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# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS **THE KYRGYZ** EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION **REPUBLIC**



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





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# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION

# THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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### ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present this Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in the Kyrgyz Republic. This is the first such assessment of UNDP's work in the Kyrgyz Republic and covers the period 2012-2016. It has been prepared by the UNDP Independent Evaluation Office as one in a series of over 100 country-level evaluations worldwide that constitute a vital component of UNDP's accountability and results-based management system.

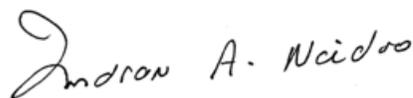
The Kyrgyz Republic has experienced many changes over the last decade. Following the June 2010 referendum and the adoption of the new Constitution, the national development context has largely been defined by the country's ambitious reform agenda to further strengthen political stability, democracy and economic growth. In 2015, the country formally joined the Eurasian Economic Union and, while it has achieved significant progress overall, several challenges remain.

UNDP has positioned itself well to contribute meaningfully to the Kyrgyz Republic's development needs. Despite operating in a challenging and volatile environment, with intense political and institutional changes in the aftermath of the 2010 revolution and ethnic conflict in the south, UNDP has been able to respond flexibly and rapidly to evolving needs. The adoption of the area-based development approach and UNDP's focus on regional/local development have enabled it to make important contributions within communities and accumulate vast knowledge of local development issues.

UNDP has a wide range of activities and has, to varying degrees, obtained tangible results in a number of programme areas, including election support; public sector governance reforms; building infrastructure for peace; community development and employment; environment and disaster risk management; and the fight against endemic diseases. Looking forward, it is important for UNDP to remain flexible and responsive, especially in light of emerging risks and opportunities such as violent extremism and religious radicalization of youth, economic competitiveness and diversification following Eurasian Economic Union membership.

The evaluation identified a number of areas for improvement and recommendations for UNDP to consider during its next programming period in the Kyrgyz Republic are included in the report. UNDP management has indicated the actions it intends to take in response.

I trust this report will be of use to readers seeking to achieve a better understanding of the broad support that UNDP has provided, including what has worked and what hasn't, and how UNDP may best position itself to help the Kyrgyz Republic continue on its path toward democratic governance and sustainable development.



Indran A. Naidoo  
Director  
Independent Evaluation Office



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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABD	Area Based Development
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Assessment of Development Results
ART	Antiretroviral Therapy
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil society organization
DaO	Delivering as One
DRM	Disaster Risk Management
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EEU	Eurasian Economic Union
EU	European Union
GAMSUMO	State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Interethnic Relations under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HFA	Hyogo Framework for Action
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDR-TB	Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NSDS	National Sustainable Development Strategy
PAC	Public Advisory Council
PBF	United Nations Peacebuilding Fund
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference

UIMS	Unified Information Management System
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNV	United Nations Volunteers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization
WUA	Water User Association

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2016, the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) of UNDP's country programme in the Kyrgyz Republic. The ADR aimed to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. The objectives of this ADR are to:

- support the development of the next UNDP country programme document (CPD)
- strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders
- strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board

The ADR covered a four-and-a-half-year period (2012-mid 2016) of the current programme cycle (2012-2017) and included some ongoing projects from the previous programme cycle (2005-2011). It was a particularly important period for the Kyrgyz Republic and the UNDP programme needed to respond to a challenging and volatile development context defined by intense political and institutional changes in the aftermath of the 2010 uprising and ethnic conflict in the south. Following the June 2010 referendum, a new Constitution was adopted that established the Kyrgyz Republic as a parliamentary democracy. A series of elections have ensued which have been largely recognized as free and fair by domestic and international observers. The government also pursued an ambitious reform agenda and a number of laws aligned with the new Constitution were adopted. An overarching five-year National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) (2013-2017) was developed and the National Council for Sustainable Development was established to ensure its implementation.

## UNDP'S PROGRAMME

The 2012-2016 United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), extended to 2017, identified peace and stability towards sustainable development as the corner stone of the United Nation's development strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic. UNDP's CPD for the Kyrgyz Republic 2012-2016 (extended to 2017) included the following six programme outcomes:

- Democratic governance: National and local authorities apply rule of law and civic engagement principles in provision of services with active participation of civil society
- Peace and development: A national infrastructure for peace (at local, regional and national levels) involving government, civil society, communities and individuals effectively prevents conflict and engages in peacebuilding
- Poverty reduction and socio-economic development: Population, especially vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive growth leading to decent and productive employment and improved access to productive natural resources, markets, services and food security
- Environment and energy: Sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices operationalized
- Disaster risk management (DRM): DRM framework in compliance with international standards, especially the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA)
- HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria: Vulnerable groups benefit from improved social protection, namely: food security; maternal and child health/reproductive health services; nutrition; education; services for sexually transmitted infection/HIV/tuberculosis/malaria; and social protection services and benefits.

## METHODOLOGY

The evaluation methodology consisted of two components: (i) an assessment of UNDP's contribution by thematic/programme areas (effectiveness of UNDP in contributing to development results through its programme activities in the above-mentioned six outcome areas); and (ii) an assessment of the quality of this contribution (relevance, efficiency and sustainability). The evaluation also assessed how specific factors contributed to UNDP's performance. Data were collected through desk reviews of reference materials, interviews and field visits. In total, more than 150 interviews and site visits were conducted at the national and subnational levels (in the capital Bishkek and four out of the seven regions: Batken, Jalad-Abad, Naryn and Osh). Data and information collected from various sources and methods were triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings.

## KEY FINDINGS

### EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

#### Democratic governance

Electoral support is one area where UNDP's contribution has been clear, consistent and impactful. In the early stages of the programme, UNDP's most significant contributions included the revision of the Electoral Code and the review of the voter registry. During preparations for the 2015 parliamentary elections, UNDP helped the Central Electoral Commission implement the new biometric identification system. It also supported the establishment of the Electoral Risk Management monitoring and response system, and the engagement of voters and civil society members in electoral matters. Partly as a result of these contributions, the Kyrgyz Republic was able to conduct elections which were widely recognized as free and fair by local and international observers.

UNDP's contributions in the area of rule of law and access to justice focused on developing a legal framework, strengthening the capacity of key public organizations, the legal empower-

ment of citizens and enhancing civil society participation. Despite the significant expansion and improvement of the legal framework, its implementation remains weak and largely constrained by the insufficient implementation capacities of institutions.

UNDP also contributed to strengthening public service delivery and people's trust in state institutions. UNDP helped authorities streamline the regulatory framework for service delivery and tackle capacity constraints of key public organizations at the national and subnational level. It also supported engaging citizens in service delivery to improve the accountability of delivery organizations. In the area of anti-corruption, UNDP's support was valuable in setting in motion processes which have the potential of achieving broader improvements if followed through.

UNDP also contributed to empowering civil society, especially the Public Advisory Councils (PACs) in their public administration oversight role. In this regard, support to draft a new law, which was approved by parliament and strengthened the standing of PACs vis-à-vis the ministries, was an important achievement. However, the lack of systematic and comprehensive information about how PACs and government organizations interact on the basis of PACs' recommendations has weakened their ability to hold the government accountable.

At the subnational level, UNDP contributed to strengthening local governance and citizen engagement with local institutions through an area based development (ABD) approach. However, the potential of the ABD approach for coordinating and channelling the contributions of other development partners at the local level was not fully leveraged.

UNDP's border management activities strengthened border management systems and contributed to cross-border cooperation among law enforcement bodies but had less impact on cross-border trade.

UNDP's activities contributed to addressing the particular needs of vulnerable groups. Gender was mainstreamed throughout most interventions in this outcome area and UNDP actively pursued the participation of women in its activities. UNDP also contributed to the development of policy documents that promoted positive changes in the roles and status of women and men. Overall, it improved women's awareness of their rights and changed attitudes on gender equality.

### **Peace and development**

A key contribution by UNDP in the area of peace and development was its efforts to strengthen the capacity of state institutions to formulate policies, laws and strategies related to conflict prevention and reconciliation. Related activities included advocating for the inclusion of a section on conflict prevention and security in the NSDS; support in drafting a body of conflict-sensitive legislation; and formulating the Concept for National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations, and the state policy on religious affairs, among others. Although a large body of laws and policies resulted from this work, the capacity of institutions to implement them remains weak and represents a challenge that needs to be tackled more effectively in the future.

At subnational level, UNDP supported local governments and communities to act as catalysts of peace by strengthening their capacity to uphold the rule of law and reduce tensions among communities. Public offices within local government were established. Support was also provided to a number of local governments and communities to implement the Concept for National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations. UNDP also supported the establishment of legal assistance centres designed to provide free legal aid and 20 public reception centres designed to ensure cooperation between local government and communities to respond and prevent inter-ethnic conflicts.

Support was also given to establish the Monitoring Centre for Inter-ethnic Relations, a conflict monitoring system designed to collect data on inter-ethnic relations and develop policy advice

for national and local authorities. The capacity of staff from relevant government authorities needs to be strengthened for more efficient monitoring and tracking of recommendations resulting from this conflict monitoring system.

By supporting cross-border cooperation, UNDP helped communities engage in cooperative interactions to build trust and find mutually agreeable solutions to cross-border challenges. UNDP contributed to reducing tensions and the likelihood of resumed violence by addressing deep-seated factors that may generate and sustain violence in conflict-prone communities.

Recognizing the role of disenfranchised and unemployed youth as drivers of conflict, the programme focused significantly on the empowerment of youth as agents of change. UNDP also engaged with a number of vulnerable and marginalized groups, and some activities focused on women's empowerment and gender equality.

### **Poverty reduction and socio-economic development**

UNDP in this programme cycle made important contributions to building national capacities for the implementation and monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is expected to support the government in the development of the national SDG adaptation roadmap to ensure a smooth transition to the new development framework. UNDP has also provided valuable contributions to the development of a number of strategies and plans at the national and subnational level, including area-based strategic plans, but there is scope for further improvements.

UNDP supported the government develop policies in the area of sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary control – a key prerequisite for access to the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Overall, UNDP's support in the area of trade policy and private sector development helped local producers take advantage of business opportunities, especially in the context of membership to the EEU.

UNDP invested significant efforts and resources in the area of regional and local development. UNDP supported community-based initiatives that enhanced key public infrastructure and services, generated income and employment, and built social capital. Through this work, UNDP targeted poor, remote and isolated areas with limited income generating and employment opportunities, and where resources and infrastructure are scarce and markets distant. Interviews with community members and leaders showed that the greatest impact come from activities that solved local infrastructure problems from which the larger community benefited. The effects of initiatives that supported business and income generation seemed more isolated, especially where their demonstration effects and replicability were weak. UNDP could focus on funding business projects that have the potential to bring about changes in community through their demonstration effects, but which do not receive funding from the banks.

Community involvement was a key instrument of the ABD approach, although the degree of community involvement varied from region to region. Given the significant potential the ABD approach has for community mobilization, UNDP could further contribute to strengthening the scope and intensity of community engagement with local governments, especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups.

UNDP's activities under this outcome area focused significantly on women. Women's socioeconomic empowerment was a key goal of programme activities at both the national and subnational level. Moreover, most interventions were designed and implemented to ensure that women were fully involved in and benefited from activities.

### **Environment and energy**

At the national level, UNDP contributed to the development and adoption of strategy and policy documents that further operationalized the sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices in the country. These included the NSDS 2013-2017 and its associated implementation programme;

the Priority Directions for the Kyrgyz Republic Towards Climate Change Adaptation till 2017; the Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) Phase-out and Refrigerant Management Plan; the Concept of Small Hydropower Development for 2015-2017; national priorities on conservation of biodiversity of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2014; and the National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Priorities Plan (2013-2023).

UNDP, together with other development partners, helped the government implement the above strategies and plans, and some impressive results were obtained in a number of areas, including a reduction in HCFC consumption, an increase in protected areas coverage and a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

At the subnational level, UNDP promoted climate change adaptation mainstreaming into local development plans in Batken and Jalal Abad and contributed to strengthening the capacities of local institutions to implement climate change adaptation measures. These local institutions included Water User Associations (WUAs) and pasture management committees, responsible for effective management of water and land resources respectively. Some UNDP interventions helped build the resilience of local communities to adverse effects of climate change and improve rural livelihoods. Both men and women participated in project interventions, especially in capacity building activities and discussions around environmental and natural resource management issues. Some projects also addressed the different needs of men and women, and the equitable distribution of benefits and resources.

UNDP's close collaboration with government agencies at different levels greatly facilitated these achievements. Furthermore, the ABD approach fostered closer working relationships with subnational authorities in the regions and better incorporation of sustainable management principles into subnational development planning. UNDP helped establish and run coordination bodies which facilitated the implementation of government strategies and programmes. Efforts to build

capacities to elaborate and implement environmental strategies and programmes also contributed to the success.

Where there were successes in the implementation of various environmental strategies and programmes, there were also some implementation challenges. Despite the government's interest in promoting small hydropower electricity, attracting investments was extremely challenging. UNDP also encountered challenges in achieving the objectives associated with the safe disposal of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) waste. Poor project planning and risk management hindered work in these areas.

### **Disaster Risk Management**

UNDP made an important contribution to strengthening the Kyrgyz Republic's DRM framework and institutions, and brought the framework closer to international standards, especially the HFA. UNDP supported the development and adoption of the National Strategy on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) for 2012-2020; the HFA-compliant roadmap document linking DRR to sustainable development; and facilitated the review of sectoral policies and laws to bring them in line with the newly adopted National Strategy on DRR. In addition, UNDP helped the government develop minimum standards of humanitarian assistance to ensure guaranteed minimum assistance to people affected by emergencies and crises, and also highlighted the importance of early recovery.

UNDP contributed to building the capacities of its main partner institutions working on DRM and to strengthening the system for the identification, assessment and monitoring of disaster risks and early warning. In cooperation with the World Bank, UNDP supported the government to put in place the disaster prevention and early warning system, the Unified Information Management System (UIMS), which integrated three systems, namely: the Crisis Management Centre, the National Unified Duty Dispatch Service, and the Public Informing and Warning System. Integration of these systems resulted in

faster emergency response times and improved disaster preparedness.

To build a culture of safety and resilience at the subnational level, UNDP worked with the Agency on Local Self-Governance and Ministry of Emergency Situations to establish an enabling environment to conduct local level DRR activities and support building the capacity of a number of local governments. UNDP also assisted local governments and communities strengthen emergency response mechanisms by helping to establish and build the capacity of rural rescue teams. Furthermore, UNDP assisted local governments and the territorial subdivisions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations implement pilot green and mitigation projects including river bank reinforcement and tree planning to prevent flooding, river bank erosion and landslides.

To manage regional level risks, UNDP provided avenues for discussions and consultations, research, sharing experiences and sustaining cooperation mechanisms among Central Asian countries on DRR issues. UNDP's efforts contributed to the adoption of the Framework of Cooperation on Strengthening Regional Collaboration Among Disaster Management Authorities of Central Asia and South Caucasus in the area of DRR, its plan of action and regulations.

To a certain extent, UNDP contributed to making DRM in the Kyrgyz Republic gender sensitive. UNDP assisted the government in improving gender aspects of DRM by incorporating gender modules into capacity-building materials for government employees. Gender aspects in DRM were also included in post-disaster needs assessment methodologies, the revised DRM monitoring system and the annual work plans of the Ministry of Emergency Situations.

### **HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria**

Overall, UNDP has been effective as principal recipient of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Under UNDP's management, Global Fund grants contributed to some important results in the coun-

try's fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. UNDP's management capacities, its presence on the ground and close working relationship with the government contributed to the progress made in the management of the three diseases. UNDP's corporate experience in managing Global Fund grants and a stable funding flow by the Global Fund also facilitated achievements.

With Global Fund grants, UNDP largely ensured the uninterrupted supply of drugs and medical supplies, particularly for persons living with HIV. Importantly, HIV and tuberculosis drugs were procured at lower prices than when they had been procured by previous principal recipients, which will help establish a baseline on drug prices for when the government takes over as principal recipient in 2018.

UNDP introduced new approaches to managing diseases and programmes, including HIV rapid saliva testing and performance-based incentives. It also improved monitoring and evaluation (M&E) procedures of sub-recipients by introducing M&E documents and guidelines.

The introduction of new disease management approaches and effective programme management, procurement and M&E as mentioned above were key factors for UNDP's effectiveness. Such effectiveness was, however, affected by inadequate quality assurance of finished pharmaceutical products and weaknesses in stock management and storage conditions in 2013, but these issues have subsequently been addressed.

In accordance with the Global Fund grant agreement, UNDP developed the capacity of national entities to prepare them to take over the role of principal recipient. A proper assessment of the effectiveness of these capacity development efforts was not conducted and, while health professionals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society were largely satisfied with the training opportunities they received, the majority felt that further efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health to take

over as the principal recipient were needed, without which they had reservations over the Ministry's ability to take over grant implementation in 2018. The capacity assessment of the Global Fund for the Ministry of Health as principal recipient conducted in 2016 noted challenges in key areas of grant management including procurement, financial management, governance, and M&E. These systemic issues can only be managed by building capacity over time.

### **QUALITY OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION – RELEVANCE, EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

Interventions in the programme cycle were largely aligned with national priorities; strategies and policies; the country's development needs; and UNDP's own mandate and strategy. UNDP effectively adapted its programming approach to the changing needs of the country. The approaches and conceptual framework were, in general, adequate for delivering results. However, in some cases, whether the approaches used were the most effective is debatable. The design of some projects in the environment and energy area also had certain shortcomings.

Organizational change initiated by the Country Office in 2012 contributed to improving efficiency and cost effectiveness, strengthening implementation oversight, simplifying the overall structure of the office, facilitating cross-practice work and avoiding the silo approach. At project level, operational efficiency varies by programme area and project. In most cases, programme activities were delivered on time. Nevertheless, there were some delays especially with regards disbursement of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and in the energy and environment area. NGO sub-recipients of the HIV and AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria programme raised concerns about the lengthy procedures to develop agreements, obtain extensions and receive funds from UNDP. Frequent changes in staff and leadership in public institutions also challenged programme efficiency at both the national and subnational level. In terms of programmatic efficiency, creating

linkages and establishing synergies between various UNDP interventions and partners contributed to reducing costs while supporting results. There is, however, room for stronger synergies between different programme areas and activities, as well as with other United Nations agencies and development partners such as the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which have been important players in the Kyrgyz Republic, especially at the subnational level.

In general, the programme benefited from a high level of national ownership which contributed to sustainability. However, the prospects for sustainability of UNDP activities and results are mixed. The sustainability of a number of structures established and supported by the programme is not certain because of the weak capacity of authorities and communities to sustain and scale up some of the initiatives whose purpose it was to demonstrate results. Some of the initiatives were not designed with a clear exit strategy or sustainability plan. Although there have been some examples of successful pilots, such as the one-stop shop idea which was adopted by some non-pilot initiatives, a number of initiatives did not go beyond the pilot stage. Some pilot interventions did not consider the affordability of scaling up activities.

### UNDP'S STRATEGIC POSITION

UNDP has positioned itself well to contribute meaningfully to the Kyrgyz Republic's development needs. The programme has been responsive to the country's changing context and emerging challenges. The ABD approach helped the Country Office achieve further integration and synergies within the programme.

UNDP's strengths include its close and established partnerships with authorities and communities, which are grounded in its neutrality and expertise. UNDP also made use of its global network to create opportunities for South-South exchanges and triangular cooperation, and encouraged the sharing of experiences.

In addition to close cooperation with government agencies, UNDP also established partnerships with donors, civil society and the private sector. These partnerships, to various degrees, enhanced the impact of UNDP's interventions.

### CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1.** UNDP activities in this programme cycle were strongly anchored to national development priorities. Although the programme operated in a volatile political and social environment, UNDP was able to respond effectively to the country's evolving needs and provide significant contributions across a number of priority areas.

**Conclusion 2.** UNDP has provided important support to the development of a significant number of policies, strategies and laws across all areas in which it is involved. However, implementation remains weak at both the national and subnational levels, indicating the need for more focus on the implementation capacities of national institutions.

**Conclusion 3.** UNDP's ABD approach and its significant focus on regional and local development have enabled it to make important contributions to the communities and accumulate vast knowledge about local development issues. However, neither the Kyrgyz Republic nor UNDP have a well-elaborated, uniform model of regional and local development, representing an opportunity for further work.

**Conclusion 4.** Significant improvements have been made to UNDP's management systems following the 2012 organizational restructuring and the introduction of the ABD approach at the subnational level. There is, however, room for further improvement by adopting a more result-based approach to management and strengthening risk management.

**Conclusion 5.** While ownership of the programme by national authorities and local

communities has overall been satisfactory, sustainability of programme results and benefits present a challenge.

**Conclusion 6.** UNDP has adequately addressed the complexities of gender equality and women's empowerment and has sufficiently mainstreamed gender in the programme. However, there is scope for further improvements which will enable it to shift the programme from gender responsive to gender transformative.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1.** UNDP should further focus its support on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, especially at the subnational level, to implement existing policies and legislation.

*Management response: Recommendation is accepted. Supporting institutions at all levels to be more accountable and inclusive with a focus on access to justice, human rights and gender equality commitments, and sustainable peace at community levels is one of the key areas identified in the new UNDAF and CPD (2018–2022) for Kyrgyzstan which is very much in line with SDG 16. Therefore, UNDP will continue to provide support to strengthen the capacity of national and local institutions to implement existing policies and legislation. Namely, within the ongoing judicial legal reform the rule of law programme has developed the detailed action plans for the implementation of the package of approved laws in 2016 working closely with the Parliament and line ministries. The implementation plans put into practice the key national legislation on national and subnational level. Along with this, the development assistance coordinated by UNDP will build the capacity of national institutions to deliver adequate services. This includes provision of various capacity development programmes (trainings for judges and law enforcement agencies, parliamentary administrative staff, sharing best practices etc.), technical assistance and guidance. UNDP will continue strengthening capacity of the State Registry Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Central Election Commission in the capital and territorial offices. As well, UNDP will enhance*

*institutional and individual capacities for sustainable climate resilient natural resource management with focus on addressing land degradation, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, integrated water resource management and sound management of waste and chemicals.*

**Recommendation 2.** Capitalizing on its rich experience with local development, UNDP should support the government in strengthening its regional development model and, within that framework, further rationalize, refine and harmonize its own model of support to local development and community mobilization.

*Management response: Recommendation is accepted. UNDP Kyrgyzstan started the review of its ABD programmes with the aim to strengthen the model of local and regional development in the country. The strengthened model of local and regional development will be applied within the existing Area-Based Development in Osh, Batken and Naryn regions and further scaled up. UNDP will continue to support the government and local authorities to implement a regional development model and coordinate the interventions of development partners at the local level.*

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should further strengthen its results-based management system and risk management practices and capacities.

*Management response: The recommendation is accepted. The Country Office will strengthen an M&E culture among staff and partners through better development and implementation of M&E plans. Measurable indicators will be integrated more effectively into the programme's results frames and other programme management documents. Risk logs are developed during the project design and carefully monitored and updated during the project implementation.*

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP should pay greater attention to the sustainability of structures and initiatives it creates. Sustainability concerns should be integrated more effectively into the Country Office's planning and monitoring processes.

**Management response:** *The recommendation is well noted and accepted. A sustainability plan will be developed and carefully monitored throughout programme and projects implementation. The office is effectively working under the resource mobilization to continue the support in key areas after careful consideration and assessment at the end of the project. In the HIV and tuberculosis programme area, UNDP continues to strengthen its capacity-building work with the main partners to take over the principal recipient role as planned in 2018.*

**Recommendation 5. There is scope for UNDP to further strengthen the gender-sensitivity approach and the gender-related impact of its programme.**

**Management response:** *Recommendation is accepted. UNDP Kyrgyzstan will continue to fur-*

*ther strengthen the gender-sensitivity approach and the gender-related impact of its programme. In 2016, the UNDP Executive Team started to review the gender mainstreaming activities of all UNDP projects with the purpose of strengthening gender approaches in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy. The Joint Gender Mainstreaming plan is being developed annually to ensure that at least 15 percent of each programme budget is dedicated for gender specific and gender mainstreaming activities. The UNDP gender team is fully involved in the appraisal and/or development of concept notes, documents and TORs according to the Interoffice Memorandum "Follow-up on Gender Seal Appraisal Mission", which confirms inclusion of proper gender analysis, disaggregated evidences and targeted approach. In 2016, UNDP started the process of revalidating its Gold Seal Certification and is planning to have revalidated it in 2017.*



# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted a country-level Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in the Kyrgyz Republic in 2016. The objectives of the ADR are to:

- support the development of the next UNDP country programme document (CPD)
- strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders
- strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board

This is the first ADR conducted in the Kyrgyz Republic. The evaluation was conducted in 2016 so its results could feed into the preparation of UNDP's new country programme which will start in 2018. The new country programme is guided by the forthcoming United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which will also start in 2018.

### 1.2 COUNTRY CONTEXT

The Kyrgyz Republic is a mountainous and landlocked country in Central Asia, bordered by China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. It has a population of slightly above six million and an area of 199,949 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>1</sup>

Since independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has undergone an unstable transition process characterized by complex social, political and institutional changes, including two uprisings in

2005 and 2010 which have overthrown authoritarian regimes. As a result of the June 2010 referendum, a new constitution was adopted, establishing Kyrgyzstan as a parliamentary democracy. A series of elections have ensued and have been largely recognized by domestic and international observers as free and fair.

The country has seen significant democratic gains over the last few years but several challenges related to a weak rule of law, economic development and social cohesion remain. In response, the government has pursued an ambitious reform agenda. A number of laws aligned with the new constitution have been adopted and a number of policies and institutional reforms have been implemented. In 2013, the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic developed its overarching five-year National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) 2013-2017 to facilitate progress towards “a democratic state with a stable political system, dynamically growing economy and stable growth in the incomes of its citizens” (National Council for Sustainable Development of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013). The government also adopted the Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for Transition to Sustainable Development (2013-2017) which translated the strategic goals of the NSDS into more detailed and actionable measures. The National Council for Sustainable Development was established to ensure implementation of the NSDS.

Post-independence economic reforms led to a significant decline in poverty rates, from 62.7 percent to 32 percent, between 2000 and 2009.<sup>2</sup> However, political crises and instability since

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1 <http://data.un.org/CountryProfile.aspx?crName=Kyrgyzstan> (accessed April 2016).

2 Official poverty estimates are based on expenditure per capita.

2010 have negatively affected the economy, and poverty climbed back to 38 percent in 2012. The country has managed to reverse the trend since then and the poverty headcount ratio declined to 30.6 percent in 2014 with a slight increase to 32.1 percent in 2015. Rural poverty rates fell to 32.6 percent in 2014 and rose slightly to 33.6 percent in 2015 (compared to 41.4 percent in 2013), whereas urban poverty declined modestly to 26.9 percent and increased to 29.3 percent in 2015 (compared to 28.5 percent in 2013).<sup>3</sup> Recognizing persistent poverty as one of the key challenges, the NSDS 2013-2017 prioritized poverty reduction through job creation and strengthened social assistance for pensioners and low income groups.

With gross national income per capita for 2013 estimated at US\$1,200, the Kyrgyz Republic was classified as a lower middle-income country in 2014.<sup>4</sup> The country has seen a lot of fluctuations in its annual gross domestic product (GDP) growth in the last 10 years. GDP was at -0.5 percent in 2010 due to the conflict, but rose to 3.6 percent in 2014. A heavy dependence on remittances makes it vulnerable to external shocks. Foreign aid is also sizeable (equivalent to 7.6 percent of gross national income in 2013).<sup>5</sup> Since 2000, main donors have included multilateral agencies such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB); the European Union (EU); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the Islamic Development Bank; and the World Bank, as well as bilateral agencies including Germany, Japan, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In 2015, the country formally joined the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) opening up opportunities to attract foreign investments, expand exports and simplify the movement of

labour migrants. However, the country faces challenges in meeting international standards, particularly in the phytosanitary and veterinary area. Russia is providing the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic with financial assistance worth \$200 million to support the country's integration into the EEU. Another \$500 million (out of a planned \$1 billion) is being given to the Kyrgyz-Russian Development Fund to support economic growth investment projects.

In 2014, Kyrgyzstan's Human Development Index was 0.655, which is in the medium human development category and positioning it 120th out of 188 countries and territories (UNDP, 2015b). On the Gender Inequality Index, it ranked 67<sup>th</sup> out of 146 countries, with a score of 0.353 (UNDP, 2015b) which was below average for the region as a whole.<sup>6</sup> There are gender gaps in areas such as access to education; employment (where 71 percent of men are employed compared to only 47 percent of women); and decision-making. In the 2015 October elections, 97 men (80 percent) and 23 women (20 percent) were elected as Members of Parliament meaning the share of parliamentary seats held by women does not meet the benchmark of 30 percent guaranteed by the legislation. There is also a serious level of sexual and gender-based violence. The National Gender Equality Strategy (2012-2020) and its subsequent Action Plan form the country's response plan to gender issues.

Graphs in Annex 2 (available online) provide further information on key development indicators. Chapter 2 also provides an overview of the key challenges which the country faces in each of UNDP's programme areas in order to facilitate the analysis of UNDP strategies and the assessment of its contribution to development results in the respective area.

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3 World Development Indicators (accessed November 2016).

4 World Bank List of economies (July 2015).

5 World Development Indicators (accessed April 2016).

6 Sub-indices show that Kyrgyzstan scores highly on education due to near gender parity in enrolment and literacy rates, but consistently low for the economic and political empowerment of women, hence bringing down its overall score.

### 1.3 OVERVIEW OF UNDP IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and UNDP signed the Standard Basic Framework Agreement in 1992 and UNDP first launched its activities in the Kyrgyz Republic in 1993. The current UNDAF 2012-2016, signed in March 2011 and since extended to 2017, identified peace and stability towards sustainable development as the cornerstone of United Nations' development strategy in the Kyrgyz Republic. The UNDAF defined seven outcomes, organized around three pillars: (i) peace and coherence, effective democratic governance and human rights; (ii) social inclusion and equity; and (iii) inclusive and sustainable job-rich growth for poverty reduction. The UNDAF noted that the United Nations country team supported the principle of Delivering as One (DaO) (United Nations in the Kyrgyz Republic and the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2011, p.4).

Following the UNDAF, the UNDP's current CPD for the Kyrgyz Republic 2012-2016 (since extended to 2017) was approved by the UNDP Executive Board in June 2011 and included six programme outcomes. The six outcomes, as included in UNDP's CPD and Country Programme Action Plan (CPAP), were as follows:

1. Democratic governance: By 2016, national and local authorities apply the rule of law and civic engagement principles in provision of services with active participation from civil society
2. Peace and development: A national infrastructure for peace (at the local, regional and national levels) involving government, civil society, communities and individuals effectively prevents violent conflict and engages in peacebuilding
3. Poverty reduction and socio-economic development: By 2016, the population, especially vulnerable groups, benefit from inclusive

growth leading to decent and productive employment, and improved access to productive natural resources, markets, services and food security

4. Environment and energy: By 2016, sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices operationalized
5. Disaster risk management: By 2016, a Disaster Risk Management (DRM) framework in compliance with international standards, especially the Hyogo Framework of Action (HFA)
6. HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria: By 2016, vulnerable groups benefit from improved social protection, namely: food security; maternal and child health/reproductive health services; nutrition; education; services for sexually transmitted infection, HIV, tuberculosis and malaria; social protection services and benefits.

At design, the planned indicative resources for the whole programme cycle (both regular and other resources) amounted to around \$83 million. In reality, however, the Country Office has managed to mobilize a higher amount of resources, with total programme expenditure for the first four years (2012-2015) of the five year programme reaching close to \$97 million, against a budget of around \$123.5 million, with an average execution rate of 78.5 percent. Non-core resources accounted for around 90 percent of total expenditure.<sup>7</sup> Major contributing partners to non-core resources have been the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the EU; the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF); the Global Environment Facility (GEF); the Open Society Foundation; and the Governments of Finland, Japan, the Russian Federation and Switzerland.

Regarding the Country Office's organizational structure, management initiated a change process

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<sup>7</sup> Executive Snapshot (accessed April 2016).

in 2012. In order to streamline the execution of programme activities, a single Programme Management Unit was created to handle day-to-day programming and implementation issues. A Policy Advisory Unit was also created to provide advisory services, develop programmes/projects, communicate with potential donors and mobilize resources, as well as perform quality assurance functions during the implementation of activities. Both the Programme Management Unit and the Policy Advisory Unit are based in Bishkek. At the subnational level, the Country Office established Area-Based Development (ABD) offices in three out of seven regions: Batken, Naryn and Osh (the latter also covering Jalal-Abad). ABD offices are delegated with managerial functions and given responsibilities for the implementation and monitoring of most programme activities in their respective regions. ABD offices also provide information and project ideas to the Country Office to keep it abreast of progress at the local level and ensure that local initiatives are in line with corporate and national-level policy.

Gender is considered an important cross-cutting issue by the Country Office, which prepared and launched its first Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017. As part of its institutional framework the Country Office has a gender team with two staff members and a Gender Task Force to ensure gender equality results. The Country Office Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 sets out the accountability mechanism, including a three-step procedure for gender review of all programme and project documents as well as the monitoring of gender equality results. It also invested in building capacities to bring gender analysis to all programme areas. The Gender Marker, which requires all UNDP-supported projects be rated against a four-point scale indicating its contribution towards the achievement of gender equality, has been consistently applied.<sup>8</sup> Gender marker ratings of UNDP-supported projects can be found in Annex 3 available online. In 2012,

UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic participated in the Gender Equality Seal corporate certification process and was awarded a gold medal. The certificate is revalidated every three years, as such the recertification process is pending.

#### 1.4 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

**Scope.** The ADR covered four and a half years (2012-mid 2016) of the current programme cycle (2012-2017) and included some overlapping projects from the previous cycle (2005-2011). The scope of the ADR included all UNDP activities and, therefore, covered interventions funded from all sources of finance, including core UNDP resources, donor funds, government funds and others. It included project-specific activities as well as non-project activities such as policy dialogue, coordination and partnership building. The ADR was both retrospective and prospective.

**Methodology.** Guided by the updated UNDP IEO ADR Methodology Manual, the ADR methodology consisted of two main components: (i) an assessment of UNDP's contribution by thematic/programme areas (UNDP's effectiveness in contributing to development results through its programme activities); and (ii) an assessment of the quality of this contribution (relevance, efficiency and sustainability). The ADR also assessed how specific factors contributed to UNDP's performance. The Terms of Reference (TOR) included a non-exhaustive list of factors considered in the evaluation (Annex 1 available online).

Data were collected through a desk review of reference materials, interviews and field visits. Reference materials reviewed included programme and policy-related documents, project documents and progress reports, past evaluation reports, self-reported data prepared by the Country Office including Results-Oriented

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8 GEN0 = outputs that are not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality; GEN1 = outputs that will contribute in some way to gender equality, but not significantly; GEN2 = outputs that have gender equality as a significant objective; and GEN3 = outputs that have gender equality as a principal objective.

Annual Reports (ROARs), and other relevant documents and reports available through the government and UNDP. A multi-stakeholder approach was followed and interviews were carried out with a wide array of government representatives, donors, development partners, programme beneficiaries, United Nations agencies and UNDP staff. In total, more than 150 interviews and site visits were conducted at the national and subnational levels including in the capital Bishkek and four of the seven regions (Batken, Jalad-Abad, Naryn and Osh). Annexes 6 and 7 (available online) include the lists of persons and documents consulted.

Data and information collected from various sources and methods were triangulated to strengthen the validity of findings. For example, to arrive at a finding about project and programme achievements, the evaluation team examined documents and materials collected during the evaluation, as well as information gathered during interviews with national implementing partners, donors, beneficiaries, UNDP programme staff and other partners.

Outcome papers were prepared for each of the six programme outcomes. A theory of change was applied and reconstructed for each outcome area, including assumptions about causal relationships and changes expected to be made by the programme. Using a set of evaluation criteria, the outcome papers employed the theory of change to assess UNDP's contribution to results and identify the factors that shaped that contribution.

**Process.** The Evaluation Manager conducted a preparatory mission to the Kyrgyz Republic from 18-22 April 2016, after which the evaluation's TOR were developed. The TOR included an evaluability assessment for each programme area to ascertain the presence of a clear programme logic to allow measurement of results, identify data availability and constraints, as well as determine the data collection needs and methods, and

an overall evaluation plan. An evaluation reference group — a group of stakeholders relevant to the country programme — was established with whom the TOR and other relevant materials were shared.

Following recruitment of the external experts, the evaluation team undertook a data collection mission to the Kyrgyz Republic from 6-24 June 2016. The team continued to collect data after the mission, conduct analyses and prepare individual outcome papers. These individual papers were then synthesized into a draft comprehensive report.

The draft report was first reviewed internally by IEO, and subsequently shared with the Country Office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States for comments in early October 2016. A revised draft was then shared with national partners for comments. The report was finalized after comments from stakeholders were examined and the Country Office submitted the management response. A stakeholder workshop was held in Bishkek on 3 March 2017.

**Limitations and challenges.** The absence of any prior outcome evaluations for the ADR presented a challenge for the team. Except for the UNDAF mid-term review, all available evaluations were at project level.<sup>9</sup> The quality of these evaluations and the project progress reports varied. The absence of solid and updated data on outcome-level indicators relating to the CPD/CPAP results framework from the ROARs or the corporate planning system (Annex 5 available online) was also a challenge.

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The report has five chapters. Following this introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 assesses UNDP's contribution to development results through its

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9 <http://erc.undp.org/evaluation/search?unitTypeId=1&countryOffices=222&completionYearFrom=2012&completionYearTo=2016> (accessed April 2016).

programmatic interventions. Chapter 3 assesses the quality of the contribution in terms of relevance, efficiency and sustainability. Chapter 4 considers UNDP's strategic positioning in the

Kyrgyz Republic. Drawing on the findings and evidence presented in the previous chapters, conclusions and recommendations are presented in Chapter 5.

## Chapter 2

# UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS – EFFECTIVENESS

## 2.1 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

Outcome statement: By 2016, national and local authorities [will] apply the rule of law and civic engagement principles in provision of services with active participation of civil society.

Outputs:

- i) Capacity of public and municipal bodies from targeted areas to deliver good quality services and apply transparent and participatory decision-making at central and local levels built;
- ii) Key actors have institutional capacities to further develop and preserve democratic stability, rule of law, a new legal framework and government accountability;
- iii) Border management modernized to promote stability and security, and facilitate legitimate trade and transit; and
- iv) Local governments and communities in selected geographical areas better address complex development problems using the ABD approach.

### 2.1.1 OVERVIEW

Following the adoption of the 2010 Constitution, which established a parliamentary system, authorities in the Kyrgyz Republic organized a series of elections which were largely recognized as free and fair. They have also undertaken a number of important measures to promote the rule of law, improve state responsiveness, transparency and accountability, reduce corruption and increase people's confidence in public institutions.

Despite significant progress, many challenges remain. These include the need to further improve the political system and the organization of elections; enhance the functioning of public institutions both at the national and subnational level; strengthen the rule of law and fight corruption;<sup>10</sup> increase the independence and capacity of the judiciary; and promote gender equality and empowerment of women. There are also challenges to enhancing the capacity of civil society and its oversight over the government. For example, during the previous legislature, attempts were made to pass legislation which would tighten control over civil society and criminalize the dissemination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT)-related information. Between 2014–2016, two draft laws, one criminalizing the dissemination of information on non-traditional sexual relations and one imposing additional controls over non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (so-called “foreign agents” draft law), were discussed in Parliament. If passed, these laws would have negatively affected human development, violated the rights of sexual minority groups and hampered services provided to them, including those to fight HIV and tuberculosis. The current parliament and the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional Law and State Structure held public debates and consultations with civil society and international organizations (including UNDP) and, in view of their opposition and advocacy efforts, the draft law was rejected. Overall, civil society in Kyrgyzstan has acquired more space and is more active than in the other Central Asian countries. Nevertheless, there is scope to enhance their capacity and oversight role, as recognized in various reports by international observers. Ethnic divisions are a serious

<sup>10</sup> Kyrgyzstan is 123rd in Transparency International's 2015 Corruption Perception Index. Available at <http://www.transparency.org/cpi2015#results-table>.

problem, especially in the densely populated Fergana Valley where different ethnic groups live side by side but are divided along ethnic lines. Social division and mistrust still exist, and are further exacerbated by weak local governance; inadequate legislation; poor management of natural resources and public infrastructure; and lingering poverty (International Crisis Group, 2015; Saferworld, 2016; Matveeva, 2011). There is, therefore, a need to increase inter-ethnic cooperation, inclusion and protection for all people – especially ethnic minorities, youth and women. Vulnerable groups face significant challenges related to access to justice. They have limited knowledge of their rights and entitlements, while accountability and mechanisms to monitor their access to justice are weak (Langford and Elemanov, 2014).

In response to these challenges, authorities have pursued an ambitious good governance and rule of law reform agenda. The NSDS 2013-2017 identified good governance and rule of law as key factors for national unity, stability and prosperity. It also laid out concrete measures for combating corruption; establishing an improved system of public administration; strengthening the capacity of the civil service; increasing transparency in government decision-making and budgeting; reforming the judiciary and law-enforcement bodies; and increasing the role of civil society in holding public institutions accountable. In all these areas the authorities have undertaken a number of important actions. For example, the government introduced key amendments to the electoral legislation, strengthening the role and functioning of the Central Electoral Commission. Key reforms have also been implemented in the judicial sector under the framework of the Concept of Judicial Reform which was developed by a commission that comprised representatives from all branches of government. In 2014, with support from the World Bank, the government adopted the Public Sector Governance Reform Roadmap which outlined key public administration reforms. A State Anti-Corruption Policy was also adopted and an Anti-Corruption Service was established under the State National Security Committee. The government's efforts to strengthen democratic governance have been sup-

ported by development partners, including United Nations agencies, ADB, the EU, the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), USAID and the World Bank.

UNDP's programme focused significantly on these governance and rule of law challenges, and supported all major stakeholders (legislative, executive, judiciary, civil society, community groups and citizens including the most vulnerable). Important areas of work have included electoral support; rule of law and judicial reform; access to justice for citizens; anti-corruption; delivery of public services; and strengthening civil society and community groups. Gender equality and women's empowerment, and the protection and promotion of human rights have been important cross-cutting themes.

### 2.1.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

Part of UNDP's programme was implemented in the circumstances of significant political and institutional instability which, for example, included changes in the constitution; the shift to a parliamentary system; frequent changes in Prime Ministers and other key figures in the coalition-based government; and sporadic tensions along the borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Through their negative impact on predictability, consistency, institutional capacity and citizens' trust in institutions, these factors have created significant challenges on the effectiveness of UNDP's activities.

**UNDP has provided an important contribution to the Kyrgyz Republic's transition to the parliamentary system, in particular through its support to the conduct of free and fair elections.**

UNDP's contribution to ensuring the conduct of free and fair elections has been clear, consistent and impactful. Interviewed stakeholders commended UNDP for its ability to provide quick and effective support under challenging circum-

stances. In the early stages of the programme, UNDP's most significant contributions included the revision of the Electoral Code and the review of the voter registry.<sup>11</sup> During preparations for the 2015 parliamentary elections, UNDP assisted the Central Electoral Commission implement a new biometric identification system based on a unified population register which was introduced in all 2,400 voting stations. This led to a significant improvement in the participation of voters from all parts of the country in elections. It also supported the establishment of the Electoral Risk Management monitoring and response system which enables officials to detect conflict risks, develop preventive measures, and engage state structures in early warning and response activities. Support was also provided to engage voters and civil society members with electoral matters. Moreover, through training and information sharing, law enforcement staff were made more aware of voter's rights. Partly as a result of these contributions, Kyrgyzstan has been able to conduct elections that have been widely recognized as free and fair by local and international observers. The 2015 election, in particular, was considered as an important milestone in Kyrgyzstan's democratic transition process and the consolidation of its political system. The peaceful, transparent and competitive manner in which the election was conducted contributed to stability and brought more trust in the government. This is also expected to have a positive impact on the upcoming electoral cycles, including the 2017 presidential election.

**UNDP's contributions in the area of rule of law and access to justice focused on development of the legal framework, strengthening the capacity of key public organizations, legal empowerment of citizens and enhancement of civil society participation.**

UNDP provided capacity support to a number of state institutions responsible for strengthening the rule of law (most importantly, parliament, the President's Office, the ombudsman, the constitutional chamber of the Supreme Court, the Ministry of Justice, the Chamber of Accounts or the newly-created Council for the Selection of Judges). Parliament, in particular, has been a key UNDP partner, receiving support to strengthen its operational procedures and systems, training for Members of Parliament, improving visibility and communications with citizens, etc.<sup>12</sup> UNDP supported the Executive in drafting a large number of laws (including the Criminal Code; the Misdemeanour Code; and laws on the responsibility of judges, execution proceedings, the bar association and the State register of persons who have committed crimes, gender-based domestic violence and free legal aid) and establishing a centralized electronic legal database under the Ministry of Justice to which all citizens have free access. A new methodology on costing draft laws was developed to facilitate the proper implementation of legislation. Despite the significant expansion and improvement of the legal framework, its implementation remains weak and largely constrained by the insufficient implementation capacities of institutions. Overall, it can be said that lasting capacity improvements take a long time, and require sustained engagement and support.

Contributions have also been made to improving access to justice for vulnerable groups, especially rural women, children, youth at risk and people with disabilities. UNDP supported the capacity development of free legal aid providers and raised awareness on the availability of instruments for accessing justice. Subsequently, the number of people who accessed legal aid almost tripled

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11 To prevent multiple voting (known as carousel voting), the new law removed the possibility of registration on the day of election. Voters have to verify their registration at least 10 days before the election.

12 UNDP supported the elaboration of the Parliamentary Development Strategy, the crafting of new Parliamentary Rules of Procedure and the development of a set of standards of expertise for draft bills aimed at improving the quality of legislation. A new format of annual report by the government to the legislative body was adopted. Furthermore, UNDP provided training to members of Parliament on the functions of the legislature, its role in the system of democratic governance, the Rules of Procedure, the legislative process, parliamentary oversight, etc. It also provided assistance to strengthen Parliament's visibility by designing an outreach and communication strategy, and public website.

from 5,170 in 2014 to 14,654 in 2015, with 8,060 of the latter being women.<sup>13</sup> ADR interviews showed that people in the visited locations knew more about their rights to justice and how to exercise them. Local governments also seemed more willing to accept the right of access to justice as a human right guaranteed by law. Support in this area is still ongoing, and it is important to ensure the availability of outcome-level data grounded in a theory of change in order to assess the ultimate outcome for people in terms of their empowerment, their active engagement with government and improvement in their living conditions.

To strengthen social accountability, UNDP also promoted engaging civil society in governance and policymaking. Although much work has focused on ensuring state institutions are more open, transparent and accessible to civil society and the media, the law-making process remains opaque. For example, despite efforts by UNDP and other donors, civil society were not sufficiently engaged in drafting a number of conflict-sensitive laws. There is scope to enhance the position of civil society organizations (CSOs) who remain fragile and largely dependent on donor funding, especially in sensitive areas such as the promotion of human rights.

### **UNDP contributed to strengthening the delivery of public services and people's trust in state institutions.**

UNDP supported streamlining of the regulatory framework for service delivery by helping establish a Unified Register of State Services and promoting the public monitoring of major services; establishing Registers of Basic Municipal Services at the local level; providing expert assistance in the development of public service standards, sectoral standards and results-based

service delivery plans by relevant ministries; and providing support to draft the law on public and municipal services, and the government decree on public and municipal service standards. To tackle capacity constraints of key public organizations at the national and subnational level, in the initial years of the programme, UNDP support focused mainly on the Offices of the President and the Prime Minister. Over time, support was extended to a number of line ministries and local government bodies. A significant number of trainings were organized and many policy documents (laws, regulations, strategies, action plans, etc.) were drafted with UNDP's support. At the subnational level, UNDP facilitated the delivery of services in target rural municipalities by supporting the establishment of good governance initiative working groups, community service rooms/multi-functional service delivery centres, e-information booths, Service Improvement Action Plans, etc. UNDP also supported the engagement of citizens in service delivery to improve the accountability of delivery organizations. The final evaluation of the Operationalizing Good Governance for Social Justice project found that UNDP "generated genuine citizen involvement, an improvement upon the previous habit of relying on social workers or other government employees to take charge of activities such as filling out forms and other basic tasks". The evaluators cautioned, however, that the moderate gains to service improvement in the target municipalities were just the beginning and that sustained efforts were required to continue the reform process (European Union and United Nations in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014, p.61). A Social Justice Index was developed and measured in pilot municipalities to help track progress. Results showed improvements in the capacities of local governments and communities in 30 pilot municipalities to plan, budget and monitor the delivery of services.<sup>14</sup> Key achievements included

13 ROAR 2015 – reporting against Integrated Results and Resources Framework (IRRF) indicator 3.4.1.

14 Pilots were implemented in (by region): Chui region (Kara-Suu, Orok, Onbirjilga); Issyk-kul region (Kol-Tor, Muhailovka, Karasaev); Naryn region (Baetov, Uchkun, Jergetal); Talas region (Bakai-Ata, Nurjanov); Jalal-Abad region (Ketmen-Dobo, Nuchke-Sai, Mogol, Akman, Kyzyl-Tuu, Yrys); Osh region (Kenesh, Ylay-Taala, Kara-Kulja, Kermetoo, Shark, Kenesh, Kulatov); and Batken region (Kyshtut, Karabak, Dara, Ak-Suu, Sumbula, Uch Korgon). Districts were selected based on criteria such as poverty rates, geographical distribution, links to other UNDP interventions, etc.

the establishment and operationalization of Community Service Rooms, the creation and training of Good Governance Initiative Working Groups and the facilitation of Service Improvement Action Plans in every pilot municipality. Furthermore, during project implementation, the average level of access to services increased from 44 percent in 2012 to 67 percent in 2014 while the average quality of services increased from 57 percent in 2012 to 75 percent in 2014. Appeals to Community Service Rooms rose dramatically when comparing June to December 2013 and January to July 2014. Osh province in particular saw a 375 percent increase in applications from one period to the next. The Social Justice Demonstration Fund (SJDF) helped communities implement projects to improve service access and quality. Of 184 applications and 243 project activities in 30 Service Improvement Action Plans, 83 community projects received support; cash or in-kind community contributions increased between 2012 to 2014 (80 percent SJDF input to 20 percent municipality input in 2012; 50 percent SJDF input to 50 percent municipality input in 2013; and 20 percent SJDF input to 80 percent municipality input in 2014). SJDF funding for community projects totalled \$443,544 over three funding rounds, community contribution (mostly cash) totalled \$97,801 and partner contributions totalled \$89,043 over three funding rounds. Moreover, improved recourse mechanisms for rights violations were established and 2,535 citizens were provided with legal assistance following a partnership between the Ombudsman Institute and a regional legal aid provider (Buxton and Ibraeva, 2014). However, there has been no clear indication that the actual quality of services received by citizens improved substantially. Without solid evidence on service quality, it is difficult to establish what degree of improvement was achieved at the outcome level. Had a citizen's confidence index on the functioning of public service delivery and public units been implemented

as envisaged by UNDP, it would have been possible to form a better understanding of the degree to which citizens are satisfied with the quality of public services and trust public institutions.<sup>15</sup> The ADR field visits provided some circumstantial evidence that the provision of certain municipal services through the one-stop shop approach seems to have improved in some local communities. Public monitoring results (2015) showed that the average ratio of standard performance of 10 pilot services was 52 percent and the average level of citizen satisfaction was 54 percent.<sup>16</sup> Large-scale transformation in the quality of public services takes time to materialize.

UNDP also contributed to civil service reform by assisting the State Personnel Service with: an analyses of legislation and policies related to civil servant's salary payment regulation; a comparative analysis of labour laws and civil service legislation, with recommendations on the introduction of a career fair promotion of civil servants; and the draft law "On Civil and Municipal Service". The final evaluation of the Capacity Development Facility project noted that UNDP's work in this area was largely fragmented and not as significant as envisioned in the original project document mainly because the government was not ready to start a major reform in this difficult and complex area (Melikyan and Tretiakova, 2014). While there have been some positive changes in recent years, progress in civil service reform remains rather mixed.

**Stakeholders praised UNDP's support for the government's efforts to fight corruption and improve transparency and accountability in the public sector.**

UNDP contributed to the establishment of a number of institutions including the Anti-corruption Coordination Council, the Anti-corruption Service of the State National Security

15 Based on opinion surveys, the Country Office reported that people's trust in state institutions increased to 18.5 points in the first half of 2015, from 6 points in the first half of 2014 and -5.5 points in 2012 (ROAR, 2015).

16 <http://www.kg.undp.org/content/kyrgyzstan/en/home/ourperspective/ourperspectivearticles/2016/active-citizens-improve-the-lives-of-others.html>.

Committee and the Chamber of Accounts. It also supported the creation of the National Secretariat on e-Governance; the development of a national E-Governance Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2017) and the relevant regulatory framework; and the establishment of an open data system.<sup>17</sup> In cooperation with parliament and the Chamber of Accounts, UNDP also helped the government introduce transparent budget procedures, promoting the engagement of CSOs in the process. It also supported two corruption risk assessments in the health and education sectors, as well as various analytical pieces and studies related to anti-corruption. Ministries used the recommendations from this work to develop their action plans. A functional analysis would have provided depth to the assessments and revealed the structural and system changes needed in each institution. However, although four were planned in the initial project document, none were conducted before the assessment. Instead, gap assessments were conducted but they do not constitute a comprehensive functional analysis (Melikyan and Tretiakova, 2014). Moreover, follow-up activities were not undertaken to support the implementation of the recommendations from the assessments.

Kyrgyzstan's position in the Corruption Perception Index improved from 150 (out of 177) in 2013 to 136 (out of 175) in 2014, 123 (out of 167) in 2015 and 136 (out of 176) in 2016. Although corruption remains widespread and represents a serious challenge for the country's development, UNDP's support has been useful in setting in motion processes which have the potential of achieving broader improvements if followed through.

**UNDP contributed to the empowerment of civil society, especially the Public Advisory Councils (PACs), in their public administration oversight role.**

PACs are voluntary groups composed of representatives from civil society, academia, business

associations, and professional and trade associations which are attached to ministries and other government institutions at the central level. Their purpose is to facilitate civil society's engagement in the government's decision-making process and monitor the work of the public administration. They emerged as the main vehicles for promoting transparency and accountability in the central public administration. UNDP supported the establishment and functioning of about 40 PACs, including a PAC Coordination Council. Both interviews and report analysis revealed that the performance of PACs has so far been mixed and their sustainability is not entirely secure (Melikyan and Tretiakova, 2014). In the years proceeding the 2010 revolution, PACs were popular as they responded to the population's urgent need for a more transparent government. However, in later years there was a decline in momentum for some PACs because of the climate of distrust among the population and the lack of public administration transparency. A number of central-level institutions still do not have a respective PAC (e.g. the State Registry Service) while other PACs, such as the one associated with the Ministry of Transport, have become inactive and lost their purpose. However, some remain active and play an important role (i.e. the PAC associated with the Ministry of Finance). There were also a number of problems related to the way PACs were designed and set up. For example, their mandates as laid out in the Presidential decree upon which they were founded, were unspecific leading some PACs to act as auditors without a mandate or qualifications, which eventually created tensions with the respective ministries (Melikyan and Tretiakova, 2014, p.49). To address this problem UNDP supported the drafting of a new law which was approved by parliament. Having PACs grounded in primary legislation, as opposed to a Presidential decree which is easier to repudiate, was an important achievement because it strengthened their standing vis-à-vis the ministries. Another design shortcoming was that the PACs' law did not envision any administrative expenses for their

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<sup>17</sup> Kyrgyzstan's ranking in the global Open Data index improved from 98 in 2014 to 34 in 2015, ahead of most of Commonwealth of Independent State countries.

operations (i.e. rent, website, secretariat, experts, etc.), which has made it difficult for them to operate effectively, especially since several members have to travel to the capital from the regions for meetings. Some of the activities of the PAC Coordination Council (trainings, round-tables or publications) have been funded by donors and this funding is uncertain in the medium to long run. More importantly, there is no comprehensive system to track how PAC recommendations are received and acted upon by the respective government bodies. The lack of systematic and comprehensive information about the way PACs and government organizations interact on the basis of recommendations has weakened their ability to hold the government accountable.

**At the subnational level, UNDP contributed through the ABD approach to the strengthening of local governance and citizen engagement with local institutions, especially where citizens were able to form strong local development structures and where local authorities were more open to involvement.**

Of particular importance at the subnational level was UNDP's adoption and promotion of the ABD approach and the establishment of three ABD offices in Naryn, Osh and Batken. These offices implemented UNDP's, and to a lesser extent other United Nations organizations', projects in the respective areas. They provided crucial support to the establishment of locally-owned and integrated frameworks for project planning and implementation. Integrated work plans developed at the regional and local levels were matched with national-level policies and strategies. This approach enabled UNDP to more effectively weave elements of good governance (e.g. citizen engagement, transparency and accountability) into other thematic activities (i.e. peacebuilding, economic development, environmental protection, disaster risk management, etc.). The ABD approach enabled UNDP to achieve more synergies, economies of scale and efficiencies for its activities, heightened visibility and trust from the local partners, and improved sustainability of its achievements.

To some extent, UNDP also promoted the ABD approach with local governments and communities, as laid out in the CPD/CPAP outcomes. In some locations, UNDP supported local authorities to adopt the integrated area development approach through the formulation of strategic plans specifically tailored to the local context, and the establishment of integrated and participatory governance structures. Overall, local governments and communities have benefitted from closer and more strategic cooperation with UNDP. However, the ADR field visits showed that local governments and communities were less able to fully adopt the ABD approach as an effective instrument for tackling development challenges.

Furthermore, the potential of the ABD approach to coordinate and channel the contributions of other development partners at the local level was not fully leveraged. In some communities where UNDP supported community-based initiatives, other international organizations including the World Bank/Agricultural Reform Implementation Support project, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Aga Khan Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) had implemented similar projects. The ADR mission found that, in some localities, international agencies worked largely independently, engaging local authorities and communities separately and with rather different terms. This led to higher transaction costs from the perspective of local communities and the creation of duplicate community structures to serve the needs of the various international organizations. Although international partners are driven by their own specific objectives and procedures, there is a need for much stronger cooperation and coordination at the local level and UNDP, as a leader of community development in the country, can play a much more active role.

**UNDP's border management activities strengthened border management systems and contributed to cross-border cooperation among law enforcement bodies, but had less impact on cross-border trade.**

Building on the achievements of the previous Border Management Programme in Central Asia, UNDP further promoted the adoption of integrated border management principles and best practices in Kyrgyzstan. It also supported the elaboration of a national integrated border management strategy and action plans, enhanced the professional skills of border management agencies, strengthened anti-drug trafficking capacities, and improved staff working conditions and motivation. By sensitizing border staff to human rights, gender and local development issues, UNDP contributed to strengthening trust and cooperation both among law enforcement bodies in Kyrgyzstan, as well as with law enforcement bodies from neighbouring countries, including through the creation of border liaison offices. UNDP's border management expertise, combined with its implementation capacity and its role as a neutral actor, enabled a dialogue among border management authorities on such a sensitive issue. However, the expected results in the area of cross-border economic cooperation and trade promotion did not fully materialize. Largely as a result of difficult political relations, there was no major improvement in trade relations with either Tajikistan or Uzbekistan. Moreover, border management activities under the Border Management Programme were largely implemented in isolation from other areas of the country programme. Better synergies and results could have been achieved if they had been more closely integrated with activities carried out under other UNDP thematic programmes, especially those focused on promoting peace and economic development among the communities living in border areas. This integration has been realized more recently through the ongoing cross-border cooperation for sustainable peace and development project, jointly implemented by UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) of both Kyrgyzstan and

Tajikistan, as well as the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) Regional Office.

**UNDP mainstreamed gender throughout most activities in this outcome area and actively pursued the participation of women in its activities. Overall, it improved women's awareness of their rights and changed attitudes towards gender equality. UNDP was also instrumental in the development of policy documents that promoted positive changes in the roles and status of women and men. Overall, its contribution can be categorized as gender responsive (UNDP IEO, 2015).**

At the policy level, UNDP supported the government to mainstream gender in the NSDS and other strategic documents, implementing the National Gender Strategy 2012-2020 and acting on the commitments of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. Moreover, with UNDP's assistance and a participatory approach, the government developed strategic policy documents such as the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2015-2017 and the National Action Plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325. UNDP also contributed to the drafting of the law on gender-based violence and facilitated the participation of civil society in public hearings.<sup>18</sup>

UNDP contributed to enhancing awareness of gender issues in state institutions, such as parliament, ministries and subnational governments. Support was provided to enable national partners to participate in global and regional events on gender equality and women's empowerment. UNDP also supported strengthening their capacities to implement gender-related international and national commitments. In some cases, commitments were not achieved as planned, as in the

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18 UNDP actively promoted parliamentary hearings on the implementation of gender legislation by the Executive and facilitated the participation of gender-related CSOs in those processes.

case of the share of elected women in parliament, due to political factors.<sup>19</sup> In its electoral support activities, UNDP conducted education campaigns with the active participation of women, especially those representing national minorities, encouraging them to exercise their electoral rights. Moreover, the voter registration software developed with UNDP's support contained data that was gender disaggregated and thus provided accurate statistics during the elections. Another area of support was the gender rating of political parties, where UNDP supported an analysis of the extent to which political parties ensured compliance with equal rights and opportunities of men and women guaranteed by legislation. The analysis looked at how gender equality issues were integrated into the agenda and activities of political parties, and what approaches and practices the various parties used to promote the issues of equal rights and equal opportunities for men and women.

UNDP also contributed to the promotion of gender issues in subnational governments and improvements in their response to the needs of women and children. It raised awareness in local communities on the problems of gender violence and bride abduction. Extensive gender sensitivity training on the development of Service Improvement Action Plans led to increased women's participation and representation of their interests at the community level. Overall, ADR visits showed that UNDP has contributed to a tangible improvement in the capacity of women, CSOs and government institutions on gender equality and women's rights in many communities.<sup>20</sup>

Although hard to quantify and assess the overall impact of UNDP's activities on the gender situation due to the lack of reliable data in some

areas (such as on bride kidnapping cases, early marriages, etc.), interviews revealed that UNDP's contribution was important, especially at the strategic level. Nevertheless, the gender-sensitive approach should be further strengthened when planning, implementing and evaluating projects, and gender perspectives should be further mainstreamed into the projects in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy.

**UNDP's activities contributed to addressing the special needs of vulnerable groups, including women, children, youth and persons with disabilities. UNDP promoted and applied a human rights-based approach to development by strengthening the capacity of rights holders to exercise their claims, and that of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations. Specific attention was paid to the rights of vulnerable groups and their equal participation in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life.**

At the policy level, UNDP contributed to improving the responsiveness of law and policymaking processes to the needs of vulnerable groups by engaging communities and CSOs in legislative and policy processes; organizing public forums, debates and hearings; and ensuring greater access to legislative facilities, etc. Work with the judicial system was conducted to strengthen delivery mechanisms of justice. CSOs working in the areas of disability, gender and youth were engaged in advancing judicial reform by discussing and submitting amendments to duty bearers.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the programme contributed to the legal empowerment of, and social justice for, disadvantaged groups and vulnerable populations by helping them claim their rights and get redress for rights violations. UNDP provided training in free legal aid, improving access to justice

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19 A number of women were withdrawn from the party lists after the last election following political bargaining among political leaders, although a few disputed their withdrawal and regained their seat.

20 Interviews showed that some degree of change has already taken place at the local level with regards to the awareness of women about their rights and the way they and gender CSOs access justice and rights.

21 For example, UNDP supported the conduct of a participatory analysis of the legal framework regulating the representation of women and ethnic minorities in the civil service.

(including for persons with disabilities in court buildings), raising awareness on human rights, electoral procedures, voting and participation in decision-making. As a result of these trainings and efforts to raise awareness, citizens submitted inquiries to and received responses from local governments, and improvements were seen in the participation of vulnerable groups in certain aspects of local governance.<sup>22</sup> The programme also helped make public service delivery more equitable and responsive to the needs of vulnerable groups. This was a key focus of the Operationalizing Good Governance for Social Justice project.

To eliminate discrimination against persons with disabilities, UNDP supported the drafting of the disability-related sections of the NSDS and implementation of the law on rights and guarantees of persons with disabilities. UNDP also assisted the government and relevant CSOs to establish an inter-agency working group to cost the ratification of the United Nations Convention on Persons with Disabilities. Interviewees considered this a significant contribution, although the convention remains unratified. Support was also given to raising awareness in society of the rights of and challenges faced by persons with disabilities.

Despite progress made during the current programme cycle, more work is needed to make a significant improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable people. Interviews with stakeholders revealed that the involvement of vulnerable groups as both beneficiaries and agents of change in UNDP projects needs to be further strengthened. Special attention should be paid to proactive measures in engaging vulnerable people, especially in remote areas.

## 2.2 PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

Outcome statement: A national infrastructure for peace (at local, regional and national levels) involving government, civil society, communities and individuals effectively prevents violent conflict and engages in peacebuilding.

Outputs:

- i) Key national institutions able to design and implement conflict prevention policies and manage risks to stability;
- ii) Advisory Committees facilitate the engagement of local actors in monitoring of and responding to potential conflict escalation at the provincial and local levels; and
- iii) Mechanisms for dialogue, joint problem-solving and cooperation are in place to reduce tensions in cross-border areas.

### 2.2.1 OVERVIEW

Since independence in 1991, the Kyrgyz Republic has seen a combination of democratic progress and authoritarian backlash against a background of difficult inter-ethnic relations. These relations reached their lowest point in June 2010 when serious confrontations took place in the south of the country resulting in 420 deaths, 2,000 injuries, and the destruction of over 2,000 houses and 300 businesses. Following the adoption of the new constitution in 2010, a series of peaceful and fair elections have taken place, new legislation has been passed and new institutions have been established. All these measures have helped improve the legitimacy of the State in the eyes of the population and have contributed to reducing violence and insecurity. At the same time, state institutions, local authorities and communities have become more able to prevent and manage conflicts and promote social cohesion.

Yet, more progress is needed to improve inter-ethnic relations and overcome regional divisions. Peace and social cohesion remain fragile because

<sup>22</sup> For example, the Youth Initiative Groups, established with the help of UNDP, created and implemented Municipal Youth Action Plans in accordance with the National Youth Action Plan.

the root causes of conflict have not been fully addressed. These include inter-ethnic mistrust and tensions at the community level, weak governance, social exclusion and uneven access to economic opportunities. Communities, especially in the Fergana Valley region in the south, remain divided along ethnic lines, with lingering social division and mistrust. Executive, law enforcement and justice structures do not have the full trust and confidence of these communities, for whom a sense of injustice continues to linger. In other areas there are sporadic outbreaks of small-scale violence triggered by grievances related to local level issues, such as the controversy over the Kumtor mining company. Other challenges include increasing religious fervour and radicalization which has the potential to become a serious threat for the country. Significant parts of the border with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan remain undemarcated which creates inter-state tensions, as was the case most recently in March 2016. These tensions spill into the communities which live around the border and escalate into violent clashes, creating a very fragile situation along the border.

The NSDS 2013-2017 focused on the causes of instability by including the rule of law, national unity and the integration of all ethnicities among its main goals. The NSDS included a separate section on inter-ethnic harmony and strengthening social cohesion, making it the first national strategy to specifically prioritize this dimension. Following wide stakeholder consultations, the government approved the Concept on National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations, the country's first policy framework towards improving social cohesion, which aimed to create "a system of institutions responsible for the regulation of inter-ethnic relations and the development of a common civic identity." Moreover, authorities elaborated a National Action Plan for the

implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (on women and peace and security) and a National Security Concept<sup>23</sup> which laid out guidelines to implement security measures overseen by the Defence Council. The government also made efforts to strengthen the capacity of peace-related institutions. For example, the State Agency for Local Self-Governance and Inter-ethnic Relations under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic (GAMSUMO) was established to work on inter-ethnic relations and the implementation of the Concept on National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations. Furthermore, the Department of Ethnic, Religious Policy and Interaction with Civil Society was strengthened to run a national peace campaign and, at the subnational level, a network of Advisory Committees (Peace Councils) was established. Key development partners supporting the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in the peace and development area include United Nations agencies, GIZ and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).

UNDP adopted a two-pronged strategy to its peacebuilding and reconciliation activities. First, it combined short-term stabilization measures with longer-term confidence building activities. As such, in the first years after the 2010 ethnic conflict, activities were designed to contribute to short-term stabilization and recovery, as well as prepare the ground for the promotion of more sustainable peace. In particular, UNDP played a key role in putting peacebuilding on the agenda of national and international institutions. Subsequently, the programme focused on the root-causes of insecurity and conflict (poverty, inequality, discrimination, cross-border infrastructure and resources, etc.).<sup>24</sup> Second, it combined a top-down/bottom-up approach to peacebuilding and reconciliation. The top-down approach consisted of measures such as the

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23 The concept identified the ineffectual nature of government, ethno-regionalism, weakness of civil identity and endemic corruption as factors undermining security.

24 Overall, the logic underlying UNDP interventions was that, where conflict has erupted, it can first be contained by providing immediate support to re-establish security and stability. Subsequently, the risk of re-emergence can be reduced by addressing the root causes of it.

establishment of sound national policy and legal frameworks, the strengthening of the capacities of national and subnational institutions, the building of a peace-monitoring infrastructure, etc. The bottom-up approach consisted of activities focused on mobilizing communities as agents of change and peace through support for vulnerable and excluded groups affected by conflicts, promoting cooperation among cross-border communities, enhancing the role of civil society and media in peacebuilding, etc. Overall, the comprehensive way in which UNDP addressed the challenges in this area was a factor of success. However, if more substantive impact is to be achieved, the depth of engagement should be further strengthened.

UNDP's peace and development programme received significant financial and technical support from the PBF and most projects were implemented jointly with other United Nations agencies. The successful mobilization of PBF funds was a positive achievement for the Country Office but, given the approaching closure of the PBF window, the challenge will be to sustain activities in this area by identifying new funding sources.

Peace and development activities were largely implemented through the ABD approach which enabled UNDP to achieve better synergies in conflict areas and integrate conflict-prevention themes into the activities of the other programmes. In order to promote community participation and volunteerism, the programme engaged local United Nations Volunteers and field monitors to support conflict monitoring, community dialogue and the implementation of confidence building measures.

### **2.2.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION**

**Through its top-down approach to peacebuilding, UNDP strengthened the capacity of state institutions to formulate policies, laws and strategies related to conflict prevention and reconciliation. Although a large body of laws and policies resulted from this work, the capac-**

**ity of institutions to implement them remains weak and represents a challenge that needs to be tackled more effectively in the future.**

In the framework of its support to develop the NSDS, UNDP advocated for the inclusion of a section on conflict prevention and security, marking the first time authorities included conflict prevention as a separate dimension into a national planning document. It also supported parliament to draft a body of conflict-sensitive legislation (in particular laws on cross-border cooperation and security). Support was also provided to the participatory formulation of the Concept for National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations, and development of an inventory of conflict prevention capacities and assets available in the country. Another area of assistance was the development of state policy on religious affairs under the leadership of the State Commission for Religious Affairs. Assistance was also provided on the formulation of an action plan to implement the state policy on religious affairs which contains a set of measures to address challenges identified in the policy, including those related to violent extremism. Support was provided to the GAMSUMO and the Inter-Agency Commission (a coordination structure under the Deputy Prime Minister responsible for security matters) to improve their ability to identify risks and threats, and develop measures that improve inter-ethnic confidence and national harmony.

Despite UNDP's significant contribution to the development of laws and policies, the weak implementation capacity of national institutions remains a serious constraint requiring deeper and more sustained engagement. In the future, UNDP should seek to address it more forcefully and systematically, especially in the framework of its public administration reform activities.

**Through its bottom-up approach, UNDP supported local governments and communities to act as catalysts of peace by strengthening their capacity to uphold the rule of law and reduce tensions among communities.**

Since the establishment of GAMSUMO in March 2013, significant progress has been made in improving inter-ethnic relations. Public offices within the local governments were established in 15 multi-ethnic districts and five towns between 2013-2014. The main selection criteria were multi-ethnic communities and factors of tension between ethnic groups. Executive Secretaries on the ground have received appeals and complaints from the public on various inter-ethnic relation issues, carried out field visits to the most affected areas, and developed conflict-analysis and recommendations for local government. In close cooperation with law enforcement authorities, they have prevented inter-ethnic conflicts in the most vulnerable public places such as markets, public transport, schools, etc. Work has been done in close coordination with other state authorities such as the State Committee on National Security and public departments of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.<sup>25</sup>

Support was also given to a number of local governments and communities to implement the Concept for National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations. Conflict prevention concepts were mainstreamed into the training curricula of local governments, guidelines of Advisory Committees (who play the role of the Peace Councils at the subnational level) and public service standards. Assistance was provided to Advisory Committees to introduce conflict sensitivity into local development plans. UNDP also supported the establishment of Legal Assistance Centres designed to provide free legal aid and 20 public

reception centres designed to ensure cooperation of local governments and communities to respond and prevent inter-ethnic conflicts.

**Support was also given to the establishment of the Monitoring Centre for Inter-ethnic Relations, a conflict monitoring system<sup>26</sup> designed to collect data on inter-ethnic relations and develop policy advice for national and local authorities.**

At the national level, the Monitoring Centre was placed under GAMSUMO and operated with analytical support by the National Institute for Strategic Studies. It was established to produce analytical reports with recommendations for preventive measures to be undertaken by the authorities. At the subnational level, the system of early warning and prevention of inter-ethnic conflicts in multi-ethnic communities was created within the implementation of the plan on priority measures for inter-ethnic relations. UNDP supported the establishment of a network of monitors responsible for producing regular reports and recommendations related to potential risks and threats in their communities. Despite the monitoring system's usefulness in generating information, weak implementation is a challenge and its impact will be more significant if recommendations generated through the monitoring process are enacted more vigorously by the respective authorities. For that to happen, a system for tracking the implementation of recommendations is necessary and, although there has been follow-up in some specific cases, currently such a comprehensive system does not exist.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, it is not known how

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25 Data from the GAMSUMO public offices showed that, by the end of 2014, 2,500 people had applied to public offices. Public secretaries instigated 3,000 measures to prevent inter-ethnic conflicts. By the end of 2015, 2,300 preventive measures had been instigated and the number of applications to the public offices was approximately 1,400. By the end of 2016, the number of preventive measures on inter-ethnic relations in 20 public offices was 1,205 and the number of citizens who had applied was 579. In 2016, Executive Secretaries prepared 960 monitoring and analytical reports on preventive measures conducted on the ground and submitted them to GAMSUMO. They also established a comprehensive database on the number of mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic areas, services and activities provided in this field, through which the GAMSUMO Conflict Monitoring Center was able to create an interactive map of conflict zones.

26 This was part of a multi-layered monitoring and response system which uses various risk management tools and includes the Electoral Risk Management tool operationalized in the 2015 parliamentary elections.

27 The National Institute for Strategic Studies, for instance, has no mandate and capacity to track responses to recommendations. At the national level, the Inter-Agency Council headed by the Deputy Prime Minister is in charge of strategic responses to recommendations generated by the conflict monitoring system, but it has not implemented a tracking system yet.

many recommendations were generated nor how many were accepted and enacted by authorities. Similarly, at the local level, it is unclear how information collected by local monitors leads to recommendations and how they are subsequently taken into account by policymakers. These shortcomings highlight the need for a more effective system to track recommendations and to strengthen the capacity of newly created structures which is extremely important because it determines the sustainability of these structures.<sup>28</sup> For more efficient monitoring and tracking of recommendations the capacity of staff of relevant government authorities needs to be strengthened.

**By supporting cross-border cooperation, UNDP helped communities engage in cooperative interactions to build trust and find mutually agreeable solutions to cross-border challenges.**

In Kyrgyzstan, UNDP is a front-runner in the area of border cooperation, building on past cooperation with UNDP Tajikistan and the field presence of ABD offices in Khujand (Sughd region of Tajikistan) and Batken (Batken region of Kyrgyzstan). UNDP's approach has been to focus on cross-border conflict monitoring for preventive action; dialogue including cross-border intercommunity dialogue, awareness raising and information sharing, cooperation between border security forces and communities; and confidence-building measures, such as joint youth initiatives, cooperation in natural resource management, generation of peace dividends through infrastructure development and livelihood support. Support was provided to local authorities to establish a cross-border cooperation framework to prevent further escalations along the border. Cross-border activities took place only along the Kyrgyzstan-Tajikistan border. Although activities with Uzbekistan had been envisaged in the CPD/CPAP, they did not materialize because of difficult political relations. Given the politi-

cal sensitivity of border issues in Central Asia, activities in this area were very challenging and sometimes involved extensive consultations which affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme. The border situation was quite volatile which also had a negative impact on the effectiveness of operations. In particular, the deterioration of the situation in 2014 resulted in the temporary suspension of UNDP activities in the border areas of the Batken region due to security concerns. Although inter-ethnic relations along the border remain tense, UNDP's presence in these areas has helped boost the people's sense of confidence. UNDP has a critical role in these areas, as few other international actors have been able to work on cross-border issues. Also, UNDP's support for monitoring activities has been a useful source of information for national and local authorities, as well as civil society groups and international organizations. Given the importance of working with communities on both sides of the border, collaboration with UNDP Tajikistan is essential and should continue to be strengthened.

**By addressing deep-seated factors that generate and sustain violence in conflict-prone communities, UNDP contributed to reducing tensions and the likelihood of resumed violence.**

UNDP undertook a number of initiatives aimed at promoting peace and security by alleviating root causes of conflict such as unemployment, poverty and inequality, especially among young people. Support was channelled through grants for business start-ups, job creation initiatives, training and vocational education, etc. In some communities, farmer cooperatives consisting of members of different ethnic groups were supported, thus making use of economic incentives to strengthen inter-ethnic relations. The ABD approach capitalized on economic development activities to support peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives. However, despite the scale of the

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28 For example, if the information and recommendations obtained from local monitors will generate action that mitigates conflict, the authorities will step in at the end of the project and continue support for these monitors. Otherwise, their functions will cease to exist once UNDP support comes to an end.

problem, the programme component has been relatively small in size and scope, and its impact has been limited. Significant improvements will require larger transformational change. Given the limited resources available, UNDP can only demonstrate what the process of change should entail, meaning it is up to the government and communities to take advantage of the opportunity and make change happen on a larger scale. UNDP activities in support of livelihoods and economic development need to be further strengthened. More impact can be generated by further improving synergies between the peace and development work cluster and other areas of the programme, especially the poverty and socio-economic development work cluster. Furthermore, the short time-frames of the peacebuilding projects are not well-suited to economic development objectives. Also, more efforts should focus on creating educational and employment opportunities for young people, who are usually most actively involved in conflict.

UNDP also sought to address disputes arising from the control or poor management of natural resources (land, pasture, water) and access to infrastructure (roads, irrigation channels, electricity) by promoting cooperation and dialogue between communities on natural resources management and joint construction of public infrastructure projects. Activities targeted tensions arising from the use of irrigation channels or water supplies and, overall, interviewed beneficiaries expressed satisfaction with the results.

**Recognizing the role of disenfranchised and unemployed youth as drivers of conflict, the programme focused significantly on the empowerment of youth as agents of peace.**

This area received little attention from international donors in the past, as such UNDP is widely regarded as a front-runner in the country. One project funded by PBF was entirely dedicated to youth. While at the national level

the impact of these activities has been limited, stakeholders noted a number of achievements at the local level. For example, a number of youth groups have formed and developed action plans which have been integrated into local development plans and received funds from local authorities. Youth cooperation across the border has been promoted through the creation of contact groups and young people have successfully started a number of business initiatives with grants provided by the UNDP programme. Furthermore, UNDP has played an important role in sensitizing local authorities to the potential role of youth in peacebuilding. Local authorities in a number of locations have forged partnerships with youth groups which strengthen the sustainability of UNDP's intervention in this area.

**A number of activities under the peace and development programme focused on women's empowerment and gender equality.**

At the policy level, UNDP supported the development of the National Action Plan on Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 which promotes the role of women in peacebuilding. UNDP also supported national partners mainstream the United Nations Secretary General's seven-point Action Plan<sup>29</sup> and track the integration of gender in peacebuilding through gender equality initiatives. However, actual progress in the implementation of the National Action Plan has been limited. To ensure women's participation in local development initiatives and conflict prevention, UNDP facilitated closer interaction between women's groups and authorities. In many locations, UNDP supported the organization of workshops on gender and conflict for communities and government representatives.

UNDP supported efforts by women's NGOs to organize public awareness campaigns and improve coordinated responses to gender-based violence in conflict areas. Mass media cam-

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29 [http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven\\_point\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf).

paigns focused on the importance of institutions' responsiveness to the needs and interests of women, during both times of peace and conflict. Models of primary aid and rehabilitation to victims of violence at the local level were tested. Overall, evidence collected during the ADR mission indicated that UNDP activities in this area can be rated as gender responsive.

**UNDP engaged with a number of vulnerable and marginalized groups during the programme cycle.**

Many activities in the programme cycle centred on ethnic minorities, and their interaction with neighbouring communities and state institutions. Youth, women and ethnic minorities were largely involved in conflict monitoring, cross-border cooperation and implementation of early preventive action. UNDP facilitated their engagement with local authorities, ensuring they participated in addressing conflicts jointly with other community representatives and authorities.

**2.3 POVERTY REDUCTION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Outcome statement: By 2016, the population, especially vulnerable groups benefit from inclusive growth leading to decent and productive employment, and improved access to productive natural resources, markets, services and food security.

Outputs:

- i) Government able to accelerate and sustain progress towards achievement of the MDGs; and
- ii) Local authorities are able to expand opportunities for income generation and employment among vulnerable groups with the focus on environmental security and gender equality.

**2.3.1 OVERVIEW**

The post-2010 period has been marked by reasonable economic growth (4 percent in 2014 and

3.6 percent in 2015, according to World Bank indicators) fuelled by increased credit to the private sector, higher public investment and the recovery of the tourism sector. Despite progress in some areas, including a fall in poverty rates (latest figures showing 32 percent in 2015, compared to 37 percent in 2013 and 63 percent in 2000), many challenges remain. The economy is largely dependent on subsistence agriculture and gold mining which represents 12 percent of GDP and 26 percent of tax revenues. It also depends heavily (32 percent of GDP) on remittances from an estimated one million labour migrants, most of whom work in Russia which makes the economy vulnerable to external shocks. In particular, Russia and Kazakhstan's current economic concerns have impacted economic activity in Kyrgyzstan and data from the Russian Central Bank show that remittances from Russia fell by about 45 percent between 2014 and 2015. Private investment is insufficient and a large section of the economy remains informal. Despite a number of positive regulatory reforms, the development of the private sector and the establishment of a favourable investment climate remain a serious challenge. Regional income disparities across rural/urban and north/south dimensions are severe, and create exclusion and reinforce division. For example, 70 percent of the poor population live in rural areas and poverty in the south is much higher than in the north (54 percent in Batken region, 43 percent in Osh region, 46 percent in Jalal-Abad compared to 17 percent in Chui province in 2012). Access to basic public services such as electricity, heating, clean water and sanitation, remain limited in rural areas where most of the poor live.

The NSDS 2013-2017 recognized the creation of an enabling environment for private sector development, the attraction of foreign investment and the provision of high-quality education and training as key instruments for creating new jobs, driving economic growth, improving household incomes and reducing poverty. The strategy also recognized regional disparities as a key challenge and highlighted the need to increase public and private investments outside the major cities.

Sustainable development was confirmed as a key priority of cooperation between the government and the donor community at the July 2013 High Level Development Conference co-chaired by the Prime Minister and United Nations Resident Representative. The NSDS and the Donor Coordination Council were recognized as key mechanisms for development and donor coordination in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan's accession to the EEU in August 2015 was a notable development, and presents opportunities and challenges for the country. It provides opportunities to attract foreign investments, expand exports and simplify the movement of migrant labour to Kazakhstan and Russia. Furthermore, Kyrgyzstan will be able to receive financial assistance in support of the integration process. A challenge will be for it to raise import tariffs on goods from non-EEU countries and implement stricter enforcement of the border regime which might impact trade with countries like China, an important source of imports. It will also have to meet EEU standards, particularly phytosanitary and veterinary, which will require improved quality of products and better regulatory standards. The extent to which the country benefits from EEU membership will largely depend on its ability to take advantage of opportunities and tackle challenges.

UNDP is one of the key development partners supporting the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in this area. Other United Nations agencies, the World Bank, ADB, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), GIZ, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and USAID also provide support. UNDP's support focused on community development and poverty reduction, private sector development and export promotion, achievement of the MDGs, etc. At the national level, UNDP provided advice, policy support and technical assistance

to strengthen the capacities of a number of key institutions to pursue sustainable human development. Trade and private sector development policies were leveraged to establish a favourable environment for the poor to benefit from entrepreneurship, increased trade and better skills. Assistance was provided to facilitate the country's accession and participation in regional economic agreements, especially the EEU. The programme also focused on the sustainable development agenda, including support for the SDG adaptation process. At the subnational level, activities helped restore community infrastructure and business activities destroyed during the 2010 revolution, creating employment opportunities. The programme sought to strengthen the productive capacity of communities in rural areas by supporting start-ups, improving skills, introducing new technologies, optimizing markets for produce and facilitating cluster approaches to production.

### 2.3.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

**Throughout the programme cycle, UNDP contributed to building national capacities for the implementation and monitoring of the MDGs and the formulation of the SDGs.**

UNDP promoted the MDG agenda and supported government efforts to embed the MDGs in national development processes. In close collaboration with other United Nations agencies, UNDP contributed to creating a more enabling environment for the attainment of the MDGs by supporting the government to design pro-poor development strategies and by advocating for increased public spending on key public services. The programme also strengthened national monitoring and reporting mechanisms<sup>30</sup> and raised public awareness of the achievements of the MDGs. The establishment of the MDG Acceleration Framework was also a result of UNDP's work (and that of other development partners).

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30 Kyrgyzstan's MDG reports were presented during MDGs consultations at the General Assembly thus reaffirming the government's MDG commitments.

Under this framework a number of studies were conducted to identify the constraints and bottlenecks that impeded the achievement of MDG 5, related to maternal mortality, an indicator on which Kyrgyzstan was largely off-track.

Kyrgyzstan was actively engaged in the post-2015 consultations and, in the framework of the global campaign ‘The World We Want’, the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) identified Kyrgyzstan as one of the countries for participatory national consultations. UNDP helped organise the two-phase national consultation process, which began in 2013 under the leadership of the Ministry of the Economy and the United Nations country team, engaging more than 10,000 representatives from the government, CSOs, private sector and media, and setting the SDG targets. It is also expected to support the government in the development of the national SDGs adaptation road map to ensure a smooth transition to the new development framework. Work will be coordinated with the preparation of the National Concept 2030 and the NSDS 2018-2023.

**UNDP has provided valuable contributions to the development of a number of strategies and plans at the national and subnational level, as well as to creating an institutional and policy framework for trade and private sector development, but there is scope for further improvements in these areas.**

As mentioned previously, UNDP contributed to the development of two notable strategic documents – the NSDS 2013-2017 and the Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017. Through projects such as the Poverty Environment Initiative, UNDP promoted a holistic approach to development planning and supported the integration of social, economic and environmental concerns into the planning process.

At the subnational level, UNDP, through the ABD approach, supported a number of regional, district and municipal governments to formu-

late area-based strategic plans. ADR field visits revealed a diversity of experiences with strategic planning at the subnational level. In some areas, the process was solid, inclusive and vertically integrated across different levels of local governance. In others, the process was weak, non-inclusive and largely disconnected from national budgets. This lack of uniformity represents an opportunity for UNDP to be more vigorously and systematically engaged in the future. UNDP assisted the Ministry of Economy in the development of a methodology of strategic planning at the subnational level, which was intended to help local governments take a uniform approach to the identification of key local development priorities and targets. However, this work requires follow-up actions to ensure that local governments have the necessary capacities.

Overall, UNDP’s contribution at the strategic level helped authorities identify priority actions for national stakeholders and development partners to pursue. However, the ultimate results from the implementation of these strategies depend on factors related to the country’s social, political and institutional challenges. One factor consistently observed during the ADR mission and highlighted previously, was the limited capacity of public organizations to follow up on agreed priorities and procedures and implement identified actions. This area requires stronger, longer-term support and could benefit from a deeper UNDP engagement, especially in the context of its support for public administration reforms.

**UNDP’s support in the area of trade policy and private sector development helped local producers take advantage of business opportunities, especially in the context of EEU membership.**

UNDP supported the government in developing policies in the area of sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary control – a key prerequisite for access to the EEU. Support was also provided for the development of policy on Free Economic Zones; the removal of procedural and legal barriers to trade and the development of infrastructure

for standardization, quality assurance, accreditation and metrology; and the establishment of animal identification and tracking (funded by Russia), etc. A particular feature of this work was the introduction of the sustainable development perspective in the formulation of trade policies. UNDP also initiated the drafting of an upcoming National Human Development Report focused on the impact of trade on human development. Despite the foundations laid by the Aid for Trade project for improved trade relations, especially with neighbouring countries, actual trade volumes remain low and largely hampered by political relations.

Efforts to establish business-support institutions at the local level met with some difficulties. For example, the programme supported the establishment of the Batken Market Information Centre to provide local entrepreneurs with ready access to market and business information. Although the centre was established, it did not become fully financially sustainable. Branches of the Export Promotion Agency were also expected to be established in Osh and Naryn but this did not happen due to a government moratorium in 2013 on the creation of new public institutions.

**Regional and local development was an area where UNDP invested significant efforts and resources. UNDP supported community-based initiatives that enhanced key public infrastructure and services, generated income and employment, and built social capital.**

Through the ABD approach, UNDP provided communities with grants and training to implement a range of activities to support public infrastructure (i.e. repairing river banks, water supply systems, electricity transformers, warehouses, etc.) and business initiatives. Based on Country Office data, about 37,000 community members benefited from better access to water, power supply, improved road infrastructure, start-up support, credit and professional skills. These interventions also improved relationships between local governments and communities, changing from top-down communication

to community participation in planning and decision-making.

Through this work, UNDP targeted poor, remote and isolated areas with limited income generation and employment opportunities, and where resources and infrastructure were scarce and markets distant. The project funded by Russia also targeted communities around radioactive sites. In some of the locations visited during the ADR mission, UNDP was the only international organization that had ever visited. Despite the negative effects that the remoteness of project sites and the thin distribution of resources on a relatively large and widely-spread number of communities might have had on programme efficiencies, UNDP has managed to reach out to some of the neediest communities in the country. Although small in size, many of these investments created a number of small businesses and jobs. Data collected by the Country Office shows that more than 1,300 jobs were created thanks to UNDP's interventions in the Osh, Naryn and Batken regions. Many of the communities where UNDP has worked are so poor that even small amounts of funds have a tangible impact on the lives of its members.

Interviews with community members and leaders showed that the greatest impact came from activities that solved local infrastructure problems (such as building an irrigation system, opening a water well, repairing an electricity station, etc.) from which the larger community benefited. The effects of initiatives that supported business and income generation seemed more isolated, especially where their demonstration effects and replicability were weak. By nature, these were pilot-type interventions that were implemented in selected districts and communities. Scaling up based on lessons learned from the pilot stage was a critical part of the intervention. Although some degree of replication has occurred such as in the case of greenhouses, beekeeping or apple production, in some cases there was no visible scaling up of the initiatives. Pilot initiatives are yet to demonstrate the effects of expanded trade through improved trademarks, packaging

or technologies. A number of businesses visited during the ADR field visits had received bank financing before or shortly after the UNDP grant. In such cases, UNDP support did not provide any added value from the broader community perspective. UNDP could therefore focus on funding business projects that have the potential to bring about changes in community through their demonstration effects, but which are not able to receive funding from the banks.

A key instrument of UNDP's ABD approach was the involvement of communities (through community, local coordination or local development committees) in identifying area priorities and, implementing and monitoring initiatives funded by the programme. The experience of working together on community projects increased people's sense of ownership of, and responsibility for, community infrastructure and services.

The degree of community involvement, however, varied from region to region. In some areas community groups were more assertive and engaged more effectively in the decision-making process, whilst in others their role was more limited. This is not surprising as the strength of community organization largely depends on local political and historical factors and evolves gradually. Given the significant potential that the ABD approach has for community mobilization, UNDP could further contribute to strengthening the scope and intensity of community engagement with local governments (especially for vulnerable and marginalized groups). The process of strategic planning at the subnational level could be used more effectively to implicate ordinary citizens in governance issues. Although currently weak throughout the country, a stronger strategic planning process with a clear commitment from local government for community participation, will encourage more meaningful citizen engagement in the implementation and monitoring of public policy.

Cost-sharing of UNDP-supported initiatives was another important element of community involvement which was achieved with some suc-

cess in some, but not all, locations visited during the ADR field visit. Depending on the complexity of the initiatives, the local contribution provided by the community or the local government varied from 20 percent to 80 percent of the total initiative's cost. Given the importance of cost-sharing on the ownership of community initiatives and the sustainability of interventions, it will be important to promote it more systematically in the future.

UNDP may also benefit from tapping into the expertise and experience of other United Nations specialized agencies (as well as non-United Nations entities) which have limited exposure to the subnational level, but great potential for added value and impact. The ABD modality provides an excellent opportunity to do so, but a lot of work is required to develop the mechanisms for channelling the contributions of other organizations.

**UNDP's activities under this outcome area focused significantly on women. Women's socioeconomic empowerment was a key goal of programme activities at both the national and subnational level. Moreover, most interventions were designed and implemented to ensure that women were fully involved in and benefited from activities. Overall, this component of the programme can be categorized as gender responsive.**

UNDP ensured gender considerations were considered in the planning, implementation and monitoring of activities. UNDP's contribution to women was particularly significant in community development activities at the subnational level. Women were key beneficiaries of better access to water, electricity supply, improved road infrastructure, street lighting, healthcare and education facilities, kindergartens, support to start-ups, credits and professional skills. Women also actively participated in many of the community groups and committees that were involved in the selection, design, implementation and monitoring of the community initiatives funded by the programme.

## 2.4 ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Outcome statement: By 2016, sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices operationalized

Outputs:

- i) Approaches to low emission development promoted and sustained;
- ii) Strategies on transition to climate resilient economies and ecosystems via development of climate change adaptation produced; and
- iii) Principles of sustainability integrated into national and sectoral sustainable natural resources management/local development plans.

### 2.4.1 OVERVIEW

Environmental conditions in Kyrgyzstan are largely influenced by energy, environment and natural resource management practices used by various stakeholders, as well as by state policies and regulations for ensuring sustainable growth. The mining industry and other industrial sectors contribute to environmental degradation due to the use of old and inefficient technologies, and most importantly, due to low incentives to improve environmental performance. Uranium and other mineral mining, and the residues from chemical substances processed during the Soviet era, remain a concern. Inappropriate agricultural practices include overgrazing of pastures, use of obsolete fertilizers and pesticides, improper agricultural waste handling practices, inadequate irrigation and drainage resulting in land degradation, water pollution and loss of biodiversity.

Unsustainable use of natural resources leads not only to environmental degradation, but also to conflicts over resource use. As previously mentioned, there are frequent tensions over access to water with conflicts triggered by the unsustainable use of water resources for hydropower, irrigation or other purposes. If adaptation measures are not taken, the long-term effects of climate change are expected to further exacerbate the sit-

uation and lead to further decline in agricultural production (Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, 2013a).

Heating and electricity production are the largest contributors to air pollution. According to the State of the Environment Report of the Kyrgyz Republic for 2006-2011, about 67 percent of air pollution from stationary sources comes from heating and electricity production. Coal is used to heat homes in rural areas, and about one fifth of the country's power production comes from burning fossil fuels which contribute to greenhouse gas emissions. Electricity generated by antiqued equipment (transformers and capacitors) containing polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB), a toxic pollutant banned in 2011 by the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, also poses health risks.

The energy infrastructure built during the Soviet era is rundown, highly inefficient and causes high energy losses. Addressing challenges in the energy sector requires significant investments which cannot be secured due to low tariffs that do not reflect real costs but are set on affordability and social considerations (ADB, 2012). Any substantial revision of energy tariffs carries the risk of political unrest, especially in light of the 2010 events.

Alternative sources of energy (e.g. small hydropower, solar, biogas) are underutilized and, according to the State of the Environment Report of the Kyrgyz Republic, only contribute about 1 percent of total energy production. Currently, there are no incentives to develop renewable energy, knowledge and experience with renewable technologies is limited and initial investment costs are relatively high (ADB, 2012).

The Government of the Kyrgyz Republic has worked closely with development partners (including United Nations agencies, ADB, EBRD, GIZ, KfW Development Bank, OSCE, SDC, USAID and the World Bank) to solve global and regional environmental problems, and mainstream sustainable development con-

cepts into its national and subnational development strategies and programmes. Challenges, however, remain in the promotion of alternative energy, safe management of radioactive and toxic wastes, and more efficient use of natural resources. Addressing these challenges requires providing economic incentives, attracting investments, strengthening environmental governance and regulatory systems, and demonstrating sustainable natural resource management practices and technologies.

UNDP's assistance in this area focused on building national capacities for the elaboration of strategies and action plans, and their implementation. Other areas of work included advocacy, resource mobilization, partnership development, knowledge sharing and convening national stakeholder consultations to promote sustainable development principles. Strategies employed by UNDP in this work area included the use of demonstrations,<sup>31</sup> study tours and the sharing of international expertise with the country. UNDP also promoted the use of evidence-based decision-making and conducted studies and assessments, and shared results of good practices and lessons learned. The GEF was a key source of funding for UNDP activities in this area.

#### 2.4.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

**Overall, UNDP has made positive contributions to the operationalization of sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices in the Kyrgyz Republic by promoting and incorporating to various degrees the principles of sustainable natural resource management, low emissions and climate resilient development into national, sectoral and subnational development strategies, plans and programmes.**

At the national level, UNDP contributed to the development and adoption of strategy and pol-

icy documents that further operationalized the sustainable management of energy, environment and natural resources practices in the country. Such strategic documents include: the NSDS 2013-2017 and its associated implementation programme, which laid down the priority directions and tasks for environmental protection such as low carbon development and climate change adaptation mainstreaming into sectoral and subnational development strategies and programmes; Priority Directions for the Kyrgyz Republic Towards Climate Change Adaptation till 2017, which serves as the national strategy towards climate change adaptation; the programme and plan for the sound management of chemicals (2014-2017); the Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) Phase-out and Refrigerant Management plan; the Concept of Small Hydro-power Development for 2015-2017; national priorities on conservation of biodiversity of the Kyrgyz Republic until 2024; and the National Snow Leopard Ecosystem Protection Priorities plan (2013-2023).

UNDP, together with other development partners, provided assistance to the government in the implementation of the above strategies and plans, and some impressive results were obtained in a number of areas. For example, UNDP provided assistance in the procurement and monitoring of refrigerant servicing equipment, while the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) was involved in non-investment activities such as the work on legislation and training of customs officers and refrigerant servicing technicians. Their assistance contributed to a 40 percent reduction in HCFC consumption between 2012-2015, instead of the targeted 10 percent, which surpassed the requirement of the Montreal Protocol for the Kyrgyz Republic.

In the area of biodiversity, UNDP helped establish the biggest national park in Kyrgyzstan which increased the protected areas coverage from 6 percent to 7 percent. Work is underway

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31 Many pilot projects were implemented on the sustainable use of land and water resources (e.g. on improved pasture management practices, on the use of drip irrigation systems, solar and biogas systems, etc.).

to build the management effectiveness of the park's administration. UNDP also supported the country's efforts to adopt an ecosystem-based approach to planning, and introduced a system of environmental and economic accounting and valuation of ecosystem services. In February 2015, with UNDP's assistance, the government adopted by decree a set of green growth indicators, based on those established by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The National Statistics Committee now provides data on green growth indicators in its annual digest on the environment in Kyrgyzstan.

UNDP also assisted the Ministries of Emergency Situations and Agriculture in developing sectoral climate change adaptation plans. Low carbon development is a priority of the NSDS and UNDP provided assistance to improve the energy efficiency of the building sector. The Energy Efficiency project established energy performance codes setting minimum standards that are required to be met by all newly constructed buildings which contributed to an average 35 percent reduction in thermal energy consumption for new code-compliant buildings. It also saw greenhouse gas emissions fall by 15,000 tonnes by the end of the project.

At the subnational level, UNDP promoted climate change adaptation mainstreaming into local development plans in Batken and Jalal Abad and contributed to strengthening the capacities of local institutions to implement climate change adaptation measures. These local institutions included Water User Associations (WUAs) and pasture management committees, responsible for effective management of water and land resources respectively. UNDP contributed to developing the capacity of WUAs by: mobilizing local finances to establish a subregional management centre for WUAs in the Batken region;

facilitating dialogue and knowledge exchange among WUAs nationwide;<sup>32</sup> and building the capacity of WUAs in the areas of water accountability, effective irrigation systems management and modern water efficient technologies. These measures resulted in rational water use and a greater water supply to downstream populations.

UNDP supported the Pasture Management Committees to develop livestock grazing plans by conducting a pastoral ecosystem assessment in the Suusamyr Valley. It also developed e-Pasture, an electronic tool to help local committees make better informed decisions and follow sustainable pasture management practices by integrating climate change adaptation measures.<sup>33</sup> There have been subsequent improvements in the country's ecological status and stress on pastures has been reduced.

UNDP's close collaboration with government agencies at different levels greatly facilitated these achievements. Furthermore, the ABD approach fostered closer working relationships with subnational authorities in the regions and better incorporation of sustainable management principles into subnational development planning.

Improved dialogue and coordination of activities among different stakeholders were other factors of success. UNDP helped establish and run coordination bodies facilitating the implementation of government strategies and programmes, the most important being: the coordination commission responsible for overseeing the implementation of the NSDS under the Prime Minister; the coordination commission for climate change adaptation mainstreaming chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister; the coordination council on the realization of investment projects in the area of water, sanitation and hygiene of the Kyrgyz Republic; and the secretariat for the global programme on the protection of the snow leopard

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32 UNDP facilitated the National Water Policy Dialogue sessions and the Second National Congress of WUAs.

33 Through the pilot project, UNDP introduced climate change risk reduction measures such as the provision of an early warning system, the use of weather forecast data by pasture-users and ensuring sufficient forage in winter to lower the risks of possible droughts.

ecosystems. These institutions provide a good platform for UNDP and its partner agencies to share information, discuss challenges, find solutions, take decisions, identify the roles and responsibilities of partners, monitor progress and undertake necessary follow-up. Decisions taken by the coordination commissions are endorsed by high-ranking government officials and issued through government decrees which facilitate their implementation. The State Agency of Environment Protection and Forestry benefitted from this in particular as it is a key government institution in the environment protection field without ministry status.

Efforts to build national and subnational capacities to elaborate and implement environmental strategies and programmes also contributed to the success. For example, UNDP helped the State Agency of Environment Protection and Forestry improve its environmental tax system by including local experts in the revision of fiscal instruments to collect, manage and allocate revenues from fines for environmental degradation. It also trained State Agency staff to apply new approaches and methodologies when calculating taxes. In the area of greenhouse gas emissions, UNDP assisted partner agencies in developing and adopting building codes and standards to increase energy efficiency. UNDP also trained construction professionals and building inspectors to enforce newly introduced regulations (the legislative and regulatory base needs further refinement which is facilitated now by the EBRD and the EU). Training modules developed with UNDP's assistance were further incorporated into the educational courses of three universities.

While there were successes in the implementation of various environmental strategies and programmes, there were also some implementation challenges. Despite the government's interest in promoting small hydropower electricity generators,<sup>34</sup> attracting investments was

extremely challenging. UNDP supported the government's work to refine legislative and regulatory frameworks for renewable energy development. However, the legislation did not have a sound incentive system. The Law on Renewable Energy Sources, for example, envisions a higher fixed feed-in tariff over the project payback period (a rate almost twice higher than the maximum end-use tariff). However, the current energy tariffs do not reflect costs and are so low that, even with the increase in tariffs, recovery of full investment costs for a new small hydropower plant may take much longer than the payback period for fixed feed-in tariff.

The objective of UNDP's Small Hydropower Development project was to accelerate small hydropower electricity generation by leveraging \$20 million in private sector investment over a four-year implementation period. However, government officials were cautious about the possible civil unrest that could result from a rise in energy tariffs and therefore there was not enough political support for the project. Results could have been more encouraging had UNDP raised awareness of the changes necessary to gain citizens' support and, subsequently, the support of politicians.

UNDP was successful in raising awareness of PCB safe handling practices among various stakeholders, creating PCB inventories and prohibiting the trade classifying these chemicals as hazardous waste. However, it encountered challenges in achieving the objectives associated with the safe disposal of PCB waste. One reason was the frequent turnover of government officials representing the main implementing partner, the now abolished Ministry of Energy and Industry. This influenced the level of support for project implementation and required additional effort to build commitment among newly appointed officials.

Poor project planning and risk management are two further factors that hindered work in this

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34 Promoting the use of renewable energy sources, including small hydropower, is a priority in the NSDS, the Concept of Small Hydropower Development for 2015-2017 and the longer-term Strategy for the Fuel and Energy Complex Development (till 2025) which set the policy framework for the sector.

area and which also apply to the Small Hydropower project. The PCB project did not provide timely responses to changes in cofinancing commitments from the government and is an example of inadequate risk management. The Small Hydropower project failed to fully consider the risks associated with tariff increases (which caused low investments in small hydropower), political commitment and the quality of local expertise (e.g. expertise for developing comprehensive renewable energy legislative framework).

The two project design documents underestimated the time required to develop and adopt legislative changes,<sup>35</sup> and conduct tender processes. They also set overly ambitious goals. For example, the four-year multi-phase plan for the Small Hydropower project included a policy and legal framework development phase (with their subsequent adoption/passing through parliament); an investment project development phase (including conducting feasibility studies and obtaining permits); and a small hydropower construction phase. The PCB project did not consider the time-frame required for the implementation of its activities, especially for building technical and regulatory capacities, and undertaking the inventory of PCBs. Separate projects prior to the main task to dispose of PCBs safely could have included an assessment of stakeholder interests and capacities; capacity building of laboratories; and an inventory of PCBs (van der Veen, 2015).

**Results in the environment and energy area contributed to reducing inequalities and poverty by promoting improved natural resource management practices and mainstreaming climate change adaptation considerations into local planning processes.**

Rural populations, especially those living in high mountainous areas, are particularly susceptible to adverse effects of climate change because of their high dependency on agriculture and low adaptive

capacity to cope with food security threats. Many UNDP-supported projects and initiatives in the environment and energy area helped build the resilience of local communities to adverse effects of climate change by conducting studies of their possible impacts and devising strategies to deal with them.

Improving rural livelihoods in the context of reducing pressures on fragile ecosystems also contributed to reducing inequalities. Fisheries, protected areas and land management projects provided rural inhabitants with the knowledge and techniques to improve sustainable natural resources management practices (e.g. joint forest management approach, sustainable aquaculture, etc.), and improved the access of poor and vulnerable groups to ecosystem services.

**Projects in the environment and energy area promoted gender equality.**

Both men and women participated in project interventions, especially in capacity-building activities, and discussions around environmental and natural resource management issues. Some projects also addressed the different needs of men and women, and the equitable distribution of benefits and resources. The needs of men and women were considered when making investment decisions for the pasture project and is considered a successful example of gender mainstreaming. The Protected Areas project in Central Tian Shan promoted the equal distribution of benefits by supporting the development of rural livelihoods for both sexes including beekeeping; yak breeding; ecotourism; handicraft trades; and harvesting and processing of non-timber forest products such as berries, mushrooms and medicinal herbs. UNDP also promoted gender issues through gender-focused studies and work to develop policies and legal acts. For example, UNDP supported research on gender aspects of poverty, environment and biodiversity, and conducted a study of potential

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35 Many outputs in turn were dependent on successful passing of certain legislative amendments.

social and gender impacts of small hydropower development. Overall, most of the results of the programme are gender targeted with a few cases where the results are gender responsive.

## 2.5 DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT

Outcome statement: By 2016, DRM framework in compliance with international standards, especially the HFA

Outputs:

- i) Participatory DRR integrated into sustainable development programming and national capacity-building;
- ii) Disaster risk assessment and monitoring system established for effective socio-economic development programming;
- iii) Local level DRM actors engaged in comprehensive regional development, integrating DRR approach into sectoral policies and practices. Best DRR practices institutionalized for sustainable community development; and
- iv) Regional DRR cooperation strengthened and cross-cutting issues mainstreamed (gender, conflict and age-sensitive approaches).

### 2.5.1 OVERVIEW

Kyrgyzstan is one of the most natural disaster prone countries in Central Asia. The most typical natural hazards include earthquakes, floods, mudslides, landslides and avalanches. These and other natural disasters are not only fatal, but they also destroy infrastructure and cause high economic losses every year. The presence of large water reservoirs, dams and improperly disposed radioactive and other toxic wastes mean natural hazards have the potential to cause catastrophic

events of national and regional significance. Mining sites for gold, mercury, coal and other mineral deposits present yet another hazard that can aggravate the effects of natural disasters. The country is highly vulnerable to the effects of these hazards because of population poverty levels, poor land use, risk-blind investments, inadequate environmental management practices, negative effects of climate change, and most importantly, the country's focus on the response side of DRM, with much less attention to preparedness and risk reduction.

To improve its DRM system and reduce its vulnerability, Kyrgyzstan joined the HFA in 2005 and started implementing measures suggested in the high-level policy guidance document. The government subsequently developed and adopted its first National Strategy on DRR and has taken active steps to mainstream DRR into national, sectoral and subnational development strategies and programmes.<sup>36</sup>

Currently, management of disaster risks is shared by various national and subnational institutions. At the national level, the Ministry of Emergency Situations is responsible for developing policy and a unified approach for DRM, along with many other tasks for improving the system. Sectoral and subnational level institutions are responsible for integrating DRR<sup>37</sup> into their development planning and improving disaster preparedness by addressing local and sector-specific drivers of vulnerabilities. In 2011, the government established the National Platform for DRR which is a multi-stakeholder mechanism for coordinating DRR activities at different levels, including national, regional and community levels. DRR activities are also coordinated by the Inter-Agency Government Commission on DRR, chaired by the Prime Minister. Following

36 The government's work is supported by various development partners, including United Nations agencies (FAO, the International Organization for Migration [IOM], the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA], UNDP, UNICEF, UN Volunteers [UNV], WFP and the World Health Organization [WHO]), the EU, the German Committee for DRR, OSCE, JICA, SDC and the World Bank.

37 The policy objective of anticipating and reducing risk is called DRR. Although DRM is used here interchangeably with DRR, it can also be thought of as the implementation of DRR. Besides, DRM is a broader concept and includes disaster response and recovery aspects as well.

HFA recommendations, the National Platform also serves as a mechanism for facilitating implementation of HFA and Sendai frameworks.

Despite progress in developing DRM institutional and policy frameworks, some challenges remain. The shift from a disaster response to DRR focus needs to take place across all institutions<sup>38</sup> and all subnational government units in order to build resiliency. Extensive work is required to expand the coverage of the newly established Unified Information Management System (UIMS); improve emergency planning; develop frameworks for early recovery; harmonize data collection methodologies and systems among different agencies; and harmonize DRR legislation with the newly adopted Sendai Framework and SDGs, as well as other Central Asian countries and the EEU.

UNDP provided development assistance on DRM through advisory, coordination, policy and technical assistance at multiple levels and in multiple areas in order to mainstream DRR in all sectors and at all levels throughout the country. Furthermore, UNDP applied an integrated approach to deliver outputs by linking DRR issues with administrative reforms, regional cooperation and climate change adaptation.

UNDP's DRM programme aimed to bring the country's DRM framework into compliance with international standards, especially the HFA. Implementation was directed at: strengthening national institutional, legal and policy DRR frameworks; supporting local governments integrate DRR strategies into their development programmes and plans; and promoting regional cooperation to bring regional countries DRM frameworks' into compliance with each other and address resource-based transboundary conflicts. UNDP's DRM activities at subnational level were implemented by its ABD offices. Some interventions were implemented jointly

with UN Volunteers (UNV) and the World Food Programme (WFP), as part of the One UN programme initiative.

## 2.5.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

**UNDP has made an important contribution to strengthening Kyrgyzstan's DRM framework and institutions, and brought the framework closer to international standards, especially the HFA.**

UNDP contributed to ensuring that DRR became a national and subnational priority and that DRM has a strong institutional basis for its implementation. UNDP helped the government improve its policy, legislative and institutional framework for DRM by supporting the development and adoption of the National Strategy on DRR for 2012-2020, the HFA-compliant roadmap document linking DRR to sustainable development. Efforts to nationalize the recently agreed Sendai Framework for DRR and SDGs are ongoing. Furthermore, UNDP assisted the government in mainstreaming risk reduction into the country's main strategy documents, such as the NSDS 2013-2017 and the Programme of the Kyrgyz Republic for Transition to Sustainable Development 2013-2017. UNDP also facilitated the review of sectoral policies and laws to bring them in line with the newly adopted National Strategy on DRR. As a result, several important legislative acts, including the Laws on Civil Defence, Local Self Governance and Hydro-meteorological Service, etc. were revised to incorporate disaster risk assessment and reduction concepts, and better delineate the DRM-related tasks and responsibilities of various institutions at central and local levels.

In addition, UNDP helped the government develop minimum standards of humanitarian

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38 Function of governmental institutions is still confined to particular sector specific goals and tasks, diminishing thereby the implementation of interrelated policies, which are important from the perspective of DRR. Besides, most local governments continue to be vulnerable due to lack of knowledge and resources.

assistance to ensure guaranteed minimum assistance to people affected in emergencies and crises. UNDP also highlighted the importance of early recovery and facilitating the development of an early recovery framework for both disasters and conflict-driven situations can be a future area of work.

UNDP contributed to building the capacities of its main partner institutions working on DRM. For example, it strengthened the capacities of the National DRR Platform<sup>39</sup> by providing technical and advisory support to its secretariat, thematic working groups and Scientific-Technical Council. Staff members of these and other institutions were directly involved in the elaboration of policies and undertook UNDP-supported studies and assessments, including a country situation analysis in DRR and the assessment of governance capacities.

UNDP also helped integrate a comprehensive training module on DRR into the curriculum of training centres of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, National Statistical Committee and the Ministry of Finance. These centres periodically conduct training sessions for government representatives from national and subnational levels, using a training module developed with UNDP's assistance. The training module was designed to build the capacities of different participants (e.g. local government representatives, staff members of line ministries) and help them better understand their roles and responsibilities in DRR planning and implementation.

By contributing to the development of the State Programme on Comprehensive Monitoring and Prognosis of Natural Hazards and the draft National Programme on Establishing Comprehensive National Risk Assessment Framework (awaiting government approval), UNDP also

contributed to strengthening the system for identifying, assessing and monitoring disaster risks and early warning. To make these programmes functional, UNDP provided support to the government to improve methods and capacities for risk assessment and monitoring, and design the architecture of the National Risk Assessment Framework by conducting in-depth feasibility studies that were still ongoing at the time of the ADR. UNDP also helped integrate key DRR indicators into the monitoring system of the National Statistical Committee and facilitated the application of the earlier developed and non-operational post disaster needs assessment methodology by linking disaster and damage registration mechanisms to the government's budgetary processes and accounting systems.<sup>40</sup>

The above measures are expected to help the country better assess the damages and losses from disasters, and better assess their impact on the country's socio-economic development. Access to reliable data and information on the costs and impacts of disasters may stimulate more investment in the area of risk reduction, as DRR interventions are currently underfunded by the government. Future work to make the national risk assessment and monitoring framework functional includes promoting the application of newly developed methodologies and systems, and integrating risk assessment products into development policies, plans and investment decisions.

One of UNDP's important contributions in strengthening the country's DRM system, in cooperation with the World Bank, was support to put in place the disaster prevention and early warning system, UIMS. The newly developed UIMS integrated three systems: the Crisis Management Centre; the National Unified Duty Dispatch Service, integrating fire, rescue and medical

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39 The members of the National Platform in Kyrgyzstan include the representatives of governmental and non-governmental institutions, and the international community. The Secretariat of the National Platform has thematic working groups in DRR. Three alliances of NGOs are also part of the National Platform on DRR.

40 The post-disaster needs assessment methodology was developed with World Bank support, however disaster and damage registration mechanisms were not functional to evaluate disaster impacts and needs for recovery.

emergency services;<sup>41</sup> and the Public Informing and Warning System. Integration of these systems resulted in faster emergency response times and improved disaster preparedness. Response times improved in particular following installation of the “112” call system for all types of emergencies and call operator training (to receive calls; to use software to identify locations, distances, required and available services; and to dispatch search and rescue teams and/or any other relevant response services).

Furthermore, UNDP helped identify information collection needs; develop and provide staff training on use of geographic information systems; and train search and rescue teams to provide emergency services. At the time of the ADR mission, UIMS still needed to cover two more regions of Kyrgyzstan. Although comprehensive information is available for many databases, national institutions still have much to do to complete and update the UIMS database.

To build a culture of safety and resilience at the subnational level, UNDP worked at the national level with the Agency on Local Self-Governance and Ministry of Emergency Situations to establish an enabling environment to conduct local level DRR activities and support building the capacity of approximately 11 percent of local governments between 2012-2015. As a result, local government representatives and local community members learned how to identify hazards, set-up risk monitoring systems, establish DRM frameworks and integrate DRR into local development planning.

UNDP also assisted local governments and communities strengthen emergency response mechanisms by helping to establish and build the capacity of rural rescue teams. Furthermore, UNDP assisted local governments and the terri-

torial subdivisions of the Ministry of Emergency Situations implement pilot green and mitigation projects which included river bank reinforcement and tree planting to prevent flooding, river bank erosion and landslides. Pilot projects gave local governments the tools to plan mitigation projects from engineering document design to financial reporting requirements. These interventions helped increase disaster-preparedness and contributed to reducing the vulnerability of poor populations living in UNDP-assisted communities by reducing risks to critical infrastructure (such as bridges, roads, irrigation network, etc.) and property, including houses, farmland and smallholding lands on which subsistence farmers depend.

To manage regional level risks, UNDP successfully provided avenues for discussions and consultations (e.g. following regional consultations Central Asian and South Caucasus countries adopted a joint statement on a Post-2015 Framework for DRR); researching issues (e.g. an analysis of potential causes of resource based conflicts in DRR in transboundary areas); sharing experiences; and sustaining cooperation mechanisms among Central Asian countries on DRR issues. UNDP also contributed to establishing the Regional Forum of the Heads of Disaster Management Authorities of Central Asian and South Caucasus countries under the “Central Asia + Japan” Dialogue; the Expert Group of Disaster Management Authorities to support the regional forum; and the Regional Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction<sup>42</sup> in Almaty, Kazakhstan to work on addressing transboundary threats of disasters and harmonizing DRR legislation. These efforts resulted in the adoption of the Framework of Cooperation on strengthening regional collaboration among Disaster Management Authorities of Central Asia and South Caucasus in the area of DRR, its Plan of Action and regulations.

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41 In addition to establishing and building the human capacities of 24 fire-rescue services, UNDP also provided material assistance (transport, equipment and other supplies) to nine services.

42 Currently, the Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction includes Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. There are future plans to include other Central Asian countries and build the Centre’s South-South cooperation capacity. Other challenges include establishing cooperation with other regional and subregional platforms such as Asia-Pacific and South Asia.

**UNDP has, to a certain extent, contributed to making DRM in the Kyrgyz Republic gender sensitive.**

UNDP assisted the government in improving gender aspects of DRM by incorporating gender modules into capacity-building materials for government employees. These materials were jointly developed with the training centres of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, Ministry of Finance and National Statistical Committee. Gender aspects in DRM were also included in post-disaster needs assessment methodologies and in the revised DRM monitoring system which includes gender disaggregated indicators. UNDP also assisted the government in developing recommendations on conflict, gender and age-sensitive approaches for consideration during planning and implementation of DRR activities. As a result, gender was included in the annual work plans of the Ministry of Emergency Situations for major DRM measures. For example, the Ministry's 2016 annual work plan included measures to implement United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 to prevent the violence against women and girls in case of emergencies.

UNDP's DRM programme attained its results for the current programming period because of the clear commitment of partner institutions, especially the Ministry of Emergency Situations, to develop and implement the HFA-compliant National Strategy on DRR. Success can also be attributed to the strong consultative and coordination structures such as the National Platform for DRR and the Special Inter-Agency Government Commission on DRR issues, chaired by the Prime Minister. The Commission, for example, greatly facilitated the process of integrating DRR into legislation.

Another success factor was the UNDP-facilitated collaboration with international experts and scientific centres which allowed the country to build a functional DRM framework. For example, the engagement of the Russian Scientific Research Institute on Civil Defence and Emergency Situations ensured that the equipment to be procured

for UIMS was appropriate to the systems. Finally, the application of the ABD approach also contributed to achieving good results in terms of better consideration of DRR issues into local development planning, and making stakeholders see it as an integral part of sustainable development. ABD office personnel worked closely with the representatives of subnational governments and involved local community members in comprehensive local development planning processes, including the development of DRM frameworks and systems, and implementation of mitigation projects.

## **2.6 HIV, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA**

Outcome statement: By 2016, vulnerable groups benefit from improved social protection, namely: food security; maternal and child health/reproductive health services; nutrition; education; services for sexually transmitted diseases, HIV, tuberculosis and malaria; and social protection services and benefits.

Outputs:

- i) National institutions have the capacity to reduce the incidence and mortality rate of tuberculosis;
- ii) Services available to key population groups in the area of HIV and AIDS expanded as result of increased capacity of national institutions and vulnerable communities;
- iii) National and local level actors develop HIV-related policies and legislation to ensure human rights based approach and gender equality principles, overcoming stigma and discrimination. HIV issues are mainstreamed into national development strategies, sectoral and local plans;
- iv) Key actors involved in multisectoral response to HIV apply human rights-based approach, gender equality principles, leadership, strategic planning, partnership building and youth protection; and
- v) Key actors have capacity to reduce local transmission and facilitate elimination of malaria.

## 2.6.1 OVERVIEW

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), Kyrgyzstan is one of 27 countries with a high burden of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and one of 18 high-priority countries for tuberculosis in the WHO European region (van den Boom et al., 2014). Systems to control infection, both in hospitals and by primary health carers, need strengthening, and tertiary-level and specialized facilities need to be more evenly distributed across the country. Moreover, the increase in primary and secondary resistance highlights serious problems at all stages of tuberculosis treatment. Patients with negative results of sputum are being unnecessarily hospitalized and those with positive smear results are being admitted for unnecessarily long periods which contributes to the spread of tuberculosis (including MDR-TB). Financial access and stigma attached to HIV, AIDS and tuberculosis may also be preventing patients from seeking care.

HIV prevalence in Kyrgyzstan was 10.3 per 100,000 in 2015,<sup>43</sup> compared to 12.5 in 2012, 8.5 in 2013 and 10.5 in 2014.<sup>44</sup> There is limited access to and awareness of preventive interventions among populations at higher risk. Although the HIV epidemic has been driven by people who inject drugs, there is a growing tendency for the HIV infection to be sexually transmitted, which affects more women. Key populations at higher risk to HIV-related diseases include people who inject drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men and prisoners. Male labour migrants, children, adolescents and women in the reproductive age group are considered at higher risk.<sup>45</sup>

Eliminating malaria is a priority in Kyrgyzstan. As no local malaria cases have been reported since 2011, the country applied to WHO for

malaria-free certification in 2013. The process was ongoing at the time of the ADR mission and expected to be completed in 2016.

Tuberculosis and HIV programmes are considered priority areas in the national health programme, the Den Sooluk National Health Reform Programme (2012-2016). The National Tuberculosis Control Programme 2015-2017 builds on the Den Sooluk programme and aims to enhance the integration of tuberculosis care at the primary health care level and improve the quality of medical services. Kyrgyzstan's fourth national HIV programme was implemented from 2012-2016 and aims to provide universal access to prevention, treatment, care and support services for key populations in accordance with the goals of the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS. Its focus is to stabilize the epidemic in the context of a concentrated HIV epidemic. The national Malaria Control Programme is focused on eliminating and preventing the revival of local malaria transmission.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria is the biggest donor funding the prevention and treatment of the three diseases in Kyrgyzstan and has had a country presence since 1996. Since 2011, UNDP has been the principal recipient of three Global Fund grants in Kyrgyzstan. The Country Multisectoral Coordination Committee made UNDP the principal recipient of all Global Fund grants in Kyrgyzstan in response to the country's unstable political situation following the 2010 ethnic conflict, as well as the negative assessment by the Global Fund Office of Inspector General of the management of grants by former principal recipients including the Republican AIDS Centre, the National Centre of Phthisiology (tuberculosis) and the State Sanitary Epidemiological Department (malaria).

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43 Data provided by the Ministry of Health.

44 Kyrgyzstan UN General Assembly Special Session report, 2015. [http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/country/documents/KGZ\\_narrative\\_report\\_2015.pdf](http://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/country/documents/KGZ_narrative_report_2015.pdf)

45 It is estimated that 30 percent of all people living with HIV in Kyrgyzstan have not yet been diagnosed, and at least one-third present in the late stages of disease. In addition, less than half of those diagnosed have been registered for follow-up care.

UNDP manages the programmes through direct legal contracts with interested governmental, non-governmental and international organizations (sub-recipients).

Development partners responding to tuberculosis and HIV in Kyrgyzstan include Doctors without Borders, the Netherlands Tuberculosis Foundation (KNCV), USAID and the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. UNAIDS, UNICEF and WHO are United Nations agencies represented in the Country Coordination Mechanism. UNAIDS is supporting Kyrgyzstan implement the national HIV and AIDS programme. WHO, a specialized technical agency, has been providing technical assistance and policy guidelines to the Ministry of Health and, between 2013 and 2014, was a sub-recipient of the Global Fund HIV component and malaria elimination process. UNICEF is responsible for prevention of mother-to-child transmission and paediatric AIDS. It was a sub-recipient of the Global Fund for prevention of mother-to-child transmission activities in 2012-2014. UNICEF also provides technical support to the Ministry of Health in the development of key documents, including clinical protocols, standard operating procedures and models.

Within the framework of Global Fund grants, UNDP aimed to support the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic strengthen national capacity to respond to HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, and provide universal access to preventive measures and treatment for high risk groups. The total tuberculosis grant amount is \$25,703,200, which includes additional funding approved by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria for 2015-2016. Under this grant, UNDP aimed to contribute to reducing tuberculosis incidence and mortality rates by ensuring universal diagnosis and treatment of MDR-TB; strengthening human and infrastructure capacity; improving the national monitoring system, including the establishment of routine resistance surveillance; and upgrading laboratory services.

The HIV grant consolidates funds awarded by the Global Fund to Kyrgyzstan amounting to \$31,054,401 for 2012-2015. UNDP submitted a proposal covering the period 2016-2017. Through this grant UNDP aimed to support the government improve HIV-related policies and legislation at national and subnational levels and improve the capacities of key actors for a multi-sector response to HIV. The grant is designed to decrease the HIV epidemic by promoting accessibility to and quality of prevention, treatment, detection, care and support services among key population groups in Kyrgyzstan.

Since 2011, the malaria grant has been used to sustain the country's progress in this area. UNDP envisioned supporting efforts to end local transmission and eliminate malaria in Kyrgyzstan. Implementation of the malaria grant ended in 2014 and totalled \$2,727,501. The grant aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of the National Malaria Control Programme and general health care system; improve access to early diagnosis and adequate treatment; promote cost-effective and sustainable vector control; improve capacities for timely response to malaria outbreaks; strengthen surveillance and research capabilities; and increase community awareness and participation in malaria prevention. The grant focused on providing bed nets covered with long lasting insecticide to pregnant rural women and families with small children (up to five years old) in affected areas.

## 2.6.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

**Overall, UNDP has been effective as principal recipient and largely ensured the uninterrupted supply of drugs and medical supplies, particularly for persons living with HIV. It has introduced new approaches to managing diseases and programmes, including HIV rapid saliva testing and performance-based incentives. However, UNDP's capacity-building work needs further strengthening, particularly in preparing the country for when it takes over the role of principal recipient.**

Under UNDP's management, Global Fund grants have contributed to some important results in the country's fight against HIV, tuberculosis and malaria. UNDP's management capacities, its presence on the ground and close working relationship with the government contributed to the progress made in the management of the three illnesses. UNDP's corporate experience in managing Global Fund grants and a stable funding flow by the Global Fund also facilitated achievements.

Key outcome level indicators of the contribution of all stakeholders (i.e. not just UNDP) tracked by the national tuberculosis programme include the number of notified tuberculosis cases and the rate of successful treatment. The number of new smear positive tuberculosis cases notified went up from 1,748 in 2011 to 1,849 in 2014 (UNAIDS, 2015; UNDP in the Kyrgyz Republic, 2014a). The national health system detected and registered about 91 percent of tuberculosis cases. Rates of successful treatment of new smear-positive cases remained high, 85 percent in 2013 compared to 82 percent in 2009. Successful treatment of MDR-TB cases also increased from 54 percent in 2011 to 63 percent in 2013 (for cases started on second line treatment in 2012). The procurement and distribution of second line tuberculosis drugs to treat MDR-TB patients benefitted from Global Fund funds. In conjunction with incentive packages designed to support adherence to treatment, this type of intervention resulted in increasing treatment success rates as noted above. UNDP also introduced performance-based incentive payments for medical workers. Other interventions included strengthening laboratory services and cold chain storage of medicines and reagents, medical staff training and strengthening the regulatory framework of the tuberculosis control programme.

Coverage of antiretroviral therapy (ART) is a key outcome indicator tracked by the national HIV and AIDS programme. The programme reported a steady increase in the number of people living with HIV continuing to take ART after an initial 12 month period from 73 percent in 2012 to 85 percent in 2014. There were 1,982 people living

with HIV receiving ART (29 percent) in 2014 compared to only 691 in 2012. Improvements were also made in antiretroviral coverage among HIV-positive pregnant women (from 93 percent in 2012 to 96 percent in 2014) and the rate of mother to child transmission fell from 3.6 percent in 2011 to 3.4 percent in 2013, and 2.3 percent in 2015. Collaborative activities have been established in inpatient and outpatient treatment facilities and nearly everyone with tuberculosis is tested for HIV and vice versa. ART has been delivered by all AIDS centres and primary health care facilities in the country. UNDP contributed to progress at different levels. In the enabling environment, it supported the development of the fourth national policy on HIV prevention for 2012-2016 and related action plans to be implemented by ministries and other state agencies; the revision of the national clinical protocol, Testing and Counselling for HIV; and the revision of clinical protocols for prevention of mother-to-child transmission. At the service delivery level, UNDP received funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to procure and distribute medical and non-medical products to ensure an uninterrupted supply for the prevention and treatment of HIV. Harm reduction services offered to high risk populations included opioid substitution therapy, and needle and syringe exchange programmes. The coverage of these interventions is expanding but still remains low. Stigma, discrimination and illegality of high risk behaviours (injecting drugs, commercial sex) prevent people from coming forward to ask for services. In order to reduce stigma and discrimination, UNDP arranged incentives for people living with HIV to encourage adherence to treatment to be paid via bank transfer. UNDP and other United Nations agencies actively advocated for parliament not to endorse discriminatory laws including the anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender law.

In accordance with the Global Fund grant agreement, UNDP developed the capacity of national entities to prepare them to take over the role of principal recipient. UNDP focused on strengthening the capacities of health sector profession-

als and health services; grant sub-recipients and community-based organizations implementing prevention, care and support interventions; and the Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Health which was established specifically to take on this role. A proper assessment of the effectiveness of these capacity development efforts was not conducted and, while health professionals, NGOs and civil society were largely satisfied with the training opportunities they received, the majority felt that further efforts to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Health to take over as the principal recipient were needed, without which they had reservations over the Ministry's ability to take over grant implementation in 2018. A mid-term review of the national HIV and AIDS programme 2012-2016, conducted by UNAIDS in 2015 with funding from USAID, revealed that out of the 17 objectives of the state programme, only four were met satisfactorily, five were partially met and eight were not met at all (UNAIDS, 2015). The review also found inaccuracies in HIV-related data. Delays in the implementation of the state programme and inaccurate data raise questions about the quality of capacity-building in general. Furthermore, the capacity assessment by the Global Fund for the Ministry of Health as principal recipient conducted in August 2016 noted challenges in key areas of grant management including procurement, financial management, governance, and M&E. These systemic issues can only be managed by capacity-building efforts over a period of time.

Following sustained efforts to eliminate malaria, no cases have been reported in Kyrgyzstan since 2011. In 2014, 97 percent of pregnant women and 93 percent of under-five children in high risk malaria districts were sleeping under bed nets treated with long lasting insecticide.

Overall, UNDP has made efforts to ensure equal access to services among key populations at higher risk especially sex workers and women living with HIV who receive targeted programme support. Gender disaggregated data is generated for all applicable indicators and UNDP's contribution in this area can be categorized as gender targeted.

**The introduction of new disease management approaches, and effective programme management, procurement and M&E, were key factors for UNDP's effectiveness. UNDP's effectiveness was affected by inadequate quality assurance of finished pharmaceutical products and weaknesses in stock management and storage conditions existing in 2013, but these issues have subsequently been addressed.**

Stakeholders confirmed that the uninterrupted supply of medical and non-medical products to prevent and treat HIV was ensured as a result of UNDP's effective procurement and grant management. According to stakeholder interviews, the supply chain and logistics of medications to treat the HIV infection improved and UNDP's role should be appreciated. UNDP also used funds from the Global Fund to ensure the supply of quality-assured tuberculosis drugs to treat MDR-TB patients. However, there have been instances of shortage and excess supply of second line tuberculosis drugs in the past due to inadequate forecasting.

Importantly, HIV and tuberculosis drugs were procured at lower prices than when procured by previous principal recipients. This will help establish a baseline on drug prices for when the government takes over as principal recipient in 2018. Cost savings, reported by UNDP to be \$11 million during Phase 1, were reprogrammed for priority areas.

UNDP is also viewed as having strong management capacity and systems. Due to its strategic positioning with the government, UNDP helped mobilize funds from the Global Fund and has improved accountability and delivery/utilization rates overtime, for example financial delivery of tuberculosis centres improved from 50 percent to 85 percent in 2012. All three grants received high performance ratings from the Global Fund in 2013.

According to the Global Fund, UNDP has successfully improved sub-recipient M&E procedures with the introduction of M&E documents

and guidelines, including an M&E toolkit, a unique codification of clients and referrals, a toolkit on the Monitoring Information System database, identification cards, opioid substitution therapy and pilot programmes for people living with HIV. Interviewed stakeholders also confirmed improvements in M&E and reporting protocols. However, HIV-related data contain many inconsistencies (UNAIDS, 2015) raising questions about the quality of capacity development initiatives.

New disease management approaches introduced by UNDP in collaboration with national partners include the HIV rapid saliva test which decreases the burden on the healthcare system, and CD4 mobile testing which improved the prevention of mother-to-child transmission care and ART care.

UNDP's 2013 internal audit of Global Fund grants highlighted weaknesses in the quality assurance of pharmaceutical products and storage management (UNDP, 2013a). It found that necessary testing of tuberculosis and HIV pharmaceutical products were not performed for all products as required under Global Fund quality assurance policies. The audit also noted that storage conditions in some of the facilities were not optimal and stock logs showed discrepancies in available stocks. As follow-up to the audit findings, UNDP developed and has been implementing a quality assurance plan that includes regular quality assurance testing for all pharmaceutical products procured. All storage facilities at oblast level were renovated, and additional humidity and temperature control equipment procured. Improvements in the status of storage and stock management were reflected in the recent assessment of the supply chain management system.



## Chapter 3

# QUALITY OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION – RELEVANCE, EFFICIENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

### 3.1 RELEVANCE

**Interventions during the programme cycle were largely aligned with national priorities, strategies and policies; the country's development needs; and UNDP's own mandate and strategy. UNDP effectively adapted its programming approach to the changing needs of the country. The approaches and conceptual framework were, in general, adequate for delivering results but there is room for further improvement in certain cases.**

UNDP's programme largely focused on key country priorities and needs. The democratic governance programme delivered strategic assistance in areas such as electoral reform, judicial reform, public service delivery, anti-corruption, local governance, etc. Peace and development activities responded to the country's acute need for support in establishing an 'infrastructure for peace'. Socio-economic development activities addressed the need for economic growth and job creation following the 2010 uprisings. The environment and energy programme helped raise awareness and built the capacity of various institutions and individuals to better use advanced technologies and adopt efficient practices to reduce pressures on the environment without compromising livelihoods. The DRM programme promoted human development by enabling local communities achieve a greater level of resilience to disasters. The HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria programme provided much needed support in the fight against these three endemic diseases. Interventions were also in line with UNDP's own corporate mandate and strategy. Most activities took place in areas which form the core of UNDP's identity and where

UNDP has a strong comparative advantage based on decades of experience around the globe.

The programme was, overall, aligned with the country's main strategic document, the NSDS, and other national and subnational strategies, programmes and policies. What adds to the relevance of UNDP's programme is also its support for the development of the NSDS and a number of other strategic documents mentioned in the previous sections. Thematic programmes were also largely aligned with sectoral priorities and strategies. For example, the democratic governance programme was largely in line with the Public Sector Governance Reform Roadmap. The Peace and Development programme was aligned with the roadmap for peacebuilding, the Concept on National Unity and Inter-ethnic Relations, as well as the commitments of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic in response to the report of the Inquiry Commission. Activities in the areas of environment and energy were consistent with specific programmes in place to meet commitments under global environment treaties, including the United Nations Convention on Biodiversity, the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The DRM programme was in line with the national DRR Strategy which prioritized mainstreaming disaster-related issues across various levels and sectors to increase the resilience of the country. Tuberculosis and HIV were priority areas in line with the National Health Reform Programme 2012-2016.

In general, UNDP's approaches were adequate and contributed to the quality of outputs. The

delivery of UNDP's interventions in different thematic areas through the ABD modality brought its operations closer to the communities and engaged community members in governance processes. UNDP's integrated and multidisciplinary approach, especially at the subnational level, facilitated interdependencies among various stakeholders and sectors. UNDP applied a conflict sensitive approach to most activities, ensuring that its interventions promoted social cohesion rather than fuelled existing tension.

However, in some cases, whether the approaches used were the most effective is debateable. For example, in its support for the delivery of public services, UNDP addressed all types of services across the board whereas it may have been more effective to have concentrated on only a few public services, and tackled corruption and poor quality more intensively in those areas first. The merits of such an approach could have been that, by demonstrating quicker results in a few areas, the programme would have established credibility earlier and won stronger support from the public and the government for the reform process. The design of the conflict monitoring system could also have been strengthened. While very relevant and strategic in principle, this system lacks a comprehensive mechanism to track the implementation of recommendations generated for authorities making it difficult to assess its effectiveness. Also, as previously highlighted, the design of some projects in the environment and energy area had certain shortcomings. For example, the outcome indicator "percentage of people living in ecosystems resilient to climate change" does not match its target namely, "[an] ecosystem approach is integrated into national and local development strategies". Furthermore, measuring the resilience of ecosystems to climate change is not an easy task.

### 3.2 EFFICIENCY

**Organizational change initiated by the Country Office in 2012 contributed to improving efficiency and cost effectiveness, strengthening implementation oversight, simplifying the overall structure of the office, facilitating cross-practice work and avoiding the silo approach.**

A three pillar structure was created whereby ABD offices were responsible for area-based implementation at the subnational level; the Programme Management Unit for overall programme management; and the Policy Advisory Unit for the provision of research, analysis and policy recommendations to the other areas of the programme. This structure resulted in a better division of labour and generated better synergies and more effective coordination.<sup>46</sup> Data provided by the Country Office showed that, overall, staff have become more specialized and dedicated to separate functions. As a result the number of project officers fell from 13 to 5, project managers fell from 8 to 5, project administrative and finance assistants fell from 40 to 20, project vehicles fell from 30 to 16 and drivers fell from 30 to 15, significantly reducing operational costs. Data from the corporate Executive Snapshot showed that the Country Office's management efficiency ratio (the ratio of management expenditure over total expenditure) fell from 8.2 percent in 2012 to 4.4 percent in 2015, which is significantly lower than the global and regional average.<sup>47</sup> Decentralized implementation through the ABD offices also contributed to efficiency of activities as ABD managers did not have to wait for decisions to be taken through a long chain of command and communication all the way to the central office. ABD offices also assisted UNDP in mobilizing resources by sharing their insights and knowledge of the local context and priorities (as demonstrated by the example of fundraising

46 For example, the Programme Management Unit fed ideas and concepts to the Policy Advisory Unit and supported it with lessons learned from implementation. It also coordinated its activities with the ABD offices in order to ensure systemic links between central and local levels and to bring timely changes into central level development policies. The Policy Advisory Unit, on the other hand, supported ABD offices with strategic advice and programme development.

47 Executive Snapshot (accessed August 2016).

from Russia for ABD activities in Naryn and PBF SDC funding for the cross border project in Batken).

**Creating linkages and establishing synergies between various UNDP interventions and with partners contributed to reducing costs while supporting results. There is however scope for further improvements in collaboration for enhanced efficiency.**

Synergies between projects based on structural proximity in government functions or theme linkages contributed positively to results. An example of this is the arrangement between the PCBs and Health Care Waste Management projects, where the PCBs project made use of the other project's office space and staff during its one year of no-cost extension (van der Veen, 2015). In another example, efficiency gains were achieved when the DRM programme strengthened coordination between local governments, the Ministry of Emergency Situations, and the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry Services. The latter is responsible for providing saplings for mitigation works and green projects free of charge, a service previously underutilized by local governments and the Ministry of Emergency Situations due to the lack of coordination. The ABD approach further reinforced UNDP's synergetic approach at the subnational level by integrating activities from different sectors and contributing to cost-effectiveness. For example, the DRM programme benefited from the incorporation of DRR elements into ABD interventions in the Osh, Batken and Jalal-Abad regions. Another example is the implementation of a livelihoods support component in the GEF-funded Biodiversity Conservation in Western Tian Shan Forest Mountain Ecosystems project through the ABD approach.<sup>48</sup>

Despite many such positive examples, overall there is room for stronger synergies between different programme areas and activities. In partic-

ular, stronger links may be established between local governance and local economic development activities at the subnational level and public administration reform agenda at the central level. Peacebuilding and reconciliation activities could also be linked more effectively with democratic governance, and economic and community development initiatives. Further improvements can also be made in the use of the ABD infrastructure for the implementation and monitoring of various programme activities.

With regards to collaboration with other development partners, UNDP established a productive relationship with UNV which facilitated capacity-building activities, knowledge transfer and involvement of CSOs and volunteers in environment, energy and DRR activities. UNDP also partnered with WFP on the joint delivery of mitigation projects, where WFP provided food for work for local volunteers. Under the peace and development programme, most PBF projects were implemented jointly by United Nations agencies and UNDP was a key player in the process. Effective joint programming resulted in good design coherence. However, cooperation did not fully extend beyond the programming stage. Stakeholders interviewed for the ADR indicated that there was less cooperation among United Nations agencies during the implementation process. Interventions were largely implemented by agencies separately, with each working with their own counterparts and beneficiaries, which resulted in agencies unknowingly targeting the same beneficiaries. To prevent this from happening, the PBF was considering tagging beneficiaries in a database to avoid double-counting. Contrary to expectations, synergies, cost effectiveness and added value from joint projects were limited under the peace and development programme. As previously discussed, in certain areas (e.g. democratic governance; poverty reduction; and the HIV, tuberculosis and malaria programmes), and especially at the subnational level, there is potential for stronger synergies with other

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48 GEF projects are usually implemented by the State Agency for Environment Protection and Forestry through its own national and subnational structures.

United Nations agencies and development partners such as the World Bank and USAID which have been important players in Kyrgyzstan.

### **Operational efficiency varied by programme area and project.**

In most cases, programme activities and outputs were delivered on time. Nevertheless, there were some delays especially with regards disbursement of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and in the energy and environment area. Some delays were unavoidable due to major political events, inter-ethnic conflicts and structural institutional change including the abolishment of the Ministry of Energy and the transitional period when UNDP assumed the principal recipient role of the Global Fund grant in 2011. Others were caused by inadequate planning (not considering realistic time-frames for procurement activities); lengthy approval and procurement procedures; and limited capacity to handle large volumes of procurement.

NGO sub-recipients of the HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria programme raised concerns about lengthy procedures to develop agreements, obtain extensions and receive funds by UNDP. Given the short duration of contracts (typically three to six months), funds were sometimes received towards the end of the quarter when it was already time to submit programme progress and financial reports. UNDP is providing continuous training and coaching of sub-recipients to enable them to meet reporting requirements. The government and other partners also expressed concern about UNDP's administrative costs to manage the Global Fund grants which were considered high in the context of diminishing levels of aid.

Frequent changes in staff and leadership in public institutions also challenged programme efficiency at both the national and subnational level. Most public sector organizations are personality-driven and very dependent on their leader and often, when the head of an institution changed, UNDP had to renegotiate the terms of coopera-

tion or even restart the programme. For example, when the head of the Office of the Ombudsmen changed, rule of law activities on human rights for ethnic minorities stopped and the whole programme had to be renegotiated with the new head who had a different vision and interests, causing a significant delay in the implementation of project activities.

### **There is a clear need to strengthen data collection and M&E systems in order to allow for assessments of programme management issues based on solid evidence and ensure programme efficiency.**

The need to demonstrate results and impact was raised several times during the assessment. Some programme areas suffer from a lack of good and reliable data at output and outcome levels (especially the latter). ABD offices are responsible for data gathering and monitoring at the subnational level, but their practices and procedures are not always coherent and harmonized. Overall, in the absence of elaborated M&E systems, the sharing of information on programme processes, implementation and progress with national and subnational counterparts was unsystematic. Outcome boards are mechanisms for partner engagement where national and international stakeholders are invited annually to discuss UNDP's progress towards the achievements of its outcomes, reflect on lessons learned and discuss plans for the successive year. These were established at the national level and marked a significant improvement but there is room for further improvement, especially in measuring outcome progress.

Assessment and monitoring of risks also needs to be improved. The current programme includes a large number of community initiatives involving the construction of public infrastructure (e.g. water supply systems, irrigation channels, warehouses, etc.). However, this requires special engineering and construction skills which UNDP does not typically have in-house. The risks associated with this type of activity are therefore significant and require adequate risk management systems and capacities within the Country and

ABD Offices. Potential risks must be identified carefully before projects begin and continuously monitored throughout implementation which requires good information collection, and analysis capabilities and systems.

### **3.3 SUSTAINABILITY**

**The programme has, in general, benefited from a high level of national ownership which has contributed to sustainability.**

Although most activities were directly implemented by UNDP, national and subnational counterparts were heavily involved in programme activities which strengthened ownership of results. Government counterparts and local communities were also highly involved in planning activities and the introduction of specific technologies or systems which allowed interventions to be tailored to national and local needs, and encouraged acceptance and use of such systems. In general, national partners demonstrated strong programme ownership. Many initiatives were led or co-led by the government who co-financed UNDP projects. However, with the exception of the election project and some local development initiatives, co-financing was mostly limited to in-kind contributions.

**Sustainability prospects of UNDP activities and results are mixed.**

Work to support legislation and policymaking was sustainable because it was engrained in existing state laws and policies. The Single Window Centers established in many local administrations were introduced into government structures and operated effectively in the locations visited during the ADR mission. Furthermore, local initiatives conducted on a cost-sharing basis with contributions from local governments or communities have a higher chance of survival after withdrawal of support. The inclusion of DRR training modules into continuous education courses for civil servants strengthened human and institutional capacities at various levels, and established infrastructure and operating

systems will contribute to ensuring continued benefits in this area.

However, the sustainability of a number of structures established and supported by the programme is not certain because of the weak capacity of authorities and communities to sustain and scale up some of the initiatives whose purpose was to demonstrate results. Some of these initiatives were not designed with a clear exit strategy or sustainability plan. PACs, for example, remain weak and their Coordination Councils depend on donor support for some activities. Although their operations are now embedded in primary legislation, there is no evidence that they have become firmly established as independent and effective players in the country's institutional landscape. A number of other structures established as part of the peace and development programme have an uncertain future. For example, for Legal Assistance Centres and Public Reception Centres to continue they are highly dependent on the willingness of local leaders. As discussed previously, the Conflict Monitoring System also faces a number of design shortcomings which challenge its sustainability. For the National Platform for DRR to continue functioning, assurances need to be made that it will receive government funds. Structures such as the Batken Market Information Centre remain financially unsustainable.

There is also a risk that programme components that rely heavily on equipment to continue operating are vulnerable to closure if sufficient funds are not raised and volunteers do not remain actively involved. For example, community radios might have been useful to raise awareness among the largest number of people, but in most locations visited during the ADR mission they did not seem to be functioning effectively. Questions were also raised about the future of the Municipal Index of Social Justice, an initiative adapted from a global index which gathers statistics on local opinion and services access and quality, including when will there be another round of data collection and who is going to pay for it?

The tuberculosis and HIV programmes are highly dependent on external assistance. As such, Kyrgyzstan has established an inter-sectoral working group to draft a sustainability plan to graduate from the Global Fund which will have both financial and programmatic implications. Global Fund support currently covers ARVs and tuberculosis drugs, reagents, testing and prevention activities among others. UNDP established the Project Implementation Unit in the Ministry of Health to help prepare the country for transition. The key questions for UNDP are can the country absorb the cost for prevention and treatment and is the transfer to the Ministry of Health in 2018 feasible? Some partners expressed concerns over UNDP's efforts to develop the capacity of the national system for eventual handover, citing that greater efforts are needed to address the systemic challenges.

Piloting and scaling up of innovative initiatives are a key factor for sustainability. Successful pilots are those initiatives which are designed, planned and executed with a clear scale up plan. Some programme activities in the current cycle made good use of piloting initiatives by focusing on innovations and scaling up. For example, some non-pilot municipalities had adopted the 'one-

stop shop' idea and were implementing it from their budgets. However, a number of initiatives did not go beyond the piloting stage because there was no clear plan or vision. Some pilot interventions did not consider the affordability of scaling up activities. For example, even though the e-governance system for pasture management committees proved its advantages and benefits, many pasture management committees and local governments cannot afford it due to the high initial cost of the land inventory component. The same is true with the installation of relatively large-scale biogas equipment, or installation of solar heating systems for schools and ambulatories. While such interventions are replicated nationwide by other UNDP projects and donors, the installation and maintenance of such systems is beyond the budget of local facilities. This highlights that project design documents do not sufficiently analyse sustainability dimensions such as economic and financial viability, and post-implementation operation and maintenance. Moreover, they do not specify an exit strategy or how sustainability will be assured. The pastures project document, for example, indicates that sustainability issues will be addressed after the project progresses but it did not consider potential paths for sustainability from the outset.

# UNDP'S STRATEGIC POSITION

### 4.1 STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND RESPONSIVENESS

**UNDP has positioned itself well to contribute meaningfully to the Kyrgyz Republic's development needs. The programme has been responsive to the country's changing context and emerging challenges. The ABD approach has helped the Country Office achieve further integration and synergies within the programme.**

As previously described, UNDP's interventions in most programme areas were largely demand-driven and were adjusted to respond to national developments, including the shift to a parliamentary system, frequent changes in the coalition-based government, sporadic tensions along the borders with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, etc. Activities in the democratic governance and peace and development areas addressed the challenges of political instability and ethnic conflict, and work in poverty reduction and socio-economic development responded to the need for stability and improved livelihoods. To support the country's regional integration and economic development, UNDP helped authorities identify gaps in regulatory and legal frameworks and develop policies in the area of sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary standards which was a key prerequisite for EEU accession. Work in the energy and environment area responded to the country's needs to improve environmental standards and ensure energy security by reducing energy losses. DRM activities addressed the need to create greater resilience to disasters for the communities. As principal recipient of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNDP supported the country respond to the challenges of endemic diseases, in particular HIV and tuberculosis.

UNDP's support for the MDG and SDG agenda, an area which received significant government attention, enhanced its strategic relevance in the country. UNDP played a key role in helping the government adapt global development targets and indicators to national circumstances; establish monitoring systems; and create databases to monitor progress and report results nationally and internationally. More recently, support has focused on raising awareness of the new development agenda and assisting Kyrgyzstan's engagement with the post-2015 process, including ongoing work to nationalize the SDGs.

Adoption of the ABD approach contributed to the programme's strategic relevance and helped the Country Office address complex development problems in targeted geographical areas. It also enabled local authorities to be more firmly in charge of the development process and made it easier for UNDP to assess the local development situation in close collaboration with local authorities, other national counterparts and development partners. ABD offices have supported regional, district and municipal administrations set the development agenda for their areas and elaborate local development plans in cooperation with non-government counterparts. Subnational authorities that were interviewed for the ADR expressed satisfaction with the ABD approach. Overall, the ABD approach provided a significant boost to UNDP's relevance at the subnational level, although there is scope, as previously discussed, for further improvement especially with regards M&E procedures and practices in ABD offices.

### 4.2 UNDP'S COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS

**UNDP's strengths include its close and established partnerships with authorities**

**and communities, grounded in its neutrality and expertise.**

National stakeholders value UNDP for its neutrality and impartiality. Even in sensitive areas, UNDP interventions have been welcomed by national partners as reflected, for example, in activities with the Central Electoral Commission, the Constitutional Chamber of the Supreme Court, parliament, etc. Government stakeholders believe UNDP provides services that bring the ‘principles and values of the United Nations’. UNDP is trusted, respected and considered neutral. It also has access to government officials and civil society meaning it is well positioned to play a strong advocacy role and undertake pioneering initiatives. UNDP has made productive use of its capacities to lead and guide a number of policy dialogues among national institutions and donor organizations. Its ability to work extensively both at the central and local level is highly valued. Its knowledge of the regional development context, based on years of engagement with local authorities and communities, is a great advantage. Other UNDP strengths include its capacity to formulate and implement complex programmes (especially in sensitive areas related to elections, the rule of law, crisis prevention and response etc.) and its capacity to coordinate and create links between peacebuilding and reconciliation, good governance and sustainable development. UNDP particularly strengthened its credibility following its efforts to help the government respond to the 2010 events. UNDP’s long-term presence and experience in the Central Asia region is another important asset given cross-border issues such as inter-ethnic conflict, migration and natural resource management.

**UNDP made use of its global network to create opportunities for South-South exchanges and triangular cooperation, and encouraged the sharing of experiences.**

UNDP put its global network to effective use in areas relating to the MDG/SDG agenda, rule of law reform, public administration reform, local development and self-governance, etc. In view of

Kyrgyzstan’s EEU accession, UNDP facilitated cooperation with Armenia, Kazakhstan and Russia. In the area of rule of law and e-governance (including open data), study tours and cooperation agreements were arranged with countries such as Estonia, Kazakhstan, Latvia and Moldova. In the area of judicial reform, the experiences of Malaysia and Viet Nam were used. Exchanging information, experience and knowledge with Tajikistan was central to cross-border cooperation and border management projects. Support to public administration reform was provided by Kazakhstan’s Astana Governance Hub and the Singapore-based UNDP Centre of Public Service Excellence. UNDP also benefitted from the rich networks of the UNDP Regional Office in areas such as public administration, human rights, gender, etc.

South-South exchanges and triangular cooperation were also promoted through the inclusion of Kyrgyzstan in the implementation of multi-country projects and initiatives. For example, the green village initiative benefited from cooperation with Croatia on green energy issues and identifying innovative financing mechanisms through crowdfunding. The use of external expertise facilitated the introduction and adoption of innovative solutions, such as financing mechanisms for global environmental management, the promotion of alternative technologies for fish farming using artificial ponds alleviating pressure on natural lake ecosystems, the introduction of better waste handling technologies, etc. South-South cooperation was also instrumental in the establishment of the Kyrgyz-Kazakh Centre for Disaster Response and Risk Reduction in Almaty, Kazakhstan which addresses trans-boundary disaster risks.

### **4.3 PARTNERSHIPS**

**In addition to close cooperation with government agencies, UNDP also established partnerships with donors, civil society and the private sector. These partnerships, to various degrees, enhanced the impact of UNDP’s interventions.**

UNDP is a key player in the development community. Donor partnerships enabled UNDP to mobilize significant resources for its programme with non-core resources accounting for around 90 percent of total expenditure. UNDP also played a key coordination role at the national level, with the United Nations Resident Coordinator/ UNDP Resident Representative co-chairing the National Coordination Council on cooperation with development partners alongside the Prime Minister. The United Nations Resident Coordinator also represents the United Nations country team in the Development Partners' Coordination Council and UNDP actively participated in the activities of the various thematic working groups which contributed to sharing knowledge and avoiding duplication of donor-funded interventions. At the subnational level, coordination was less effective and there is potential for UNDP to play a stronger role in supporting regional and local authorities to coordinate development assistance more effectively.

The 2015 UNDP Partnership Survey, administered by the Country Office, revealed favourable results.<sup>49</sup> Of respondents, 95 percent consider UNDP a valued partner and 93 percent strongly agreed or agreed that UNDP played a relevant role in the development process and implemented projects reflecting national priorities. Of respondents from the government and bilateral donors/agencies, 85 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied with UNDP's results, and 90 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied with UNDP's engagement (quality and timely communication, consultation and/or engagement in key project events/meetings, etc.).

United Nations joint programmes implemented under the DaO programme totalled almost \$10 million since 2010 and brought together the

expertise of 14 participating United Nations agencies, funds and programmes. As a key participant of the DaO programme, UNDP has been a part of the United Nations country team's efforts to operationalize the DaO approach by establishing required systems and mechanisms. A progress report by the United Nations Development Group in August 2014, reported that the country team in Kyrgyzstan had achieved some core elements of the DaO approach, such as having an UNDAF, one leader, one communication group reporting on joint results, etc. The DaO approach contributed to development outcomes through joint programming and advocacy.<sup>50</sup> UNDP's work with UNV and WFP in the environment, energy and DRM areas are good examples of collaboration with other agencies. However, as previously discussed, joint implementation of the peace and development programme remains weak on the ground. Overall, there is scope to take further advantage of the expertise of other United Nations specialized agencies in their areas of work.

UNDP's partnership with civil society took many forms. In collaboration with other United Nations agencies, UNDP has maintained regular contact with civil society and has organized frequent consultations with their members. CSOs have participated in outcome board meetings held on an annual basis.<sup>51</sup> UNDP also advocated on behalf of civil society, in particular against the two draft laws on foreign agents and criminalization of information related to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, and through its support for stronger legislation to protect women's rights. Further, through most of its activities, UNDP has sought to create a space for civil society to participate in the decision-making of state institutions both at the central level (i.e. law making, PACs, parliamentary hearings,

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49 Overall, 69 partners participated in the survey but the number of respondents for each question varied slightly.

50 UNDP led the participation of United Nations agencies in parliamentary hearings and review meetings with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on United Nations assistance, strategic support and challenges of UNDAF implementation. UNDP also played a key role in convening an inclusive Post-2015 National Consultations process, based on the DaO platform.

51 A concept note to establish the Civil Society Advisory Board was developed in 2015 and membership selection has been completed.

Council on the Selection of Judges, national DRR platform, etc.) and the subnational level (local development committees, public services, WUAs, pasture management committees, etc.). UNDP has also partnered with civil society in programme delivery, such as the HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria programme where civil society were sub-recipients.

Kyrgyzstan has a small but growing private sector with which UNDP has made efforts to engage, especially at the community level where signif-

icant support was provided to develop small-scale entrepreneurship and trade. Other areas of engagement with the private sector include support for PCB holders, fish farm owners and other businesses to increase their resilience to climate change, promote safe handling of toxic wastes, improve biodiversity conservation, etc. Overall, there is scope to further engage business representatives in the UNDP programme. Corporate social responsibility activities could be an effective instrument for engaging larger businesses into joint development projects.

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. UNDP activities in this programme cycle were strongly anchored to national development priorities. Although the programme operated in a volatile political and social environment, UNDP was able to respond effectively to the country's evolving needs and provide significant contributions across a number of priority areas.**

UNDP activities during this programme cycle were largely demand-driven and aligned with the priorities and plans of national partners. In particular, UNDP's support for the development of a number of national and sectoral strategies and programmes, including the overarching NSDS, further reinforced the strategic nature and relevance of its interventions.

Despite operating in a challenging and volatile environment, with intense political and institutional changes taking place in the aftermath of the 2010 uprising and ethnic conflict in the south, UNDP was able to respond flexibly and rapidly to evolving needs and support the authorities' reform agenda in a number of fields. These included judicial, electoral and public sector governance reforms directed at improving the transparency, accountability, structure and management of public institutions and the delivery of public services. Significant support was provided to build an 'infrastructure for peace' and promote community development, employment and economic growth. Important progress was also made in the DRM sector as a result of shifting the sector's focus from having standalone DRR interventions to integrating DRR in all sectors and levels of public governance. Similar progress has been observed with regards to integrating climate change adaptation issues into development planning. As the princi-

pal recipient of grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, UNDP has ensured an uninterrupted supply of drugs and other medical products, particularly for HIV, and introduced new disease management approaches, thereby contributing to progress in the fight against endemic diseases.

Partners highly valued UNDP's ability to work extensively both at the national and subnational levels, and to forge vertical and horizontal linkages, synergies and cooperation among government authorities, CSOs and communities. UNDP's engagement with some of the poorest, remotest and most conflict-ridden communities in the country and its support for marginalized people is also to be noted. Looking forward, it is important for UNDP to remain flexible and responsive, especially in light of emerging risks and opportunities such as violent extremism and religious radicalization of youth, economic competitiveness and diversification following EEU membership, and so on.

**Conclusion 2. UNDP has provided important support to the development of a significant number of policies, strategies and laws across all areas in which it is involved. However, implementation remains weak at both the national and subnational levels, indicating the need for more focus on the implementation capacities of national institutions.**

Across all programme areas, UNDP has assisted national and subnational authorities in the development of an impressive number of policies, strategies and laws. This support has been valuable because it has helped Kyrgyzstan to have a relatively modern legal and policy framework in many sectors. However, implementation of many of these instruments remains weak and is ham-

pered by frequent changes in political leadership and government officials, and by the insufficient capacities of national institutions to implement agreed policies and strategic plans.

In response to this challenge, UNDP made efforts in some programme areas to shift its assistance beyond the development of laws and policies into strengthening implementation capacities. For example, it supported a number of institutions to develop implementation action plans and assisted parliament with the design of a methodology to identify costs associated with the implementation of draft laws to clarify financial implications. Although these are steps in the right direction, there is still a lot of room for UNDP to further rationalize and strengthen its support for the implementation capacity of national institutions.

**Conclusion 3. UNDP's ABD approach and its significant focus on regional and local development have enabled it to make important contributions to communities and accumulate vast knowledge about local development issues. However, neither the Kyrgyz Republic nor UNDP have a well-elaborated, uniform model of regional and local development, representing an opportunity for further work.**

Most programme components have had a significant focus on local development and provided important contributions to communities, especially those in poor, remote and conflict-affected areas. This focus on local development has brought UNDP closer to the communities, giving it greater visibility and acceptance among ordinary people and stronger ties with local decision makers. The ABD approach has been particularly useful in providing UNDP with a common platform to implement projects from different practices and enable it to achieve greater coherence, effectiveness and efficiency through

mutually reinforcing interventions. It also made it easier for UNDP to assess local development needs and enabled local authorities to be more firmly in charge of the development process.

Over decades of work at the community level UNDP has built a vast reservoir of expertise and knowledge of local development issues. Given the diversity of its experiences, UNDP could benefit from a more consolidated model of local development<sup>52</sup> which would synthesize more effectively the lessons learned and best practices drawn from decades of community-based work. Such a model, applied more uniformly and consistently throughout its operations, would provide UNDP's community-level activities with useful guidance and principles, and could also form the basis for further strategic support to the government's efforts to strengthen its regional development policy. The Ministry of Economy is in charge of regional development policy and had planned to develop a Concept of Regional Development for which UNDP was expected to provide support. UNDP provided a municipal strategic planning methodology to the Ministry, helped to adapt it in some localities and, together with UNEP, strengthened capacity of strategic planning department. However, more can be done in this area. UNDP is uniquely positioned to follow up on this objective and help the government move towards the development of a model.

Also, stronger synergies could be forged with international organizations at the subnational level. While at the national level a significant degree of cooperation and coordination has taken place, thanks in part to the leadership demonstrated by the United Nations Resident Coordinator/UNDP Resident Representative, at the local level there is a diversity of processes and procedures supported by an array of donors, which represent a challenge for capacity-con-

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52 The term 'model' does not imply a strict format of local development activities, but rather an approach and a set of principles which are explicitly stated and provide an overarching framework that guides programme development and implementation. UNDP's ABD approach constitutes a part of such a model, but so far it has related more to how UNDP should conduct its business at the subnational level, rather than how development should take place at that level.

strained local governments and which could benefit from stronger cooperation.

**Conclusion 4. Significant improvements have been made to UNDP's management systems following the 2012 organizational restructuring and the introduction of the ABD approach at the subnational level. There is, however, room for further improvement by adopting a more result-based approach to management and strengthening risk management.**

The Country Office made substantive improvements to management systems during the current programme cycle. The organizational restructuring and introduction of the ABD approach at the regional and local level resulted in a better division of labour among staff, and generated better synergies and more effective cross-practice collaboration. The establishment of Outcome Boards is another innovation that has strengthened programme implementation and coordination. Overall, these improvements have had a positive impact on operational efficiency, cost effectiveness, implementation oversight, quality assurance and other programme management dimensions.

There are, however, challenges that the Country Office should tackle more vigorously in the upcoming programme. Of crucial importance is the need for a more effective results-based approach to management and implementation. UNDP's decision-making and reporting may benefit from better evidence of its contribution to development results at the outcome level. Data collection and M&E systems require further strengthening, especially at the level of the programme as a whole. Identification and tracking of risks could also be improved which requires better information collection and analysis capabilities and systems.

**Conclusion 5. While ownership of the programme by national authorities and local communities has overall been satisfactory, sustainability of programme results and benefits present a challenge.**

In a volatile political and social environment like Kyrgyzstan's, sustainability of achievements is a major challenge. Ownership of the programme demonstrated by authorities and communities during the current programme cycle has been a key factor for the sustainability for many initiatives. A large part of the work to support legislation and policymaking has been sustainable because it has been embedded in existing state laws and policies. Another important indicator of ownership was the government's decision to participate in cost-sharing for a number of activities. At the subnational level, ownership was strengthened by involving local governments and communities in the selection of funded initiatives and their contributions to cost-sharing.

However, as previously highlighted, sustainability of a number of initiatives supported by the programme remains uncertain because of the weak capacities of national and subnational institutions to sustain and scale up initiatives whose purpose was to demonstrate effects. There is also concern over the capacity of the Ministry of Health to take over the principal recipient role for the HIV and tuberculosis programmes. Overall, UNDP interventions in all areas need a clear exit strategy and sustainability plan to counteract the capacity weaknesses of national institutions.

**Conclusion 6. UNDP has adequately addressed the complexities of gender equality and women's empowerment and has sufficiently mainstreamed gender in its programme. However, there is scope for further improvements which will enable it to shift the programme from gender responsive to gender transformative.**

In its current programme, UNDP has made important contributions towards gender equality and women's empowerment. Gender has been largely mainstreamed in most programme activities and the participation of women has been pursued in most projects and initiatives. Overall, the programme has improved women's awareness of their rights and effectuated some degree of change in people's attitudes towards gender equality. UNDP has also been instrumen-

tal in developing policies that promoted positive shifts in the roles and status of women and men. UNDP's contribution was significant at the local level where women were key beneficiaries of better access to water, electricity supply, road infrastructure, child care, professional skills, credit, training and education, etc.

However, programme activities were not always designed to measure and monitor gender results, and gender mainstreaming was not strongly linked to gender equality on the ground or the transformation of gender relations in society. UNDP's programme in the current cycle has been largely gender responsive, and in some areas, gender-targeted. The Country Office can do more in all programme components, in particular with regards to DRR and environment and energy, to shift the programme from gender responsive to gender transformative.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1. UNDP should further focus its support on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, especially at the subnational level, to implement existing policies and legislation.**

The focus on implementation will require greater attention to, and more alignment with, the broader public administration agenda and, in particular, more engagement with civil service reform. The Public Sector Reform Roadmap, approved by the government in 2014, offers UNDP a good platform to deliver its support in this area in an effective way and in coordination with the contributions of other development partners (especially by tapping into the expertise of specialized United Nations agencies). This work should build on the strong foundations laid by UNDP activities in support of public service delivery, budget transparency, local governance, etc.

**Recommendation 2. Capitalizing on its rich experience with local development, UNDP should support the government in strengthen-**

**ing its regional development model and, within that framework, further rationalize, refine and harmonize its own model of support to local development and community mobilization.**

UNDP is in a unique position to support the government strengthen the model of regional development. In parallel with this process, UNDP should strengthen its own model of local development and community mobilization by building on the ABD approach and other existing frameworks. Also, UNDP should play a stronger role in supporting local authorities strengthen coordination of development partner activities at the local level. Donor coordination at the local level could be linked more effectively to the strategic planning process which UNDP has supported in a number of locations.

**Recommendation 3. UNDP should further strengthen its results-based management system and risk management practices and capacities.**

The Country Office should further strengthen its results-based management system by upgrading data collection and M&E systems. Programme synergies should be pursued more effectively by having activities implemented, monitored and evaluated at the level of the programme as a whole. Measurable indicators should be embedded more effectively into the programme's log frames and other programme management documents. More effort should also be made to further cultivate a culture of evaluation among staff and partners. Furthermore, the Country Office should strengthen its risk management systems and capacities. Potential risks should be identified carefully before the beginning of projects and should be continuously monitored throughout implementation. At the subnational level, M&E practices and procedures among ABD offices should be further developed and harmonized.

**Recommendation 4. UNDP should pay greater attention to the sustainability of structures and initiatives it creates. Sustainability concerns should be integrated more effectively**

**into the Country Office's planning and monitoring processes.**

UNDP should ensure that internal and external factors affecting the sustainability of its interventions are well accounted for and assessed at the design stage and during implementation. Management should ensure that all projects have well-defined exit strategies and sustainability plans. The sustainability of interventions should be carefully monitored throughout programme implementation. The possibility for continued support or donor replacement after the end of a project should receive careful consideration and assessment. There is also a need for strengthening the planning and monitoring of pilot initiatives and their demonstration effects, so that their replicability and scaling up are monitored and supported more effectively. Furthermore, the Country Office's knowledge management system should enable staff and partners to learn more effectively from and be better aware of sustainability successes and failures. In the HIV and tuberculosis programme area, UNDP should further strengthen its capacity-building work to prepare the country to take over as principal recipient as planned in 2018.

**Recommendation 5. There is scope for UNDP to further strengthen the gender-sensitivity approach and the gender-related impact of its programme.**

UNDP should further strengthen its gender-sensitive approach when planning, implementing and evaluating programme activities. Gender perspectives should be mainstreamed more effectively in programme design and implementation, in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy. The Country Office can achieve more gender transformative results by shifting the approach of some of its interventions from 'women as vulnerable citizens' to 'women as agents of change'. At the community level, there needs to be more active engagement of women in programme activities, especially in peacebuilding and reconciliation. Also, gender-related activities require a stronger M&E framework, relying on more solid and disaggregated evidence. The Country Office was awarded the Gold Gender Equality Seal in 2012 and UNDP may consider going through the Gender Seal Certification Process for revalidation as this process will help maintain a positive and supportive environment for gender equality, as well as revalidate the investment the office has made in the gender area.

### 5.3 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

**Evaluation recommendation 1. UNDP should further focus its support on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, especially at the subnational level, to implement existing policies and legislation.**

The focus on implementation will require greater attention to and more alignment with the broader public administration agenda, and in particular more engagement with the civil service reform. The Public Sector Reform Roadmap, approved by the government in 2014, offers UNDP a good platform for delivering its support in this area in an effective way and in coordination with the contributions of other development partners (especially by tapping into the expertise of specialized UN agencies). This work should build on the strong foundations laid by UNDP activities in support of public service delivery, budget transparency, local governance, etc.

**Management response:** Recommendation is accepted. Supporting institutions at all levels to be more accountable and inclusive with a focus on access to justice, human rights and gender equality commitments, and sustainable peace at community levels is one of the key areas identified in the new UNDAF and CPD (2018-2022) for Kyrgyzstan which is very much in line with SDG 16. Therefore, UNDP will continue to provide support to strengthen the capacity of national and local institutions to implement existing policies and legislation. Namely, within the ongoing judicial legal reform the rule of law programme has developed the detailed action plans for the implementation of the package of approved laws in 2016 working closely with the Parliament and line ministries. The implementation plans put into practice the key national legislation on national and subnational level. Along with this, the development assistance coordinated by UNDP will build the capacity of national institutions to deliver adequate services. This includes provision of various capacity development programmes (trainings for judges and law enforcement agencies, parliamentary administrative staff, sharing best practices etc.), technical assistance and guidance. UNDP will continue strengthening capacity of the State Registry Service under the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic and the Central Election Commission in the capital and territorial offices. As well, UNDP will enhance institutional and individual capacities for sustainable climate resilient natural resource management with focus on addressing land degradation, climate change adaptation, biodiversity conservation, integrated water resource management and sound management of waste and chemicals.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Ensure that the new CPD focuses on strengthening institutions at all levels to be more accountable and inclusive with a focus on access to justice, human rights and gender equality commitments, and sustainable peace at community levels.	2017	Senior Management Team/ Programme Officers		Initiated
1.2 Design and initiate specific interventions with a focus on strengthening the capacity of key institutions (i.e. parliament, key ministries, local authorities, the Civil Registry)	2017	Programme Unit		Initiated

**Evaluation recommendation 2: Capitalizing on its rich experience with local development, UNDP should support the government in strengthening its regional development model and, within that framework, further rationalize, refine and harmonize its own model of support to local development and community mobilization.** UNDP is in a unique position to support the government in its attempt to strengthen the model of regional development. In parallel with this process, UNDP should strengthen its own model of local development and community mobilization by building on the ABD approach and other existing frameworks. Also, UNDP should play a stronger role in supporting local authorities strengthen the coordination of the activities of development partners at the local level. Donor coordination at the local level could be linked more effectively to the strategic planning process which UNDP has supported in a number of locations.

**Management response:** Recommendation is accepted. UNDP Kyrgyzstan started the review of its ABD programmes with the aim to strengthen the model of local and regional development in the country. The strengthened model of local and regional development will be applied within the existing Area-Based Development in Osh, Batken and Naryn regions and further scaled up. UNDP will continue to support the government and local authorities to implement a regional development model and coordinate the interventions of development partners at the local level.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Review its ABD programmes with the aim to strengthen the model of local and regional development in the country.	2017	Programme Unit		Initiated

**Evaluation recommendation 3. UNDP should further strengthen its results-based management system and risk management practices and capacities.** The Country Office should further strengthen its results-based management system by upgrading its data collection and M&E systems. Programme synergies should be pursued more effectively by having activities implemented, monitored and evaluated at the level of the programme as a whole. Measurable indicators should be embedded more effectively into the programme's log frames and other programme management documents. More effort should also be made to further cultivate an evaluation culture among staff and partners. Furthermore, the Country Office should strengthen its risk management systems and capacities. Potential risks should be identified carefully before the beginning of projects and should be continuously monitored throughout implementation. At the subnational level, M&E practices and procedures among ABD offices should be further developed and harmonized.

**Management response:** The recommendation is accepted. The Country Office will strengthen an M&E culture among staff and partners through better development and implementation of M&E plans. Measurable indicators will be integrated more effectively into the programme's results frames and other programme management documents. Risk logs are developed during the project design and carefully monitored and updated during the project implementation.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Upgrade data collection in M&E systems.	2017	M&E Focal Point, UNDP Projects, Country Office		Initiated
3.2 Measurable indicators are integrated more effectively into the CPD and project results and resource frameworks.	2017	M&E Focal Point, UNDP Projects, Country Office		Initiated
3.3 M&E plans are strengthened for effective M&E of programmes and projects	2017	M&E Focal Point, UNDP Projects, Country Office		Initiated
3.4 Risk logs are developed during project design and carefully monitored and updated during project implementation.	2017	Programme Officers		Initiated

**EEvaluation recommendation 4. UNDP should pay greater attention to the sustainability of structures and initiatives it creates. Sustainability concerns should be integrated more effectively into the Country Office's planning and monitoring processes.** UNDP should ensure that all internal and external factors that affect the sustainability of its interventions are well accounted for and assessed at the design stage and during implementation. Management should ensure that all projects have well-defined exit strategies and sustainability plans. The sustainability of interventions should be carefully monitored throughout programme implementation. The possibility for continued support or donor replacement after the end of a project should receive careful consideration and assessment. There is also a need for strengthening the planning and monitoring of pilot initiatives and their demonstration effects, so that their replicability and scaling up are monitored and supported more effectively. Furthermore, the Country Office's knowledge management system should enable staff and partners to learn more effectively from and be better aware of sustainability successes and failures. In the HIV and tuberculosis programme area, UNDP should further strengthen its capacity-building work to prepare the country to take over the principal recipient role as planned in 2018.

**Management response:** The recommendation is well noted and accepted. A sustainability plan will be developed and carefully monitored throughout programme and projects implementation. The office is effectively working under the resource mobilization to continue the support in key areas after careful consideration and assessment at the end of the project. In the HIV and tuberculosis programme area, UNDP continues to strengthen its capacity-building work with the main partners to take over the principal recipient role as planned in 2018.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Fully implement the Capacity Development and Transition Plan to transfer the role of principal recipient to the Ministry of Health. Continue to strengthen the capacity of the main partners within the Global Fund grants through various trainings.	2017	Global Fund Grants Implementation Unit		Ongoing
4.2 Strengthen the Country Office's knowledge management system.	2017	Programme Officers		Ongoing
4.3 Internal and external factors that affect the sustainability of programme and projects interventions are well accounted for and assessed at the design stage and during implementation.	Annually	Programme Officers		Ongoing

**Evaluation recommendation 5. There is scope for UNDP to further strengthen the gender-sensitivity approach and the gender-related impact of its programme.** UNDP should further strengthen its gender-sensitive approach when planning, implementing and evaluating programme activities. Gender perspectives should be mainstreamed more effectively in programme design and implementation, in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy. The Country Office can achieve more gender transformative results by shifting the approach of some of its interventions from "women as victims/vulnerable citizens" to "women as agents of change". At the community level, there is a need for a more active engagement of women in programme activities, especially in peacebuilding and reconciliation. Also, gender-related activities require a stronger M&E framework, relying on more solid and disaggregated evidence. Given that almost four years have passed since the Gold Gender Equality Seal was awarded to the Country Office, UNDP may also consider going through the Gender Seal Certification Process for revalidation, as this process will help maintain a positive and supportive environment for gender equality, as well as revalidate the investment the office has made in the gender area.

**Management response:** Recommendation is accepted. UNDP Kyrgyzstan will continue to further strengthen the gender-sensitivity approach and the gender-related impact of its programme. In 2016, the UNDP Executive Team started to review the gender mainstreaming activities of all UNDP projects with the purpose of strengthening gender approaches in line with UNDP's Gender Equality Strategy. The Joint Gender Mainstreaming plan is being developed annually to ensure that at least 15 percent of each programme budget is dedicated for gender specific and gender mainstreaming activities. The UNDP gender team is fully involved in the appraisal and/or development of concept notes, documents and TORs according to the Interoffice Memorandum "Follow-up on Gender Seal Appraisal Mission", which confirms inclusion of proper gender analysis, disaggregated evidences and targeted approach. In 2016, UNDP started the process of revalidating its Gold Seal Certification and is planning to have revalidated it in 2017.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Revalidate UNDP Gold Seal Certification	2017	Senior Management Team/Gender Focal Point		Initiated
5.2 Elaboration and implementation of Joint Gender Mainstreaming Plan with more focus on women as agents of change especially at the local level	Annually	Senior Management Team/Programme Unit/Operations Unit/Project Implementation Unit /ABD/ Gender Focal Point		Developed
5.3 Ensure more solid gender disaggregated evidence in the M&E framework, i.e. new CPD and Project documents	2017, ongoing	M&E Officer/ Programme Officers		Initiated



# ANNEXES (available online)

The below annexes of the report are available on IEO's website at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/8473>

Annex 1. EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

Annex 2. COUNTRY AT A GLANCE

Annex 3. COUNTRY OFFICE AT A GLANCE

Annex 4. PROJECT LIST

Annex 5. CPD RESULTS FRAMEWORK AND INDICATOR STATUS

Annex 6. PEOPLE CONSULTED

Annex 7. DOCUMENTS CONSULTED







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