, poverty eradication and natural resource management) where UNDP knows how to emphasise its comparative advantages. These are its strong points. Some signs suggest that the country office capacity to make the most of these specialisations is strong, while others imply that it is deteriorating.

50 As one respondent said, ‘those who leave ‘sit down at home’ with the institutional memory and the newcomers have to start from scratch’.

Despite the difficulty in raising funds in a context like Gabon, a middle income country with few sources of ODA, the country office has, until now, managed to mobilise various resources to fund its portfolio. In particular, the GEF and GFATM, key sources of funding in the previous cycle, were secured because UNDP had recognised expertise in managing these international instruments.

The Gabonese State is another important source of programme funding, the main one for the current cycle, with beneficiary projects being the Strategy to combat Unlawful Enrichment and Money Laundering and ARTGOLD. Here again, donor confidence is based on the recognition of UNDP expertise in the relevant areas.

Beyond its thematic capacity, UNDP also has expertise in resource mobilisation, with the advantage of being able to exercise this function in a strategic, non-sectoral way. Sectoral agen-

cies are more limited in their spectrum of potential donors, but as a strategic agency UNDP can mobilise more widely and bring in resources that may be sectoral in nature, such as the Shell funding for the Operationalisation of the Ndougou Health Department.

Unfortunately, there are also real signs of deterioration of the office's capacity to make the most of its assets. There is a tendency to lose resources obtained, and also to lose clients from the portfolio, as in the case of GEF and Shell-Gabon. In terms of GEF, the office was unable to replace its environment expertise in order to continue to benefit from a positive government assessment of its support. In the case of Shell-Gabon, the specific technical expertise in public health was not there at management level, and UNDP did not manage to secure it from any other agency. GFATM management was also lost but that was not a reflection of performance, as any country delegating the role aspires to become the main beneficiary at some point.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS

Relevance: The UNDP programme is strategically relevant as all of its constituent parts are perfectly aligned with the country's development priorities, as shown in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon, in particular. However, whilst operational relevance is generally in evidence, in that the programme brings appropriate solutions, there are areas of weakness. The household waste collection project in the less developed urban areas of major towns is inappropriate as it increases the wealth gap to the detriment of poorer populations by making them pay for a waste collection service that populations of wealthier neighbourhoods do not pay for. The fact that ARTGOLD is currently only present in the five wealthiest provinces is also a problem from the point of view of a pro-poor approach, compulsory for all UNDP strategies.

Effectiveness: The UNDP programme has made strategic and operational contributions in the area of the environment, with improved management frameworks and instruments. Following the institutional assessment carried out as part of the Second Communication on Climate Change, a National Climate Council was set up, followed by specific plans and strategies for steering critical resources. There have also been real programme outcomes in terms of governance: developing global and sectoral strategies for steering the economy, general governance guidelines, and a new impetus for decentralisation through a dedicated strategy and substantial support for local government capacity. Finally, there has been an impact on poverty at strategic level through the development of capacity for redirecting policies towards the poorest (operationalisation and monitoring of MDGs) and improving

the resilience of the poor particularly in the field of health, where indicators for the prevention and treatment of malaria, tuberculosis and AIDS have been improved.

Efficiency: There are clear signs of efficiency in the programme, particularly as it is chosen by a range of partners to implement segments of their investment strategies. The programme has managed resources from the Global Environment Facility and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and has received funds from Shell-Gabon for the operationalisation of the Ndougou health department. At central and local government levels, significant public resources are allocated to UNDP to take advantage of its technical capabilities for delivering on investment. Although these experiences are evidence of a degree of programme efficiency, conversely the failure of some of them is a sign of the erosion of this efficiency. UNDP has lost GEF and Shell-Gabon funding because the added-value of the programme frameworks was no longer meeting expectations.

Sustainability: This faces definite threats, not least the context of institutional instability. Frequent changes of administration leave incoming governments in a position where they have to start from scratch in an environment where institutional memory remains poor. The dead wood among national stakeholder personnel undermines their commitment and willingness to capitalise on the achievements of the programme, often objectively seen as a donor intervention which brings with it allowances or payments. Notwithstanding, institutional achievements to which the programme has contributed are gradually bedding down in sectors such as the environment. However, in poverty and health, the achievements of GFATM are deteriorating, with

indicators for the prevention and treatment of targeted diseases on the decline. Previously, the suspension of the country from these funds showed that the strategic capabilities that UNDP tried to establish in the sector were unable to thrive. Two evaluations over two successive semesters resulted in the conclusion that the country results were no longer sufficient and the information system for monitoring them even less so.

UNDP positioning: This is adequate in terms of the strategic themes of governance, poverty reduction and natural resource management, focus areas where UNDP is acknowledged to offer added value. However, the performance of this positioning is increasingly hindered by two factors: firstly, by dwindling technical capabilities in the country office, which has resulted in losing the management of GEF and Shell-Gabon resources, for example; and secondly by the fact that Gabon, now an upper middle income country, wants to restructure its cooperation relationships and brings its partners still closer to its specific development needs.

The reputation of UNDP, and the comparative advantages attributed to it, has greatly contributed to the substance of the programme. This positive reputation, based on proven expertise in its focus areas of governance, the environment and poverty reduction, has enabled the country office to raise programme funds from three types of partners. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria was the biggest donor for a large part of cycle I. The UNDP application and portfolio management capacity enabled it to become the main beneficiary of GFATM and manage grants on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the country. From this position, UNDP has greatly contributed to recording public health indicators. In a more localised way, the same situation prevailed with Shell-Gabon funding, which was used to support the department of Ndougou which houses oil sites operated by this company.

The second donor from which UNDP drew sectoral support for its activities in the country

is the Global Environment Facility. Here again, the agency's technical expertise resulted in successful funding applications and management throughout practically the whole of cycle I. The best institutional outcomes were achieved on this basis, with thorough analysis work conducted for the Second National Communication on Climate Change. Management frameworks and tools from the sector have followed and contributed to establishing improved capacity for managing the environment.

Finally, the recognised added value of UNDP has enabled the country office to position itself not just as key technical partner for the country, but also as a recipient of state funding to deliver projects devised in partnership with national counterparts. As such, the State is almost the sole donor for all governance work under the programme. The Anti-corruption and Anti-money Laundering Strategy, drawn up in the previous cycle and the implementation of which has just begun in the current cycle, is entirely state-funded. Although UNDP allocates funds to the Articulation of Territorial and Thematic Networks for Governance project, in support of decentralisation, most of the funding for this activity comes from the Gabonese state budget. In addition, some local governments allocate a portion of their investment budget to the programme.

The proportion of funding from the State also hinders implementation. Unfortunately, these financial interventions are beset with a degree of uncertainty. First, there is the problem of timescales. The state budget is not operational until the end of the first quarter, and in some years state partnerships are set up much later than that. The ARTGOLD project almost had to recall field staff to Libreville because funding from the State was delayed. The PACLEI project also experienced delays in getting off the ground (launched last May). Over the last year, interruptions in the availability of state funding have been exacerbated by the drop in oil price and revenue, which has placed a burden on the public finances in a country where oil makes up 50% of the budget and 80% of export income.

The recategorisation of the country as an upper middle income country affects the programme in a variety of ways. Firstly, this status dries up the sources of official development assistance traditionally used to fund development needs, though the needs remain. The gap in social services and infrastructure has remained particularly significant, yet traditional donors are not stepping into the breach, precisely because of the country's MIC status. As such, the programme has to find alternative funding to supplement the national budget with the problems set out above.

More indirectly, this MIC status influences the programme by gradually shifting how the country views its development partners. With under 5% of the state budget coming from ODA, public officials tend to consider technical and financial partners as non-essential stakeholders and implement inconvenient forms of conditionality. The opportunity visa required to implement donor programmes falls within this scope, and has already led to the deferment of substantial financial assistance from the African Development Bank and the French Development Agency.

The other conditionality which affects the programme is the request for the nationalisation of staff. The national counterpart exerts constant pressure on the UNDP country office for more positions to be held by Gabonese people, including management positions. The team was able to observe this pressure from both government and civil society. One official interviewed explicitly stated that, "if we are to continue to fund the programme, we will increasingly need to call on national expertise".

Of relevance here is the case of UNDP management of Global Environment Facility funds, which the State unilaterally decided to transfer to the World Bank. While the decision was primarily the result of legitimate grievances, and the country office admits that in recent years it has been unable to offer high-level expertise on

environmental issues, it is also symptomatic of the greater scrutiny the government places on technical partners as an upper middle income country. It is also of some relevance that in a strategic interview with government sources, the team was clearly told that the local office of the World Bank, who benefited from this decision, embraced nationals on its management team⁵¹.

Within the country office the continuous depletion of capacity has ultimately undermined its value and taken resources away from the programme. Recently the office has seen a significant haemorrhaging of its staff. Between retirements and contracts coming to an end, in a system which does not routinely replace staff, the office now finds itself extremely depleted. At the time of the mission, strategic staff was made up of the Resident Representative: an economic advisor, two main technical advisors and a programme assistant. Operations have also been slimmed down with some roles redirected to regional offices which offer remote assistance.

This situation has resulted in a depletion of internal capacity, which has ultimately had a negative effect on the programme. The loss of Global Environment Facility funding must be viewed in this context. National counterparts, both the Environment Ministry and the Ministry for the Economy and Finances, stated clearly that they had transferred management of these funds to the World Bank because since cycle I of the programme UNDP had lost, and not rebuilt, technical capability in the field of the environment. UNDP were seen to be insufficiently responsive and proactive, no doubt exacerbated by management instability with a succession of no fewer than three resident representatives (including an intern) over a short period.

Lack of capacity was also the cause of the dissatisfaction that led Shell-Gabon not to renew its trust in UNDP for the operationalisation of the Ndougou Health Department. The oil company

51 The economic advisor is a Gabonese national, as the team was able to verify at this partner's headquarters.

entered into a second phase of this project without UNDP, transferring a person to manage the project from one of its overseas sites. The main criticism was the lack of responsiveness on the part of the UNDP office in Libreville, which significantly hindered the local management based in Gamba. The lack of specific expertise in public health in Libreville served only to lengthen project response times. Although UNDP is not required to mobilise such expertise, it could have involved a sister agency such as WHO, whose office is in Libreville can call on almost 80 health experts⁵².

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Reassess the intervention context to that of a middle-income country

As an upper middle income country, Gabon is increasingly making known its particular needs in terms of development and development cooperation.

In-depth consultations should be organised with the government, at political and technical levels, as well as with civil society so as to determine the best entry points and possible points of impact of UNDP cooperation.

2. Restructure the country office

Today the UNDP country office is losing financial resources (responsibility for managing GEF funds, Shell-Gabon funding), due to the continuous depletion of its technical capacity (a limited quantity of human resources with inadequate profiles).

There is a need to define new remits for cooperation on the basis of the conclusions of the previous recommendation, to determine the relevant profiles, mobilise more local staff with the highest standards of skills and productivity, on the basis of well-defined criteria, to take into account current budget restrictions and attract state funding more effectively.

3. Refocus the programme at a strategic level

There have been a lot of disasters in the programme's operational activities. These include: income-generating activities and other direct funding to associations in phase I of ART-GOLD, which disappeared without impact; the anecdotal discriminatory effects of waste collection; inconclusive management of the operationalisation of the health department of Ndougou and departure of the partner.

With each new project, the country office must focus on strategic content such as background research, organising stakeholders, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation, delegating operational aspects to a national implementing agency, supported by a UN agency with expertise in the field.

4. Improve monitoring and evaluation of the programme

A very small number of evaluations have been conducted over the 2007-2015 period; even joint reviews with the government have become increasingly rare in recent years. This situation makes it impossible to detect problems in time to remedy them.

In the absence of a monitoring and evaluation unit, which perhaps is not justified given the size of the portfolio, a member of the country office team must be made accountable and responsible for this function, drawing up an overall annual monitoring and evaluation plan and taking the responsibility to deliver it.

5. Use state funding as leverage for the development of national capacity

Where UNDP handed the reins to the State for the management of GFATM grants, these resources were very soon suspended on the grounds of inadequate capacity and results.

52 Seven specialists in the country office in Gabon and 70 specialists in the Central Africa regional team.

To get national partner agencies to a point where they can implement activities themselves, UNDP needs to provide specific analysis of their capacity-building requirements and systematically plan and implement this capacity-building using appropriate techniques, whilst involving them in the financial management of projects.

6. **Develop and implement a strategy to win back strategic resources**

In recent years, the country office has lost partners (GEF, GFATM, and Shell-Gabon) and needs to win them back, whilst also building new relationships. Building on the previous recommendations, with stronger, relevant strategic focus and technical capacity, UNDP should build a more systematic approach to recovering funding relationships, with a regularly evaluated ad-hoc plan and appropriate institutional communication, with buy-in from the whole office.

Annex 1

SUMMARY OF EXPLANATORY FACTORS

No.	Positive factors	Negative factors	Impact on the programme
1.	UNDP strategic reputation		Substantial fund-raising: Fund to Fight Diseases; Global Environment Facility. State budget: PACLEI, ARTGOLD; Shell-Gabon funding.
2.	Robust skills and comparative advantages of UNDP in programme focus areas: governance, poverty, environment		Actual contributions to promoting governance, poverty alleviation and management of the environmental sector.
3.		Continuous erosion of the country office technical capabilities	Reduced effectiveness of financial resources: GEF and Shell-Gabon funds, in particular, have been lost.
4.		Dispersion of operational activities where UNDP has no proven comparative advantage	Favours situations of failure which discredit the programme and the office: case of operationalisation of the health department of Ndougou
5.		Not enough of a joint approach with thematic UN agencies.	The programme is increasing its risk of failure by operational activities in which other UN agencies have the best expertise: Operationalisation of the Ndougou Health Department.
6.		Weakness of the monitoring and evaluation function, including the reduction in number of joint reviews with government	Absence of warning capability which would have made it possible to spot negative trends in time to correct them
7.	High quality political support from government		Favours programme implementation and results
8.	Providing the programme with substantial resources		Allows substantial segments of the programme to be implemented: PACLEI and ARTGOLD in particular
9.		Transfer of the UNDP GEF to the World Bank	Reduces the programme's commitment to the environment sector despite being a historic partner
10.		Budgetary constraints due to the fall in oil revenues	The late release of state financial contributions, and in insufficient quantity, reduces the programme's return.
11.		Deadwood among national administrative staff	The expectation of personal gain undermines the commitment and results of national counterparts
12.		Institutional instability: frequent institutional and staff changes	Hinders the sustainability of programme achievements, particularly in terms of capacity-building.
13.	Status of Gabon as an upper middle income country		Poses significant challenges in terms of adapting to the new needs of the environment

Annex 2

PEOPLE CONSULTED

GOVERNMENT OF GABON

Allogo Tiwino, Patrick, Director General of Statistics

Ebobola, Louis Léandre, Director General of the Environment, Ministry of Environment

Ibouili, Joseph, Focal Point, ARC MDGs, Ministry of Economy

Johnson-Ogoula, Christian, Deputy Technical Director, ANPN

Mahounbou, Jocelyn, Doctor, Head of the tuberculosis component of the GFATM program against diseases, Ministry of Health

Massard, Etienne, Secretary General of the Presidency, Presidency of the Republic

Meye, Léandre, Director General, Directorate of Fauna and Protected Areas

Mezui, Marcellin, Coordinator of the GFATM's National Unit against diseases, Ministry of Health

Mezui, Laurent, First National Coordinator ART GOLD, Ministry of Health

Obiang, Martian, Head of the Third Communication on Climate Change, Ministry of Environment

Okindja, Bernard, Head of Administration & Financial, NAFI

Ondo Assame, Olivier, ISO Coordinator ANPN

Ondo Metogo, Simolin, Prime Minister's Office (Illicit enrichment), Libreville

Ondo Ndong, Michel, Technical Advisor Decentralisation, Ministry of Interior

Ovono Ndong, Albert, Former Secretary-General for development agencies, Ministry of Economy

Pandzou, Bernard, responsible for the project Adaptation to Climate Change (Gabon Africa Adaptation Programme)

Razack, Safiou Abdou, doctor, head of the Malaria component of the GFATM program against diseases, Ministry of Health

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Afanou, Fidèle, Civil Society, ARTGOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Akendengue, Lucie, President of the Departmental Assembly of Mbendje, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Batsielilit, Alain, President Department Kougouleu beneficiary clinic/ART GOLD, ART GOLD Ntoum, Kougouleu

Kassa Ibinga, Bonaventure, Mayor of the 4th arrondissement, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Makanga Makaya, Antoine, President of the County Council, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Matoumba, Flavienne, Deputy Mayor of Ntoum, Kougouleu

Mboumba, Clotilde, Mayor of Gamba ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Moukabi, Adrien, Prefect of Gamba ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Obali, Raphael, Prefect of Etimbouè Omboué ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Pambo Moussoungou, Philibert, Prefect of Ambendje, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Polo-Pandzou, Odette, 2nd Mayor of Gamba ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Zinzmba, Sylvaire, Manager at the IT and office training centre, Ntoum Town Hall

CIVIL SOCIETY AND NON- GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Abondoum, Omega, Mother/Daughter Association, Sewing Workshop, ART GOLD Ntoum, Kougouleu

Akendengue, Marc, Representative of the Youth Association of Mandji Island (Ajim)

Arnhem, Eric, Technical Advisor Forestry, Wildlife Conservation Society

Bouka, Olivier, Member, AJIM

Charpentier, Christelle, Economic Operator, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Essono Ndong, Cyrille, SPO-Association, Oyem

Hega, Martin, Project Director, Wildlife Conservation Society

Manfoumbi, Miguele, Member, AJIM

Mapenda, Vierge Florentine, Mother/Daughter Association, Sewing Workshop, ART GOLD Ntoum, Kougouleu

Mouloumbi, Nicaise, President, “Croissance saine environnement” and President of the High Council of NSAs

Moussounda, Juste Parfait, AJIM

Mpaga, Georges, Coordinator, Network of free organisations for good governance (OLBG)

Ndong Nze, Lionel, GPS

Ndombo, Aubierge, Mother/Daughter Association, Sewing Workshop, ART GOLD Ntoum, Kougouleu

Ngomo Asseko, Pascal, environmental-SOGEV Association Oyem

Ndoutoume Nze, François, member, Association Romenec Franz, Oyem

Nzamba, Lilian, Representative, NGO Christer Service

Odounga Awassi, Dieudonné, President, National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI)

Okome Essima-Mabiala, Régine, Doctor at Shell company health center, Gamba

Ondeno Tete, Thomas, President of the Association Service Plus

Protet, Judicael, Brainforest Representative

Sisso, Maurice, Doctor, Gamba health centre, ART GOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

de Wachter, Pauwel, Director WWF

INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES AND DONORS

Tsouck Ibounde, Rick, National Economist, World Bank

UN AGENCIES

Biloho, Huguette, Programme Officer, FAO

Inoua, Aboubacar, Doctor, Program Officer, WHO

Keba, Patricia, Doctor, Programme Manager, UNFPA

Tack, Inge, Resident Representative, UNAIDS

UNDP GABON

Assoumou Mezui, ARTGOLD LBV

Fall, Mactar, Senior Technical Advisor ARTGOLD LBV

Gandoul, Thimotée, Focal Point, ARTGOLD Local Governance, Port-Gentil

Lepondo, Rostand, Research Officer, Shared Urban Solid Waste Management project, (PRONAGUP)

Meye, Sylvain, National Director of PI program for monitoring and evaluation, ARTGOLD LBV

Mezui Ondo, Romuald, Coordinator, Shared Urban Solid Waste Management project, (PRONAGUP)

Ondamba, Faustin, Advisor to the Environment Minister/Ministry of Environment, Project Manager MBE RIVER

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Annex 4

OUTCOME CLUSTERS COVERED BY THE THEMATIC REPORTS

Strategic areas	Outcome clusters/ thematic reports	Specific outcomes covered over the 2007-2016 cycle	Indicative # of projects covered	Indicative budget	Consultants		Data collection
					National	Team leader	
Poverty eradication	1. National capacity for developing, implementing and monitoring pro-poor policies are strengthened	Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented (07-11)	2	1,134,231	Data collection and contribution in the form of standardised inputs	Finalisation of the thematic report on outcome clusters by the team leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documents • Interviews in Libreville and the interior • Focus groups with beneficiaries • Implementation site visits
		The national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs (12-16)	2	421,842			
	2. Socio-economic capacity of the poor and their access to basic social services are strengthened	The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased (07-11)	5	8,337,330			
		Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their wellbeing (12-16)	2	1,475,842			
		The population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development of human capital (12-16)	10	20,126,500			
		Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased (07-11)	9	11,612,702			
		Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria (07-11)	4	9,227,834			
		The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services (12-16)	6	1,840,489			

Strategic areas	Outcome clusters/ thematic reports	Specific outcomes covered over the 2007-2016 cycle	Indicative # of projects covered	Indicative budget	Consultants		Data collection
					National	Team leader	
Promoting good governance	3. The quality of public institutions and their management capacity are strengthened, both at central and local level	The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved (07-11)	5	2,188,158	Data collection and contribution in the form of standardised inputs by one national consultant/governance		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documents • Interviews in Libreville and the interior • Focus groups with beneficiaries • Implementation site visits
		Local and community dynamics, including decentralised cooperation, are promoted (07-11)	1	ARTGOLD I & II Resources			
Environmental management	4. National environmental management capacity strengthened	An efficient operational monitoring system is set up (07-11)	11	8,221,856	Data collection and contribution in the form of standardised inputs by one national consultant/environment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of documents • Interviews in Libreville and the interior • Focus groups with beneficiaries • Implementation site visits

NB: Gender and other cross-cutting themes will be treated as such in each of the four outcome clusters

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts assessments called 'Assessment of Development Results' (ADR) so as to collect and produce information to assess the contributions of UNDP to development results at country level, as well as to demonstrate the effectiveness of the UNDP strategy in strengthening national efforts to achieve development results. The aim of an ADR is:

- To feed into the preparation of the UNDP new country programme;
- To strengthen UNDP accountability in relation to its partners and national stakeholders;
- To strengthen UNDP accountability in relation to the UNDP Executive Board.

ADRs are independent evaluations performed as part of the general provisions of the UNDP evaluation policy⁵³. The IEO is independent of UNDP management and headed by a director who reports to the UNDP Executive Board via the UNDP Administrator. The Evaluation Office's responsibility is two-fold: (a) to provide the Executive Board with reliable and credible information taken from the evaluations for the purpose of institutional accountability, decision-making and improvement; and (b) to strengthen the independence, credibility and usefulness of the evaluation function, as well as its coherence, harmonisation and alignment with United Nations reform and national ownership. Given the principle of national ownership, the IEO strives to carry out ADRs in collaboration with the government in question.

The first to be conducted in Gabon, this ADR was carried out in close collaboration with the Gabonese government, the Country Office (CO) of UNDP in Gabon and the Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA). It assesses the results of the UNDP programme over the 2007-2015 cycle with a view to contributing in 2016 to the preparation of the next UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) as well as other strategic planning exercises.

2. NATIONAL CONTEXT

Gabon is an African state situated between Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and the Republic of Congo. It has a population of 1.672 million inhabitants for an area of 268 000 km², of which 85% is made up of forest. The urbanisation rate is very high with more than four out of five Gabonese living in urban areas.

The country is led by an elected President supported by a Prime Minister who is the head of government. Legislative power is held by a bicameral parliament made up of a National Assembly and a Senate with 120 and 102 members respectively. The country is broken into a number of entities (provinces, departments, cantons, groupings of villages and villages) which overlap but according to a very incomplete logic in terms of decentralisation.

Gabon is an upper middle income country and owes this status mainly to its oil resources on which its economy is heavily reliant. As the fifth biggest oil producer in Africa, oil accounts for 80% of the country's exports and 60% of its bud-

53 See the UNDP evaluation policy www.undp.org/eo/documents/Evaluation-Policy.pdf. The ADR shall be carried out in accordance with the Norms and Standards and Ethical Guidelines as defined by the United Nations Evaluation Group (www.uneval.org).

getary revenues. This commodity accounts for 45% of GDP. In light of the current climate of falling prices globally and dwindling oil reserves nationally, this dependency on black gold, in a country filled with many other resources (agroforestry for example) gives the Gabonese economy a degree of fragility. This situation, combined with a policy of major works begun with the arrival in power of the current Head of State, produces significant challenges in terms of public finances. In 2013, for the first time in fifteen years, the country recorded a total budget deficit calculated at almost 2% of GDP and an estimated deficit excluding oil revenues of 24.4%. Nonetheless, the economy is showing some signs of expansion with a GDP growth rate of 5.5% in 2011 and 5.6% in 2013.⁵⁴

Despite the growth of the Gabonese economy and its status as a middle income country since 2010, socio-economic indicators remain poor. Gabon has a human development index of 0.674 as of 2013 and ranks 106th out of 187 countries, which corresponds to life expectancy at birth of 63.1 years, 7.5 mean years of schooling and per capita gross national income of 12,521 dollars in 2012 (purchasing power parity).⁵⁵ Poverty levels in Gabon are comparable with those in low income countries. In terms of MDGs, progress towards most targets remains inadequate in terms of, for example, the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger (MDG 1). One third of Gabonese people still live below the national poverty line.

In terms of development planning and programming frameworks, the country had a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper as early as 2003, but has not really implemented it. Following the arrival in power of the current Head of State, a much longer term document was drawn up, entitled Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE). As such, this new strategic framework falls more within the concept of a prospective study and is intended to be broken down on an operational level into short and medium term

action plans, the first of which is currently in the process of being implemented.

3. UNDP IN GABON

UNDP has been present and active in Gabon since signing an Assistance Agreement with the country in November 1974, which is regularly added to with country programmes and their action plans. From 2001, the drawing up of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework over five year periods, has offered new impetus to cooperation between countries and agencies within the United Nations system, under the leadership of UNDP, whose Resident Representative also acts as the Resident Coordinator of UN operational activities. Poverty alleviation and the promotion of sustainable human development are the principal objectives of interagency cooperation, through actions implemented in the areas of governance, HIV/AIDS and the environment.

In 2001, UN agencies represented in Gabon were: UNDP, WHO, UNESCO, UNFPA, HCR, WFP, IMF, World Bank and ADB. The Office of the Resident Coordinator oversaw collaboration between the Government and any agencies not represented in Libreville, including ILO, UNIDO, WMO, ITU, IOM, FAO and IAEA. Two agencies, UNICEF and UN-Habitat were established in 2011, bringing the total number of agencies in Gabon to 11, with the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa (UNCHRD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), also involved in UNDAF 2012-2016, though not present on the ground.

Over the last decade, in line with the country's development priorities and within the UN-wide system which makes up the UNDAF, UNDP has set out its activities around two successive programming cycles, 2007-2011 and 2012-2016, the contents of which are as follows:

54 <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/gabon/overview>.

55 UNDP, Human development report (2013).

Cycle 2007-2011 – included three areas of intervention in line with national priorities and the UNDP Strategic Plan, and was part of the UNDAF for the same period.

- Poverty reduction and pursuing MDGs.
- Promoting good governance.
- Disease control.

Gender was considered to be cross-cutting and as such present in every part of the programme. The importance of developing national capacity and promoting good governance both at central and local/community level is highlighted. National implementation was chosen with a view to building capacity in terms of the management, monitoring and evaluation of the selected projects and programme.⁵⁶

Cycle 2012-2016 – is broken into two main strands:

- Contribution to strengthening economic, democratic and environmental governance.
- Promoting the well-being of populations and increasing the participation of all in growth.

In each of these two areas, the intervention strategy focused on developing capacity as well as people taking ownership of results to make them sustainable. Participation in the objective of greater economic growth and the diversification of the sources of growth defined by the Government will help to make the institutions responsible for encouraging the private sector able to play their role effectively. Moreover, UNDP strategically supports a range of actions that may constitute incentives to completing the decentralisation process.⁵⁷

Moreover, the status of upper middle income country is not without impact on the framework of cooperation between UNDP and Gabon. Indeed, this status, which nevertheless cohabits

with significant development gaps, as evidenced in particular by the fact that the country will fail to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, restricts the country's access to a whole spectrum of funding under official development assistance. This makes external resource mobilisation all the more difficult. UNDP is reduced to turning to the State to raise the necessary funds for its programme, with no guarantee that it will get a positive response.

4. SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The ADR usually assesses two programme cycles in the country: the current and previous cycles. During the inception mission in Libreville (22 to 28 February 2015), it seemed appropriate to focus the evaluation on the last 8 years of activity, 2007-2014, i.e. the two first years of the current programme cycle (2012-2014) and the five elapsed years of the previous cycle (2007-2011) which is all the more likely to have produced results with the time elapsed since. Given the natural continuity between the two cycles, particular attention will be paid to projects implemented over both. New projects are based on the results and lessons learnt in the past.

The evaluation will cover UNDP activities in Gabon and the implementation of its programme in support of efforts by Gabonese authorities. Analysis of the two most recent programmes show three main areas of intervention: (i) governance, (ii) human development/poverty eradication and (iii) the environment. In these three areas, there is significant strategic activity supporting the development of the country's capacity, particularly in the form of technical assistance to draw up national policy documents on governance (on anti-corruption measures, for example, but also on environmental governance) and working towards and achieving the MDGs/SDGs. At operational level, the country office primarily undertakes pilot activities liable to open the way to more widespread

56 Country Programme for Gabon (2007-2011).

57 Country Programme for Gabon (2012-2016).

Table 1a. Country Programme for Gabon (2012-2016) outcomes and financial data

Thematic area	UNDP/CPD Outcomes	CPD Budget	Expenditure 2012-2014
Economic, democratic and environmental governance	The national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs.	9,353,000	340,105
	The population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development of human capital.		18,105,456
	Total	9,353,000	18,445,561
Poverty reduction, fight against HIV/AIDS, empowering women	Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being.	10,530,000	1,429,542
	The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services.		2,665,800
	Total	10,530,000	4,095,342
General total		19,883,000	22,854,269*

Source: CPD 2012-2016, Atlas

* Total expenditure includes 313,365 USD not allocated to a CPD outcome

interventions by the State or other partners: this is particularly the case of the programme in support of local development through decentralisation.

In terms of activity, the current cycle includes the following specific projects:

1. ARTGOLD: reached the mid-point at the time of the ADR; it promotes decentralisation and local development; it covers 5 out of the country's 9 provinces; it has already undergone a mid-term review; it is jointly funded by UNDP and the country; it sits within the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development which leads on the project nationally; it is built on the previous phase.
2. Project in support of the National Commission to Fight Against Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI) and the National Financial Investigation Agency (ANIF), commonly known as PACLEI (Fight against corruption): It supports the implementation of the Anti-Corruption Strategy; It is strategic in nature and thus potentially covers the whole country and is in the launch phase (2014-2017); It is funded by the State; it officially sits within the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development but in reality between two institutions (CNLCEI and ANIF) which it supports and whose management staff oversee the project at national level, with the Chair of the CNLCEI providing national leadership; It is based on a previous phase the main output of which was an ad-hoc national strategy which is precisely in the process of being implemented in the current phase.
3. TRIDOM: This involves work on the conservation of biodiversity; it covers two out of the country's nine provinces; it is funded by the Global Environment Facility; it sits within the Environment Ministry which leads on the project; it is in the process of being wound down.
4. Waste management: it works on waste collection solutions in less developed urban areas; it operates in 3 out of the country's 9 provincial capitals (Libreville, Port Gentil et Oyem); It is the result of the rolling-out of an initial phase which targeted the town of Libreville and the success of which resulted in the country requesting that the project be rolled out to other regional capitals. It sits within the Environment Ministry which manages it nationally; it is funded by UNDP and the State; it will come to an end in 2015 after 4 years in operation (2012-2015).

5. 3rd Communication on Climate Change: It is in the launch phase; it follows on from previous phases (1st and 2nd Communications); It falls within a dynamic of strategic support enabling the country to honour its international commitments in terms of monitoring its environmental profile; As a strategic project it potentially covers the whole of the country; It sits within the Environment Ministry, which leads on the project nationally; It is funded by the Global Environment Facility.
6. Capacity-building in support of MDGs/SDGs: It supports capacity-building in terms of pursuing and monitoring the country's commitments to human development indicators; It is in its third year and will come to an end 2016 (2013-2016); As a strategic activity, it potentially covers the whole of the country; It sits within the Ministry of Econ-

omy, Employment and Sustainable Development which leads on the project nationally; it is funded by UNDP.

7. Payment of Forestry Services: this promises an innovative approach to making environmental resources sustainable: Promoting sustainable management of the dam on the River Mbé through the development of a mechanism for the Payment of Environmental Services; it operates in 1 of the country's 9 regions (Médouneu); it sits in the Environment Ministry which oversees the national management of the project; it is funded by the Global Environment Facility.

In addition to the current cycle, the previous programme will also be examined as it is the one for which the activities have potentially had time to produce results. The activities within it can be summarised as follows:

Table 1b. UNDP Country Programme for Gabon (2007-11) outcomes and financial data			
Thematic areas	CPD Outcomes	CPD Budget	Expenditure 2007-2011
Achievement of MDGs and poverty reduction	Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented.	1,800,000	1,509,215
	The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased.	1,100,000	7,138,804
	The most deprived and vulnerable population groups gain access to basic social services.	3,650,000	0
	Total	6,550,000	8,648,019
Promoting democratic governance	The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved.	4,605,000	1,898,771
	Local and community dynamics, including decentralised cooperation, are promoted.	4,975,000	0
	An efficient operational monitoring system is set up.	1,600,000	6,044,844
	Total	11,180,000	7,943,615
Responses to HIV/AIDS/ Malaria/ Tuberculosis	Target populations know how to prevent HIV infection.	650,000	0
	Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased.	9,800,000	10,595,003
	Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria.	7,900,000	12,736,729
	Epidemiological monitoring and information management are improved.	600,000	0
	Total	18,950,000	23,331,733
Grand total		36,680,000	40,405,595*

Source: CPD 2007-2011, Atlas

* Total expenditure includes 482,229 USD not allocated to a CPD outcome

1. Disease control programme: Funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, this was a major activity for the country in the area of health and included the following projects: HIV Round 3, Malaria Round 4, Malaria Round 5/phase 1, Malaria Round 5/phase 2 and HIV Round 3/Therapeutic continuity; It sat within the Health Ministry; it accounted for over half of the portfolio resources; it covered the whole country.
2. Poverty eradication and support for MDGs and the PSRP: in addition to strategic support for monitoring the MDGs and PRSP, this included the programmes ARTGOLD/Local Development/Gabon, the Joint Food Security Project (HCR, FAO, WHO, UNICEF and UNDP) which covered 4 out of 9 regions and in which UNDP was responsible for income-generating activities, and finally a gender project was also attached to this segment of the former portfolio.
3. Waste Management Project: It was the ancestor of the project of the same name within the current cycle; It accompanied the rolling out of a local strategy for waste collection in less developed neighbourhoods with limited access; it was restricted to the town of Libreville; Its results led to the Government deciding to roll it out to other regions (current project); it sat within the Environment Ministry;
4. National Good Governance Programme: Funded by UNDP, it was the framework for supporting the State in setting out its key governance strategies; as a strategic programme, it was on a national scale and sat within the Ministry for the Economy. Its main outputs were, in particular, a National Action Plan, a Decentralisation Strategy, an Anti-corruption and Money-laundering Strategy, the subject of a dedicated project in the current cycle (PACLEI)
5. Support for the environment sector: a bundle of project activities enabled UNDP to support the Government in formulating its environmental policy instruments and producing its regular mandatory sectoral reports: 1st and 2nd Communication on Climate Change; Adaptation to climate change, Biodiversity, Waste Management and Mbé River (predecessors of the three projects of the same name in the current cycle); All of these activities were funded by the Global Environment Facility, and have given rise to communications of the same name and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy; they all sat within the Environment Ministry.

5. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology consists of two main parts: (1) analysis of the contribution of UNDP to development results through its themes/programmes and (2) evaluation of the quality of its contribution. The ADR will present its findings according to the above criteria⁵⁸, on the basis of analysis by thematic area, so as to draw general conclusions about the evaluation and set out recommendations for future programmes.

- (1) **UNDP contribution by thematic and programmatic area.** The effectiveness of the UNDP contribution to Gabon's development results through its programme activities will be analysed. Particular attention will be paid to examining this contribution in relation to the overarching UNDP goal of poverty reduction and its contribution to promoting gender equality and empowering women⁵⁹.
- (2) **The quality of UNDP contribution** The ADR will examine the quality of the UNDP contribution based the following criteria:
 - **Relevance** of UNDP activities to existing development needs as reflected in

58 More details on criteria are available in the ADR Handbook, IEO, January 2011.

59 Using the UN System-wide action plan for implementation the CEB and the United Nations system-wide policy on gender equality and empowerment of women. www.unwomen.org/~media/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/How%20We%20Work/UNSystemCoordination/UN-SWAP-Framework-Dec-2012.pdf

national priorities and the views of the local population;

- **Efficiency** of UNDP activities in terms of rational use of human and financial resources; and
- **Sustainability** of the results to which UNDP has contributed.

The ADR will also examine how certain factors can explain UNDP performance, particularly the engagement principles set out in the Strategic Plan 2014-2017⁶⁰. For example, in addition to examining the contribution of UNDP to gender equality and the empowerment of women, the evaluation will examine the issue of gender as a factor in UNDP performance. For each country programme outcome, this will involve analysing how the issue of gender is mainstreamed across programmes and operations.⁶¹ Then, UNDP strategic positioning will be analysed from the standpoint of the organisation's mandate and recognised or emerging needs and national priorities for development in Gabon. This will involve a systematic analysis of UNDP positioning in the space of the country's development policies as well as the strategies used by UNDP to maximise its contribution. The ADR will pay particular attention to good practice and lessons learnt from the experience, including assistance given in non-technical areas which is mainly associated

with its contribution through its strategic positioning and which may be applied to other countries and regions. Finally, the ADR will examine how management methods have had an impact on meeting programme objectives.⁶²

In analysing the above, particular attention will be paid to identifying country-specific factors that have influenced – or continue to influence – UNDP performance, i.e.:

- Internally, the human resources available within the country office and their profiles;
- Externally, the national context characterised by the status of the country as an upper MIC not eligible for certain official development assistance resources;
- Externally again, the context of institutional stability with frequently changing administrative staff.

The outcomes of the last two programme cycles will be analysed together and separate reports on each outcome produced, so as to examine the progress made towards achieving these outcomes and measuring the UNDP contribution to these intended changes. Should it prove relevant, a 'Theory of Change' (ToC)⁶³ will also be used to guide the thinking of the evaluation team, in consultation with UNDP and national stake-

60 The engagement principles of the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 include: national ownership and capacity; a human rights-based approach; sustainable human development; gender equality and women's empowerment; voice and participation; South-South and triangular cooperation; an active role as global citizens; and universality.

61 Using, among other things, the marker of equality and the gender equality label as parameters, on the basis of UNDP and UNEG methods.

62 This information is derived from an analysis of the objectives entered in the Results-Based Management (RBM) platform, the financial results of the Executive Snapshot, the results of the Global Staff Survey and interviews at operational level with the Country Office.

63 'Theory of change' is an outcomes-based approach which applies critical thinking to the design, implementation and evaluation of initiatives and programmes intended to support change in their contexts. As a minimum, theory of change is considered to encompass a discussion of the following elements:

- Context for the initiative, including social, political and environmental conditions;
- Long-term change that the initiative seeks to support and for whose ultimate benefit;
- Process/sequence of change anticipated to lead to the desired long-term outcome;
- Assumptions about how these changes might happen, as a check on whether the activities and outputs are appropriate for influencing change in the desired direction in this context;
- Diagram and narrative summary that captures the outcomes of the discussion.

Source: Vogel, Isabel, 'Review of use of "Theory of Change" in International Development' (April 2012), DfID

holders. In drawing up the ToC, the assumptions underlying the expected changes in the programmes and the relationship between cause and effect should become clear and form the basis for the data collection methodology required to verify the theories behind the observed changes. The specific outcome reports will evaluate the UNDP contribution to each outcome according to pre-defined evaluation criteria and will also identify the factors specific to each area having influenced this contribution. Each outcome report will be produced based on a standard model which will make it easier to summarise results and formulate conclusions. The findings and conclusions of each outcome report will then be summarised in the global ADR report.

At the same time the ADR will place an emphasis on empowering the organisation and on strategic perspectives that take into account past lessons learned. Through the TOR, the approach can help the management and programme staff to make strategic decisions based on evaluation data. The EM will ensure that the ADR can feed into this strategic thinking through strong engagement with the country office and its national partners.

From a more technical point of view, the quality of the 'evaluability' of programmes will ensure the UNDP contribution to the objectives in each area can be assessed and baseline and target data of the indicators of the results of the two CPDs compared. In the case of the existing programme, evaluation will run to 30 June 2015, the cut-off date, which means that around 70% of the programme will have elapsed (3.5 out of 5 years). A scale will be used to quantify progress made on each CPD result and on each criterion, based on information gained from semi-structured interviews, qualitative assessments and quantitative data where relevant.⁶⁴ As progress in against certain objectives can sometimes be slow to materi-

alise⁶⁵, any quantitative assessment of programmes will be strengthened by qualitative analysis allowing UNDP contributions in non-technical areas (specifically project-related) to be recorded. Each assessment must explain contributions by different partners, including those in which UNDP played a decisive part working with national counterparts and in the case of projects and programmes, with other agencies.

The ADR will be of use to the next UNDP country programme, as well as the Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA) and the various offices of the headquarters, in identifying lessons from past programmes and opportunities for future programmes so as to offer recommendations on where UNDP can add value.

6. DATA COLLECTION

Evaluability: An analysis was carried out before and during the inception mission in order to understand the constraints and opportunities involved in data collection. This process is used as a basis for identifying data collection methods and helps to give an initial idea of ADR requirements in terms of the necessary resources and timeframe for data collection. A full table of data collection challenges and opportunities is provided in Annex 1. The Gabon country office has not evaluated outcomes but has carried out a number of project evaluations which will be used as inputs for analysis. They are limited in number and as such limit the evaluability of the office's development activities. The four evaluation reports below are available.

- Final evaluation of the project Conservation of Transboundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (TRIDOM); 2014.
- Cycle 2007-2011 mid-term review, 2010.

64 For more information on the scale system, see the ADR Handbook, IEO, 2011.

65 This is particularly relevant to Gabon where UNDP has been able to offer support through actions (for example its role in advising on, facilitating and influencing public policy) to develop and strengthen public institutions or policies, which may have taken time to be set up or to have become operational.

- Final evaluation: Shared urban management of solid waste in Libreville; 2009.
- Final evaluation of the Fourth Round of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria ‘Malaria part’ Gabon; 2008.

Data collection: A mixed-method approach will be used and will include:

- **Review of reference documents:** A number of documents will be consulted, including country programming documents, project/programme documents produced by UNDP and the Gabonese government, UNDP institutional documents (for example, global staff surveys, strategic plan, multi-year funding frameworks, results-based annual reports), available reports on previous assessments available for projects and any available research and publications on the country.
- **Interviews:** Direct face-to-face and telephone interviews will be carried out with relevant stakeholders, such as government representatives, civil society organisations, private sector representatives, United Nations and development agencies, donors and beneficiaries of the country programme, to gather their opinions on any assessment questions arising from the ADR, including UNDP services, project and programme delivery and impact (strengths, weaknesses and funding allocated).
- **Field trips:** The evaluation team will visit the selected project sites to record any results in person. Selected regions will be those where UNDP has a high concentration of projects and those where crucial projects are in the process of being implemented. Efforts made to confirm results on the ground will make up for shortcomings related to the relative lack of data from preceding evaluations. Relevant stakeholders for interviews and sites to visit in Libreville and the provinces of the hinterland will be identified based on available programme documents and discussions with UNDP programme managers and national partners.
- **Approval:** All assessment findings will be corroborated by relevant evidence. Robust and consistent analysis of the questions under evaluation will be carried out by triangulating findings.
- **Stakeholder involvement:** At the start of the evaluation, in-depth analysis of stakeholders (already well advanced during the inception mission) will be carried out to identify any relevant UNDP partners, as well as those who are not UNDP partners but who play a key role in achieving outcomes in priority areas. The evaluation will employ an inclusive approach in designing and rolling out the evaluation and validating its outputs. The CO will involve national stakeholders from government and civil society, United Nations agencies and other donors and partners in this process.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT

The evaluation process involves a large range of different offices.

The UNDP Independent Evaluation Office: The IEO will lead the ADR in collaboration with the country office and the Gabonese government. The IEO has drawn up these Terms of Reference (ToR) for the evaluation and will prepare the main overview of each outcome report which will be integrated in the final report, will select the team of consultants, manage the data collection team, offer advice, organise feedback sessions and a meeting with stakeholders, prepare the first provisional version of the report, finalise it and oversee the review and monitoring process. The Independent Evaluation Office will bear all the costs directly related to carrying out the ADR.

UNDP Country Office in Gabon: The country office will provide support for the evaluation:

- i) by working with the national Government and other stakeholders in the country;
- ii) by helping the evaluation team to identify and collect all the relevant reference documents for the country programme and UNDP;

- iii) by providing timely logistic and administrative support required by the evaluation team during the data collection process (notably arranging appointments), as well as ensuring that adequate security measures are taken for the evaluation team;
- iv) by reviewing the draft ARD report and adding all the factual corrections needed and any comments by facilitating the setting up of a national reference group;
- v) by facilitating the organisation of a final stakeholder workshop, and/or various discussion sessions aimed at the various stakeholder categories; and
- vi) by implementing the assessment's final recommendations.

National reference institution: National participation and the appropriation of the ADR process and its results will be ensured by a partnership in the evaluation process with the Ministry for the Economy, Employment and Sustainable Development (MEEDD) as UNDP principal interlocutor, but also by bringing in any other relevant administrations and entities. The MEEDD is expected to: i) examine the Terms of Reference of the evaluation; ii) assist in choosing stakeholders to interview and sites to visit; iii) help to facilitate data collection on the ground; iv) make observations on the second draft version of the ADR report; v) facilitate the organisation of the stakeholder workshop alongside the CO.

Regional Service Centre for Africa (RSCA): The RSCA will assist the evaluation by sharing information, examining the ToR and the first provisional version of the ADR and by taking part in the stakeholder workshop. The RSCA is also in charge of monitoring and supervising the implementation of monitoring actions by the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC).⁶⁶

The evaluation team: The Independent Evaluation Office will put in place an evaluation

team for the ADR comprised of the following members:

- **Evaluation Manager (EM):** A member of the Independent Evaluation Office team, whose general responsibility is to carry out the ADR and prepare and revise the provisional and final report, to co-lead the stakeholder workshop and to provide any clarification required by the country office in the preparation of its logbook for the first version of the ADR report, and the management response (which will be submitted to the ERC with the final ADR report).
- **Research assistant (RA):** An RA in the Evaluation Office is involved in the collection of reference documents and the preparation of data and information, particularly for Chapters 2 and 3 of the ADR and the information on the programme.
- **Team leader (Consultant):** An independent evaluation expert from the region (Africa), responsible for contributing to the inception mission and drawing up the TOR, overseeing data collection throughout the main field visit, helping to draft the ADR report and facilitate the process of discussion and sharing of results with stakeholders.
- **3 national specialists:** National consultants will be recruited to cover the areas of **Governance**, the **Environment**, and **Poverty eradication**, including the large segment from the previous programme, **Disease control**. They must also, where possible, cover other areas of UNDP work in Gabon, in particular cross-cutting areas (gender, human rights and capacity-building). National consultants will be responsible for specific contributions to outcome reports and the main ADR report related to the areas assigned to them with the SRO responsible for incorporating these inputs and finalising all of the mission deliverables in the form of contractual funds.

66 <http://erc.undp.org/>

Table 2. Evaluation team responsibilities

Expert/ Thematic areas	Responsibilities
3 national experts Governance/environment/disease control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of documents 2. Primary data collection through interviews and project implementation visits 3. Review of data collected 4. Production of thematic inputs for the specific outcome report(s) for the area in question and the main ADR report.
Team leader Poverty eradication and monitoring the MDGs and the PRSP/TRIDOM project Gender Benchmarking	<p>As a thematic expert</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review of documents 2. Primary data collection through interviews and project implementation visits. 3. Review of data collected 4. Production of thematic inputs for the specific outcome report(s) for the area in question and the main ADR report. <p>As a main expert</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training national consultants in the ethical rules and technical tools for conducting evaluation 2. Coordination of the entire document review and data collection and review process 3. Drafting specific outcome reports and the general evaluation report based on the thematic inputs produced by national consultants

The responsibilities of the evaluation team members are given in the table above.

- **Support staff deployment:** an assistant will be recruited to offer support for the mission; their responsibilities will include planning the field visit, requesting appointments, arranging travel within the country and any other secretarial work to support the mission.
- **Implementation of travel logistics:** given the need to honour a high number of appointments, particularly in Libreville, a team of three consultants, a vehicle and dedicated driver will be enlisted locally, on a full-time basis, for the mission.

8. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation will be performed in accordance with the guidelines approved by the IEO methodology. The following lines summarise the elements of the process. Four main phases form a framework for carrying out the evaluation.

Phase 1: Preparation. The Independent Evaluation Office will prepare the baseline documenta-

tion with the help of the country office and will receive the information from the regional office and other central administrations. The EM and TL undertook a one-week inception mission in the country and met with the country office, government partners and main national stakeholders. The objectives of this mission were to: i) ensure that the key stakeholders understand the aim, the process and the methodology of the evaluation; ii) obtain the point of view of key stakeholders on all the important questions to be addressed in the evaluation; and iii) determine the scope of the evaluation, its approaches, calendar and the parameters for choosing the ADR evaluation team.

The inception mission in Libreville (22-28 February 2015) led to the drawing up of these Terms of Reference, which were communicated to the key stakeholders for their comments. Based on the finalised ToR, and in accordance with the internal rules governing recruitment, the Independent Evaluation Office will recruit three national consultants (see Part 7 and Table 2) who are evaluation experts in the areas covered by the evaluation.

Phase 2: Collection and analysis of data. The aim is to collect the data in accordance with the ToR and analyse the data gathered from a variety of sources in relation to the evaluation criteria shown in part 6.

- Activities prior to the mission: The members of the evaluation team will analyse the reference documents and prepare a provisional outcome report before the data collection mission. This document will identify the evaluation issues specific to outcomes, as well as any gaps and problems that will need to be validated during the field data collection phase. Moreover, Chapters 2 and 3 of the ADR final report must but drafted in full prior to the main mission so as to be checked by the country office.
- Data collection and validation mission: The evaluation team, led by the EM and the DEM, will carry out a mission in the country to collect data in the field. This field visit will take place over a 3-week period between mid-May and the beginning of June 2015. Once the data has been collected, the team will come together to think about the main observations and recommendations, with the aim of producing the outcome reports. The evaluation team will debrief, with the country office mainly (and potentially the RSCA) at the end of the field visit (in the first week of June) to discuss the main observations and preliminary recommendations. The team will ensure that all factual inaccuracies and errors of interpretation are corrected.

Phase 3: Summary, drafting the report and examination of results. The aim is to collate all the evaluations (outcome reports) and to consult with relevant stakeholders to obtain solid and factual observations, conclusions and recommendations.

- Drafting reports: Provisional and final reports are drawn up in accordance with the ToR, the ADR Handbook and the quality standards established by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG).

- Review: For reasons of quality assurance, a provisional version of the report is first reviewed internally by the IEO, the country office and the RSCA. The ADR EM at the IEO examines compliance, whereafter the report is submitted to the IEO director for approval. In terms of the review by stakeholders, a first version of the report is then sent via the country office to the Gabonese national counterpart to check any facts and identify any inaccuracies or omissions. The IEO will carefully review the comments received and propose changes to the document where necessary. A 'log book' of comments and responses will be prepared.
- Workshop and meetings of stakeholders: In close cooperation with the county office and the RSCA, a meeting with the main national stakeholders is scheduled (end 2015) to present the results of the evaluation and assess the routes to take. Participants include the senior management of the IEO and the EM, the TL, the country office, representatives of the RSCA and of national stakeholders. The main aim of this meeting is to obtain the broadest country-wide buy-in to make the most of the lessons learned and recommendations made by the report and to strengthen national appropriation of the development process and the empowerment needed for UNDP work in the country. The report will be finalised at the end of the workshop.

Phase 4: Production, dissemination and monitoring. The aim is to create a report that is accessible to a broad spectrum of readers (maximum of 50 pages plus annexes published in French – online and in hard copy – and also available online in English). After the review, translation and formatting process, the final report will then be posted online on the IEO website. This phase will ensure that the results and lessons learned from the ADR report are fully taken into account for future operational improvements and widely disseminated to the public. The report is submitted to the UNDP

Administrator, who requests official responses to the evaluation from the country office/RSCA (a 'management response'). The RSCA is in charge of monitoring and supervising the implementation of monitoring actions by the Evaluation Resource Centre (ERC). The ADR is shared internally and externally, both in hard copy and electronic copy. The results of the assessment are presented to the senior management of the RSCA in the form of a formal presentation. Discussions may take place with other offices to facilitate organisational learning. A summary will be used as a communication tool.

9. ADR PROCESS TIMETABLE

The provisional timetable for the evaluation process and the respective responsibilities are set out below. The country office and the RSCA will take part in the process of drawing up a new CPD in 2016. As such the ADR comes at the ideal time for conclusions and recommendations arising from the ADR to feed into the planning process. Thus, the key messages from the evaluation can be validated appropriately and incorporated into the new country programme with confidence. The final report should be available to the country office and the RSCA in the 1st quarter of 2016.

Table 3. Provisional timetable (in 2015)		
Activity	Implementing agencies	Provisional timetable
Phase 1: Preparation		
ADR launch and preparatory work	EM/RA	January/February
Inception mission; identification of consultants	EM/TL	22-28 February
Provisional Terms of Reference (TOR) for translation	EM/TL/IEO	5 March
TOR for CO/RSCA/Gov observations Gabon	EM	25 March
Final version of TOR completed and approved by the IEO	EM	15 April
Evaluation team recruitment	EM	30 April
Finalise Chapters 2 & 3 (French)	TL/EM/RA	<10 May
Phase 2: Data collection and analysis		
Producing evaluation tools and protocols	TL/EM	<15 May
Data collection mission (report), analysis and *Sharing of preliminary results of Gabon ADR	SCRO/EM/Consultants	17 May – 5 June 5 June*
Phase 3: Summing up and drafting of report		
First provisional version for observations by CO/RSCA (and translation of summary for IEO)	TL/EM/IEO/CO/RSCA	1 July
Comments received and second provisional version presented to the CO/RSCA + relevant ministry	EM/TL/CO/RSCA/gov	5 August 20 August
Comments received, ADR report finalised and full report translated into English	EM/TL	15 September 15 October
Stakeholder workshop in Gabon	TL/EM/IEO/CO/Gov	November
Phase 4: Production and monitoring		
Report finalised; Final management response drafted by the CO; communication brief produced	IEO/CO	December
Publication and dissemination of final report	IEO	1st part 2016

Table 4. Analysis of evaluation capacity

Programme area	Outcomes	Budget 2007-2014	No. projects (2007-2014)	Opportunities/ constraints in terms of data collection *Evaluations
Poverty eradication	Outcomes 12 and 13: 'Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented.'	1,134,231	2	
	Outcome 14: 'The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased.'	8,337,330	5	Project 00033796 – Final evaluation: Shared urban management of solid waste in Libreville. (2009)
	Outcome 24: 'Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being'	1,475,842	2	
Governance	Outcome 16: 'The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved'	2,188,158	5	
	Outcomes 18 and 19: 'An efficient operational monitoring system is set up'	8,221,856	11	Project 00051146 – Conservation of Trans-boundary Biodiversity in the Dja-Odzala-Minkébé Interzone in Gabon, Congo and Cameroon (TRIDOM).
	Outcome 22: 'The national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs'	421,842	2	
	Outcome 23: 'The population, in particular the most vulnerable groups, benefits from sectoral strategies and policies targeting equitable, equal and inclusive development'	20,126,500	10	See TRIDOM project evaluation (Outcome 18)
The fight against disease and HIV/AIDS	Outcome 20: 'Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased'	11,612,702	9	
	Outcome 21: 'Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria'	9,227,834	4	Project 00043340 – Final evaluation of the Fourth Round of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria 'Malaria part' Gabon. (2008)
	Outcome 25: 'The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services.'	1,840,489	6	

Sources: DDP Gabon 2007-2011 and 2012-2016, ERC, Atlas

Table 5. Country Programme Outcomes (2007-2011 and 2012-2016)

	UNDAF (2007-2011)	UNDP Country Programme (2007-2011)	UNDAF (2012-2016)	UNDP Country Programme (2012-2016)
Areas of cooperation	UNDAF Outcome	Country programme outcomes	UNDAF Outcome	Country programme outcomes
Poverty eradication	By 2011, poverty reduction with a particular focus on vulnerable groups through economic diversification	Budgetary, fiscal and sectoral policies for the poor are adopted and implemented.	(Outcome 3) communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being	Communities use preventative measures that encourage the improvement of their well-being
		The income of poor and vulnerable groups is increased.		
Governance	By 2011, the capacity and performance of public institutions and community stakeholders are improved	The framework and operation of political, economic and social institutions are improved	(Outcome 1) the national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs and economic and social sectors.	The national statistical system produces quality information on the monitoring of MDGs
		Local and community dynamics, including decentralised cooperation, promoted.		
		An efficient operational monitoring system is set up		
The fight against disease and HIV/AIDS	National responses to HIV/AIDS and malaria are strengthened by 2011	Access to comprehensive care (medical, economic, nutritional, legal as well as relating to orphans and vulnerable children and the planning and budgetary process) is increased	(Outcome 6) Populations, in particular the poorest groups, have access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services.	The population has access to quality educational and sanitation services, including HIV/AIDS services.
		Children under 5 years of age and pregnant women receive therapeutic care and protective means against malaria		

MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO ADR RECOMMENDATIONS

ADR recommendations	Dialogue for repositioning
<p>1. Reassess the intervention context to that of a MIC.</p> <p>As an upper middle income country, Gabon is increasingly making known its particular needs in terms of development and development cooperation. In-depth consultations should be organised with the government, at political and technical levels, as well as with civil society so as to determine the best entry points and possible points of impact of UNDP cooperation.</p>	<p>Gabon is indeed an upper middle income country which, in terms of financial and human resources and political stability, cannot be compared to low-income countries. However, in human and social terms, its performance is close to that of low-income countries. Gabon is faced with significant social and spatial inequalities between rural and urban areas, precarious and upgraded districts, which are potential sources of conflict.</p> <p>National priorities are aimed at making Gabon emergent by 2025, winning back the domestic market for food, reducing poverty and promoting shared growth. The Government's programming tools are the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE), the Human Investment Strategy (SIH) and the 'Programme gabonais de réalisations agricoles et des initiatives des nationaux engagés' (GRAINE). The GRAINE programme specifically targets the reduction in food imports, youth employment in the agricultural sector and increased contribution of agricultural production to GDP.</p> <p>Gabon has also committed to implementing the 2030 development agenda aimed at achieving the sustainable development goals (SDGs). All of these commitments by Gabon are also part of the Agenda 2063 Vision for the transformation of Africa.</p> <p>The most important contributions of UNDP are at strategic level: strategic diagnoses which form the basis of plans and programmes; formulation aimed at inclusive, sustainable development; effective embedding of SDGs in national plans and programmes; support for developing national capacity for the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of national development plans.</p> <p>At an operational level, the following can be cited: implementation of specific support for building capacity for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of plans and programmes at central and local level; supporting grassroots in gaining autonomy and developing their resilience on the basis of fairness, including in terms of gender; support for local governments in planning their development and effectively managing their resources (including natural resources) and the environment.</p>

(continues)

ADR recommendations	Dialogue for repositioning
<p>2. Restructuring the Country Office</p> <p>Today the UNDP country office is losing financial resources (responsibility for managing GEF funds, Shell-Gabon funding), due to the continuous depletion of its technical capacity (a limited quantity of human resources with inadequate profiles). There is a need to define new remits for cooperation on the basis of the conclusions of the previous recommendation, to determine the relevant profiles, mobilise more local staff with the highest standards of skills and productivity, on the basis of well-defined criteria, to take into account current budget restrictions and attract state funding more effectively.</p>	<p>In terms of human capacity, the UNDP office must be able to respond to the country's support needs. The areas in which UNDP must be able to offer support to the host country are: strategic advice, formulating programmes and capacity-building to eradicate poverty, the reduction of inequalities, environmental conservation and sustainable environmental management, the process of economic and social transformation and partnerships.</p> <p>Incorporating sustainable development goals in policies and programmes and strengthening capacity for monitoring SDGs are areas in which UNDP must add value. Embedding SDGs in plans and programmes, achieving them more quickly and monitoring them effectively are all areas in which UNDP can offer support.</p> <p>All of this support requires the office to have human resources of sufficient quantity and quality. Not that UNDP capacity should be developed as a substitute for those of national stakeholders. It is about having a degree of leverage enabling national institutions responsible for issues of sustainable human development to gradually do without technical support by developing national capacity. To make a difference in this process, UNDP must have national specialists in governance, the environment and poverty, all able to advise the Office in their areas, to offer basic support in formulating national programmes and plans and to develop operational solutions on a small scale that may be replicated in light of lessons learned. The most senior local staff member will coordinate the programme. An international staff member may assist in implementing the programming measures in a transitional phase. Quality support for the operations plan must be available to improve the way in which deadlines and standards are met.</p>
<p>3. Refocus the Programme at strategic level</p> <p>There have been a lot of disasters in the programme's operational activities. These include: income-generating activities and other direct funding to associations in phase I of ARTGOLD, which disappeared without impact; the anecdotal discriminatory effects of waste collection; inconclusive management of the operationalisation of the health department of Ndougou and departure of the partner. With each new project, the country office must focus on strategic content such as background research, organising stakeholders, capacity-building and monitoring and evaluation, delegating operational aspects to a national implementing agency, supported by a UN agency with expertise in the field.</p>	<p>The refocusing of the programme on the strategic level implies that the programmes be targeted towards the strands requiring substantial support for which UNDP cannot set itself apart as a leader or as having a qualitative advantage. The strategic dimension must be based on in-depth analysis which will tease out solid strategic policies. These strategic diagnoses are of use, particularly for plans and programmes that are international in scale. Some of the areas that might be subject to in-depth and/or strategic analysis include: conditions for inclusive growth, employment and vocational training, reducing inequalities, governance, inadequacies in terms of building capacity for resilience, sustainable development, conditions for accelerating structural transformation and, as such, emergence.</p> <p>The Office should rely on national capacity-building to conduct this strategic analysis and diagnosis through the recruitment of national experts and by involving national institutions, studies and research, whilst bringing in international experts and practitioners from countries that have emerged in the areas under consideration. This national capacity-building will also relate to the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programmes.</p> <p>The Office also intends to work closely with other agencies under the UNDAF and 'Delivering as One' (DaO) frameworks.</p> <p>From an operational perspective, the sustainability of results will now form the basis of the Office's interventions. Support for IGAs will focus on: the implementation at local level of revolving funds, both encouraging saving and the funding of low-cost micro-projects. The funds collected will be used for technical support to set up and monitor projects, charges or products of the bank or microfinance institution. At the same time, the capacity of local stakeholders will be strengthened on the basis of their needs in terms of resilience, environmental management and local planning. The sustainability of the Office's interventions will also be guaranteed without it or other financial partners being required to refund the same activities.</p>

(continues)

ADR recommendations	Dialogue for repositioning
<p>4. Improve monitoring and evaluation of the programme</p> <p>A very small number of evaluations have been conducted over the 2007-2015 period; even joint reviews with the government have become increasingly rare in recent years. This situation makes it impossible to detect problems in time to remedy them. In the absence of a monitoring and evaluation unit, which perhaps is not justified given the size of the portfolio, a member of the country office team must be made accountable and responsible for this function, drawing up an overall annual monitoring and evaluation plan and taking the responsibility to deliver it.</p>	<p>The Office will gradually bring its programming capacity up to UNDP standards. Programme specialists, and particularly the programme coordinator, who will be gradually recruited, will take on the monitoring and evaluation function based on UNDP standards in consultation with implementation partners and the Government.</p> <p>The senior economic advisor and the senior technical advisors in post will support this process by enabling the national programme staff to take on their full responsibilities. Training on- and off-site will also be envisaged to allow the programme team to successfully perform its mission and respond to client requests in a timely fashion. Project staff will also be trained in producing basic reports.</p> <p>The Office also commits to producing an annual programme report from now on in partnership with the Government and other development partners.</p> <p>A mid-term assessment of each project will also be carried out.</p> <p>The Office's responsibility will, therefore, be strengthened in the areas of monitoring-evaluation and reporting.</p>
<p>5. Use State funding as leverage for development of national capacity</p> <p>Where UNDP handed the reins to the State for the management of GFATM grants, these resources were very soon suspended on the grounds of inadequate capacity and results. To get national partner agencies to a point where they can implement activities themselves, UNDP needs to provide specific analysis of their capacity-building requirements and systematically plan and implement this capacity-building using appropriate techniques, whilst involving them in the financial management of projects.</p>	<p>The use of State funding by the Office cannot be an end in itself.</p> <p>The Office is going to turn it into real leverage to develop national capacity. Similarly, raising funds from non-government partners will follow the same rationale. Donor visibility will be enhanced and analysed by mutual agreement.</p> <p>Dialogue between implementation partners will be strengthened in order to identify in a timely fashion any capacity gaps and collectively agree appropriate actions to tackle them. The programme team itself will be strengthened to allow it to offer solutions to the needs of implementation partners.</p> <p>As the sustainability of development results should be at the centre of UNDP activities, efforts will be made to minimise any reported implementation difficulties experienced by the national counterparts.</p> <p>Dialogue will also be strengthened with the Government so as to reach a mutual agreement on the actions required for a smooth transition.</p>
<p>6. Develop and implement a strategy to win back resources</p> <p>In recent years, the country office has lost partners (GEF, GFATM, and Shell-Gabon) and needs to win them back, whilst also building new relationships. Building on the previous recommendations, with stronger, relevant strategic focus and technical capacity, UNDP should build a more systematic approach to recovering funding relationships, with a regularly evaluated ad-hoc plan and appropriate institutional communication, with buy-in from the whole office.</p>	<p>All of the expected responses in terms of replenishing human resources, particularly national personnel, refocusing the Office on strategic issues and programming, monitoring and evaluation and using Government resources as leverage to build capacity, will enable the Office to strengthen its influence and ability to respond to the efforts of the Government, development partners and civil society. The ultimate aim being to see national institutions take ownership of the national development process and to have the capacity to formulate programmes and plans, as well as carry out effective implementation and monitoring-evaluation, UNDP will have fulfilled its mission when it will have contributed to this process in a decisive way.</p>



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United Nations Development Programme
Independent Evaluation Office
220 East 42nd Street, New York, NY 10017, USA
Tel. +1 (646) 781 4200, Fax +1 (646) 781 4213
Web: www.undp.org/evaluation



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