

# ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS **MEXICO**

## EVALUATION OF UNDP CONTRIBUTION



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





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Resilient nations.*

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### ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT RESULTS: MEXICO

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# FOREWORD

Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) are independent evaluations of the activities of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its countries of operation and constitute one of the main outputs of the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). ADRs analyse the progress of UNDP interventions on a national level. This is the first ADR to be carried out in Mexico. The evaluation was led by the IEO and conducted by a team of independent experts, managed by a member of the aforementioned office. Their work was supported by the UNDP Country Office and UNDP's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), who are the primary users of the ADR alongside national counterparts. This approach made it possible to ensure compliance with the standards of independence, impartiality and rigour in ADR methodology.

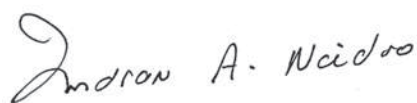
The UNDP Programme in Mexico has contributed to improving the impact of public policies on the topics of poverty reduction, the environment, sustainable development and democratic governance; reversing environmental degradation and maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable and equitable way. UNDP has been the Government's main partner in positioning Mexico as a development cooperator on a regional level and the Mexican State has progressed in the consolidation of an international cooperation platform. UNDP's contribution to the design and implementation of national development policies has faced several challenges, acknowledged by counterparts and detailed in this evaluation. The 2030 Agenda is an opportunity which UNDP has begun to take with a view to re-establishing high-level dialogue and contributing to the Government's identification of its aims on a national level, in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, UNDP has focused upon thematic projects,

leaving aside fundamental national agenda areas (gender equality, the empowerment of women, human rights, topics of safety, transparency, corruption and impunity), which are part of the commitments included in UNDP's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and in accordance with the SDGs. Furthermore, it has left lagging behind the comprehensive view of development based upon the multidimensional nature of poverty, which constitutes the added value of its work on an international level.

This evaluation suggests that there should be greater autonomy, firmness, originality and agility from UNDP in Mexico, so as to make an impact on development, and greater audacity when proposing alternative paths and positioning sustainable human development and the commitments made by Mexico in compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs in the context of an upper middle-income country. UNDP should play an even more proactive role in identifying the country's development challenges in the organization's next cooperation programme; diversify its sources of funding, so as to obtain greater management autonomy when defining the next cooperation programme and an improved strategic position; be firmer in promoting an environmental agenda integrated with social and economic inclusion, fostering the link between the environment and multidimensional poverty; continue its efforts to systematize, drive and diffuse good public policy practices through South-South and Triangular Cooperation policies on an international level, with the aim of continuing to contribute to Mexico's positioning as an international cooperator and increasing its connection to the rest of world; and approach the matter of gender equality by strategically considering the design and implementation of projects, in addition to making gender a cross-cutting issue to reflect its fundamental importance and that of empowering women.

The ADR focused upon UNDP's performance and accountability and identified its key problems and limitations, in order to learn from past and present shortcomings and look towards the future. It is hoped that the findings of this ADR will be used by UNDP in Mexico, the RBLAC and UNDP headquarters to analyse the lessons learned and the opportunities presented for the new cooperation programme, bearing in mind UNDP's added value in the context of this country classified as graduated, the country office's cooperation strategy and its ability to follow up on the development results. The IEO hopes that the results of this evaluation will allow UNDP to expand and improve its support of the Mexican Government and the other national partners and will contribute to UNDP's future strategy, and that its recommendations will lead to future management and implementation actions.

We believe this assessment to be timely in a global context in which UNDP is reflecting on what its added value in upper middle- and high-income countries is and under what conditions and how it can continue to play a role, particularly in national situations like this one, in which the Human Development Index reflects the need to continue addressing challenges linked to the poverty and inequality faced by a significant proportion of the country's population.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Indran A. Naidoo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Indran" being more prominent than the last name "Naidoo".

Indran A. Naidoo  
Director  
Independent Evaluation Office



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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADR	Assessment of Development Results
AECID	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation
AMEXCID	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation
C3	Climate Change Council
CABEI	Central American Bank for Economic Integration
CEMEFI	Mexican Centre for Philanthropy
CEMEX	Cementos Mexicanos (Mexican cement multinational)
CICC	Inter-Secretarial Commission on Climate Change
CIDE	Centre for Research and Teaching in Economics
CO	(UNDP) Country Office
CONABIO	National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity
CONAFOR	National Forestry Commission
CONAGUA	National Water Commission
CONANP	National Commission of Natural Protected Areas
CONEVAL	National Council for the Evaluation of Social Development Policy
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil Society Organization
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEF	Global Environment Fund
GII	Global Impunity Index
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HDR	Human Development Report
IACHR	Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
IDB	Inter-American Development Bank
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP
INECC	National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change
INEGI	National Institute of Statistics and Geography
INMUJERES	National Institute for Women
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel of Experts on Climate Change
IPRO	Institutional Strengthening of Social Programmes Initiative
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LCID	Law on International Cooperation for Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals

MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
NIM	National Implementation Modality
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ONE	National Entrepreneur Observatory
PED	State Development Plan
PEMEX	Petróleos Mexicanos (Mexican petroleum company)
PPP	Puebla-Panama Plan
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
RENCID	National Registry for International Development Cooperation
ROAR	Results-Oriented Annual Report
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEDESOL	Social Development Secretariat
SEMARNAT	Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources
SEP	Secretariat of Public Education
SRE	Secretariat of Foreign Affairs
SSC	South-South Cooperation
STC SDG	Specialized Technical Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals
TrC	Triangular Cooperation
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNS	United Nations System
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Assessment of Development Results (ADR) in Mexico to gather and show evidence of UNDP's contribution to the development results in the country, in addition to the effectiveness of the organization's strategy in facilitating and boosting national efforts with the aim of achieving development results. This assessment aims to support the production of UNDP's next Country Programme Document (CPD) and strengthen the accountability of UNDP's Office in Mexico to interested parties and, in particular, to the Executive Board.

ADRs are independent assessments carried out within the framework of the general provisions of UNDP's Evaluation Policy. This is the first ADR to be conducted in Mexico. It was carried out in close collaboration with UNDP's Country Office and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC). Mexican national counterparts who showed interest in the evaluation process were consulted and interviewed. In compliance with the evaluation terms of reference and the ADR Methodology Manual, two UNDP programme cycles were analysed, corresponding to the period 2008-2016, covering the first three years of the 2014-2018 CPD and taking into account the major interventions or projects that began during the previous programme cycle, laid out in the 2008-2013 CPD.

The ADR assessed the effectiveness of UNDP's contribution to development results in Mexico by evaluating the activities undertaken and the results in the context of its programme. An assessment was made of the organization's contribution in relation to its general vision of supporting countries to successfully eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities and exclusion,

and to foster gender equality and the empowerment of women. The quality of its contribution was also evaluated based upon the relevance of UNDP's projects and results to the country's needs and national priorities, and in relation to the organization's mandate. The quality analysis also focused on the efficiency of interventions in terms of their use of human and financial resources (programmatic, managerial and operational efficiency), and on the sustainability and ownership of the results to which UNDP contributes.

UNDP's strategic positioning was analysed in terms of its mandate and of the recognized needs – or the new national and development priorities – of Mexico. This included an analysis of UNDP's positioning in the political space of developing countries and within the context of upper middle-income countries, and of the strategies used by the organization to maximize its contribution.

The evaluation team examined a sample of 72 projects, out of the 109 in the country office's portfolio for the period under evaluation. Quantitative and qualitative data were gathered and used, projects were visited on the ground and over 130 interviews (individual and group) with people of both genders were conducted, including implementation partners, beneficiaries, Government representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia, private business, United Nations agencies and country programme donors.

The focus of the evaluation was on looking towards the future, learning from previous experiences and recommending options for change and improvement. The ADR's conclusions and recommendations should act as input for producing the programme UNDP intends to implement in Mexico from 2019 onwards.

## MAIN RESULTS

In Mexico, UNDP has contributed to improving the impact of public policies that support poverty reduction, the environment, sustainable development and democratic governance by creating knowledge, fostering dialogue, providing skills training and implementing projects. It has also contributed towards the three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society, strengthening their capabilities to achieve social inclusion, quality of life, economic growth and competitiveness through the production and dissemination of Human Development Reports (HDRs) and studies on social inclusion and food security, and through active participation in inclusion projects related to gender, the disabled and children. UNDP has supported the Government in undertaking projects for the development of entrepreneurs and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), with the aim of increasing economic growth and boosting competitiveness. Furthermore, it has contributed to reversing environmental degradation and to maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable and equitable way by making environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy a cross-cutting matter in legislative processes. Moreover, UNDP has contributed to strengthening the electoral system, to the formulation and evaluation of public safety strategies focused on citizens and to the creation of public policies for the prevention of crime and in favour of social cohesion, with a rights-based approach and a gender perspective. UNDP was also the Government's main partner in the positioning of Mexico as a development cooperator on a regional level and, as a result, the Mexican State has progressed in consolidating a pertinent international cooperation platform.

Nevertheless, UNDP's contribution to the design and implementation of national development policies has faced several challenges, including electoral cycles. The sexennial National Development Plans (NDPs) do not necessarily coincide, in terms of time, with UNDP's programme cycles and they limit the organization's capability to link

the commitments made by the country on an international level with the national agenda. Over the past four years, UNDP's collaboration with the Government has decreased. This is due, on the one hand, to the latter showing reduced interest in involvement with the international body and, on the other hand, to UNDP not being proactive in promoting topics that could be incorporated into the public agenda. High-level dialogue has been weakened by staff turnover in projects and in UNDP's management and administration, and by the instability of staff in government agencies, which affects discussions with strategic agents and the implementation of interventions. In this context, the 2030 Agenda has opened a window of opportunity, which UNDP has begun to use to re-establish high-level dialogue and contribute to the Government's identification of its national aims to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In terms of its programme, UNDP has moved from macro policies to creating micro-level policies with state governments. The organization has focused on thematic projects that characterize Mexicans' everyday existence (violence, deterioration of social fabric, patronage, poor state capacities), leaving aside fundamental topics from the national agenda, in which it had previously made important contributions to the development of public policies – such as gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights, and topics of safety, transparency, corruption and impunity – which are part of the commitments made in UNDP's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan and in accordance with the SDGs. UNDP has also left lagging behind the comprehensive view of development based on the multidimensional nature of poverty, which constitutes the added value of its work on an international level.

## CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. Added Value in Mexico.** UNDP is respected and has a good reputation; it provides a seal of legitimacy and credibility, is well-accepted and is considered by the Mexican Government, local governments and CSOs

to be a valuable and trustworthy ally. UNDP is respected by the national agencies and organizations, which recognize the added value contributed by its image of transparency in handling public resources, its competency stemming from its capability to access a network of experts, its impartiality when linking the participation of national partners and its approach to topics such as sustainable human development. UNDP's support is valuable for intervening in communal land and communities where the Mexican Government is not fully accepted. Furthermore, the organization contributes legitimacy, as an expert voice which prioritizes human well-being.

**Conclusion 2. Comparative Advantages.** The Government has made use of UNDP's comparative advantages and has partnered with the organization to promote the national agenda and implement projects which required elements of international validation, specialized experience and an independent partner. It is acknowledged that UNDP offers opportunities to create and manage knowledge through the methodologies promoted for the production of Human Development Reports (HDRs) and for the monitoring and evaluation, up to 2015, of the aims established in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now in the SDGs.

**Conclusion 3. Pertinence.** UNDP's projects and activities are pertinent to and consistent with the national development priorities, laws and programmes. However, it is not clear whether the set of projects that can be attributed to each outcome are inter-linked to achieve this, because there is no evidence to allow for evaluation of project results in relation to outcomes. The wording of the outcomes, which originate from the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and are used as a reference point for UNDP's contributions established in the CPD, is very ambitious in relation to the specificity of the projects promoted.

**Conclusion 4. Effectiveness.** The vast majority of project results are positive. The most successful results were those which generate evidence orga-

nized in databases, optimize the use of resources by forging strategic alliances with local and national agents and promote their sustainability by involving academic institutions and social organizations, and those in which the responsible parties (including UNDP staff) are prepared to participate in the community in order to better understand local leadership, generate trust with agents and further maximize the available resources. However, the turnover of government and UNDP staff and the organization's excessive bureaucracy affected the projects. There was also little coordination between the different UNDP areas of cooperation, for example between the environment and poverty: key contexts for sustainable human development.

**Conclusion 5. Programmatic and Managerial Efficiency.** There is a perception of programmatic efficiency in management and an appropriate use of resources to develop projects, and that administrative procedures are rigid and costly. Nevertheless, UNDP's accountability mechanisms and project audits force CSOs to undertake additional administrative procedures, which require time and resources disproportionate to UNDP's capabilities for cooperation. Furthermore, they generate distrust because UNDP's administrative procedures are sometimes viewed as direct interference in the administrative functioning of the implementing partners.

**Conclusion 6. Administrative and Financial Efficiency.** UNDP's Mexico Office has healthy financial management and its administrative systems have significantly improved. Its financial sustainability is valued as being between moderate and strong, based upon its level of extra-budgetary funds; however, the Government's participation in funding – the critical source of financial resources – has decreased. Budgetary restrictions and an adverse environment surrounding national public finances place UNDP in a vulnerable situation, given its financial dependence on the Mexican Government. The organization has (as recorded in the Atlas system) a very high number of service contracts, which impacts on the country office's adminis-



trative capacity. These contracts, concentrated in two institutions, do not contribute a great deal of added value and there is no short- or medium-term exit strategy.

**Conclusion 7. Sustainability and Ownership.**

Achieving a high level of project sustainability is made difficult by sexennial changes in the federal and state governments and the turnover and instability of the UNDP office staff in Mexico, which obstructs the continuity of relevant projects and affects institutional memory. In case where results did not reach a desirable level of sustainability, some weaknesses in UNDP were found, alongside a lack of internal structure in the country office to ensure project continuity. Project sustainability is also affected by dependence on consultants with temporary contracts to implement permanent work. Appropriation of project results is often limited and the likelihood of replicating experiences is minimal. Increasing budgetary restrictions from public finances are leading to cuts to several national counterparts responsible for ensuring the continuity of project results, many of which will also not be able to be replicated on a larger or wider scale.

**Conclusion 8. International Cooperation.**

In the current cooperation programme, there is evidence of South-South Cooperation (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation (TrC) and added value contributed by UNDP, which, in its partners' opinion, should be boosted. The publication of the report 'Towards a Global Partnership for Development: The UN and Mexico's South-South Cooperation' in 2014, the product of a joint collaboration process by the United Nations System in Mexico, maps the UN's experiences to SSC components led by the Mexican institutions. This report allowed the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) to gain visibility and positioned the United Nations as a facilitator of SSC and TrC in Mexico. The potential of SSC is being under-used; UNDP has obtained very good results in several parts of the world and the lessons learned in other countries could be useful for many projects in Mexico and vice versa: the

lessons learned in Mexico could be useful beyond its borders.

**Conclusion 9. Gender.**

UNDP has lost national leadership among its partners where gender is concerned and the incorporation of gender perspective in the country office has ceased to be a priority. There has been no gender strategy since 2012 and the body has made no effort to implement the Gender Equality Seal on a corporate level. The area of poverty reduction showed the largest proportion of programme content focused on gender. When implementing projects in the areas of governance and the environment, UNDP did not contribute approaches, methodology or experts to improve gender equality. With regard to the country office, staff distribution is satisfactory and equal in terms of sex, and the gender gap is smaller than the global average for the organization.

**Conclusion 10. Strengthening of Capabilities.**

Significant effort was made towards improving capabilities within the institutions involved in UNDP projects. The organization facilitates the development of capabilities because of its trained technical staff, the competency of the country office to manage projects and its access to national and international experts, good documented practices, access to support networks and ability to summon relevant agents. UNDP's participation has allowed for the creation, in some cases, and the strengthening, in other cases, of experts qualified in sustainable human development. However, there is a high risk that these capabilities will be lost and, alongside them, sustainability of results. The capabilities developed within the academic sector are a stable asset for long-term appropriation and continuity, but there is not always evidence of the mechanisms through which their potential can be used once projects are concluded.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1. Role and Added Value.**

Mexico needs an autonomous, firm, original and agile UNDP in order to make an impact on



development, one with more audacity when proposing alternative paths and positioning sustainable human development and the 2030 Agenda at a high level. UNDP faces the following challenges: strengthening its capacity for high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government; maintaining before the Government its capacity for linking partners and the strategic credibility for which it is known; improving its high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government, with the aim of achieving greater impact on the formulation and implementation of public policies and acting as a bridge in periods of political change; defining priorities in substantial topics relating to sustainable human development, in order to continue to be recognized as an active partner in promoting the implementation of the national development agenda and prioritizing research and knowledge creation; and taking on a proactive leadership role in terms of high-level influence and in the design and implementation of public policies in the national development areas which are lagging behind. Furthermore, UNDP must include topics from the national public agenda, private business projects, CSOs and academia in the formulation of the thematic areas for the next programme cycle. By doing so, it will have more effective and innovative impact upon those public policies which affect substantial topics and which are far-reaching for sustainable human development, instead of isolated consultancy projects based on deliverables.

**Management Response:** *UNDP in Mexico is autonomous, firm, original and agile in promoting development solutions, which has allowed it to achieve sustainable human development results which are objectively measurable, verifiable and strategically communicated. UNDP has successfully inserted relevant topics and has positioned the concept of sustainable human development at the heart of the national agenda and in federal and local public policies.*

*Thanks to the design of its current Country Programme Document (2014–2018 CPD), UNDP generates opportunities for collaboration with the Mexican Government for the consolidation of its enabling frameworks for the development and imple-*

*mentation of the 2030 Agenda in federal and subnational contexts. Through this collaboration, alliances are extended to other thematic sectors and to new partners (private sector, chambers of commerce, Congressional committees, civil society and academia), which demonstrates the indisputable relevance and independence of UNDP in Mexico.*

**Recommendation 2. The 2030 Agenda and Comparative Advantages.** The commitments made by Mexico with regard to compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are a window of opportunity for UNDP to develop significant leadership through its positioning as the United Nations agency specializing in the strengthening of national capacities to implement and monitor the aforementioned agenda and to examine the progress made by the country towards meeting the established goals. The 2030 Agenda is a key instrument for strengthening intellectual capabilities in emerging topics. It is also essential for drawing upon the progress in conceptualizing and implementing sustainable human development as detailed in UNDP's Strategic Plan, with the aim of defining priorities in substantial topics which contribute towards overcoming the main sustainable human development challenges in a comprehensive, inclusive way. Given the absence of programme commitments beyond 2018 in Mexico, the 2030 Agenda may be a long-term programme platform which guarantees continuity in time for UNDP projects.

**Management Response:** *UNDP in Mexico is considered by the Government to be the leading UNS agency for accompanying institutional agents in analysing, diffusing and monitoring the start of holistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country. Recently, the Presidency of the Republic established the National Council for the 2030 Agenda, which boasts the participation of State Secretaries, local Governments, representatives of other State powers, civil society, academia, the private sector and international bodies, alongside the UNDP Resident Coordinator and Representative. UNDP-Mexico has programme commitments beyond 2018, including specific trans-sexennial projects, which will transcend the 2012–2018 NDP and will allow*

*for continued aligned results which will specifically undertake the 2030 Agenda aims.*

*UNDP in Mexico works successfully to implement the 2030 Agenda with the executive branch at the level of different State Secretariats, including the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, the Secretariat of Social Development and the Presidential Office, as well as with the legislative branch, academia and civil society.*

**Recommendation 3. Strategic Positioning and the 2019-2023 Cooperation Programme.** We recommend that a more proactive role be taken to identify the country's development challenges to be prioritized by UNDP in its next cooperation programme; that more innovative initiatives be proposed which underline its added value and contribution; and that aims which impact on a national- and state-policy level, and on specific topics, be established. UNDP is recommended to take on calculated risks, to open doors, to once again explore complex national agenda topics – such as elections, transparency, conflicts, safety and corruption, which have proved to have added value – and to develop strategies to allow projects to cover the thematic spectrum of the UNDAF's outcomes and the outputs of the next CPD, in order that substantial accountability may be carried out in relation to the UNDP contribution to achieving the outcomes. It is also recommended that the organization concentrate its efforts on projects with long-term impact and wide national or state scope, better integrating environmental topics with those of poverty, so as to address the challenge of sustainable human development. Similarly, it is recommended that tools be created to promote knowledge management and alliances with consolidated CSOs and academia, and also to diffuse project results, with the aim of ensuring the furthest possible reach as criteria for identifying UNDP projects.

**Management Response:** *UNDP in Mexico will have a new country programme aligned with the priorities of the Mexican Government from 2020 onwards<sup>1</sup>, once the UNDAF has been produced in conjunction with the UNS and the new federal Government, which will begin to govern in 2019.*

**Recommendation 4. Mobilization of Resources.**

It is necessary to diversify funding sources in order to obtain greater management autonomy when defining the next cooperation programme and improved relative strategic positioning in relation to the Mexican Government and UNDP's other strategic partners. It is a challenge to implement a strategy for funding the country office which includes mobilizing resources with other donors, including from the private sector, and continuing to promote costs shared with the Government, particularly now that there are budget restrictions on a national level.

**Management Response:** *UNDP's management in Mexico is autonomous and independent. At the same time, its operations are mainly supported by mobilization of resources with the federal Government. Mexico is an upper middle-income country, a member of the OECD, with a situation which has allowed the country to graduate. UNDP's business model in Mexico is aligned with the Executive Board's rulings relating to programming and funding arrangements for UNDP's physical presence in upper middle-income countries. It also respects the international agreements which stipulate that countries should contribute to their own development (including the Paris Declaration, the Doha Conference and the Addis Ababa Conference). Furthermore, UNDP implements its development programmes based on regular resources and those from third-party sources, including government resources, which are approved within the frameworks of results and resources (in CPDs) by the Executive Board. UNDP in Mexico works creatively to consolidate collaboration opportunities, with a specific added value and on relevant topics, without compromising its independence and credibility before a range of agents.*

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1 One of the key actions forecast by the UNDP Office in Mexico is an extension of the current CPD (2014-2018) to 2019, in order to align its priorities with the National Development Plan, which will take effect from that year onwards.

*The Mexico office's Resource Mobilization Plan will consider widening its range of donors and will contemplate the possibility of work with the private sector and with third countries.*

**Recommendation 5.** On an **operational** level, UNDP's Office in Mexico is able to meet the challenges which arise in a graduated country and overcome the low classification awarded to it by its governmental partners where cost-effectiveness is concerned. This can be achieved by: reflecting on its technical and administrative staff's capacity for response to project needs and strengthening overloaded areas of work; reducing the number of service contracts handled by the office and which do not guarantee permanence of the staff in question in their corresponding government institutions; adopting talent attraction strategies for consultants, to guarantee continuity of expert human capital in the office and in projects; strengthening induction courses intended for project staff on administrative and managerial topics and relating to South-South and North-South Cooperation and to making gender perspective a cross-cutting issue; reviewing the employment terms of the staff recruited by UNDP who work in government institutions to guarantee increased support should they face alleged bullying or sexual harassment; developing conflict management strategies to reduce the possible impact on projects caused by differences in personality and attitude between UNDP staff, consultants and counterparts; and establishing expanded consultancy termination procedures which are more effective and guarantee that the contracted outputs will be delivered in a timely manner.

**Management Response:** Since 2015, UNDP in Mexico has implemented a work plan which is operationally focused upon: 1) improving the capacity of the office and its projects for cost-effective implementation of initiatives and 2) timely, effective and efficient adaptation of the management needs of counterparts, the office and the country context.

**Recommendation 6. Monitoring and Evaluation.** It is recommended that the functions of programme and project monitoring and evaluation

be reinforced, in order to qualitatively evaluate UNDP's thematic areas and foster, alongside the Mexican Government and CSOs, the diffusion of the results of UNDP projects in Mexico. This would provide continuity for UNDP's well-recognized efforts on a global scale in relation to the use of corporate tools and its progress in terms of Results-Based Management, taking into consideration national indicators, such as the country's rate of economic growth and poverty reduction, to demonstrate the pertinence of initiatives fostered by the organization. It is also recommended that the projects maintain a focal point of monitoring and evaluation, in order to continue to develop a culture of accountability in projects.

**Management Response:** In 2017, UNDP in Mexico was recognized by the Office of Audit and Investigation as an example of best practice in project monitoring, based on timely tracking of and reporting on the results and indicators identified in project documents. The work undertaken by the UNDP office in this country in terms of monitoring, reporting and evaluation has been widely acknowledged on a corporate level, and the organization has been invited to participate in pilot projects for corporate tools for monitoring and evaluation (Corporate System, PQA, IRRF, IWP, etc.) and has influenced the design and implementation of these. Since 2012, UNDP in Mexico has been ranked, for the fifth year running, as one of the top five offices on a global level in terms of results reporting, and specifically the ROAR. In 2016, this report was ranked first in Latin America and the Caribbean and third on a global level. The way in which the UNDP Office in Mexico presents information in terms of annually achieved results has influenced the ROAR structure and the type of information requested on a corporate level.

UNDP-Mexico analyses intermediate results and seeks out strategies to systematically improve them. Results are diffused through reports on work since 2012, updates to the UNDP-Mexico website and a solid presence in the press and social networks.

The four evaluative dimensions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are included in

*the intermediate and final project evaluations. With regard to the formats for which modification is suggested, it should be mentioned that these are corporate formats and that UNDP-Mexico complies faithfully with the specific guidelines for their use. Inclusion of the four suggested dimensions would need to be raised on a corporate level and is beyond the country office's responsibility.*

*UNDP-Mexico also manages and accompanies the external evaluations committed to in the evaluation plan, complying faithfully, at the present time (2017), with the planned evaluations. We currently have 12 focal points for monitoring and evaluation, which are each responsible for a different project. An internal monitoring and evaluation network has also been created, composed of the above-mentioned focal points, which exchange information.*

**Recommendation 7. The Area of the Environment.** It is suggested that UNDP be firmer when promoting an environmental agenda integrated with social and economic inclusion, taking advantage of the added value of its unique experience and work and of the availability of a significant budget for environmental topics, risk and disaster management and climate change. UNDP's contribution could be bolstered in central planning (and not only in sample areas), in order to move towards a green economy in all economic sectors; in the implementation of adaptation strategies for society and the Government in general to climate change; and in the promotion on a national level of the link between the environment and multidimensional poverty, among others. In the environmental area, UNDP could become a key agent for providing environmental policy with continuity beyond changes in administration and economic scenarios, and could be a pillar of State policy, supporting long-term institutional memory in Mexico in certain areas; it could drive professionalization of the public and private sectors in the topics of the environment, climate change and disaster risk management; and it could support the design of a scheme of position profiles in these areas, to ensure more permanent and continuous mechanisms which allow for new generations of experts to be trained.

**Management Response:** *The Mexican Government has played an important leading role in driving specific topics from the environmental agenda, to which the UNDP country office has contributed specialized knowledge and specific substantial support, with excellent results. The change towards building resilience, sustainable resource management and reversing environmental degradation in Mexico has progressed through collaboration with the local and federal Governments and, especially, through effective collaboration with counterparts such as SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, CONANP, CONABIO, INECC and the Secretariats involved in the CICC, international bodies (FAO, WB, IDB and GIZ), industrial sectors and CSOs. With the federal Government, cooperation schemes have been produced in the framework of their programmes, with the aim of generating enabling mechanisms for sustainable economic development and of incorporating standards, criteria, methodologies and green-planning indicators.*

**Recommendation 8. South-South and Triangular Cooperation.** The topic of South-South and Triangular Cooperation has accounted for significant contributions on UNDP's part and continues to be a relevant area of work for the Mexican Government. Therefore, it is important to continue to be a significant ally in systematizing, promoting and diffusing good public policy practices through these types of cooperation, taking advantage of UNDP's capacity in this area on an international level, in order to continue to contribute to Mexico's positioning as an international development cooperator and to better connect the country to the rest of the world.

**Management Response:** *Recommendation 8 has been duly noted.*

**Recommendation 9. Gender.** It is important to approach the question of gender equality by strategically taking into account the design and implementation of specific projects, in addition to making it a cross-cutting issue, in such a way that the fundamental importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women is reflected. It is recommended that gender strategy



be updated and adjusted to the new, current Gender Seal Policy in UNDP and that a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women in its own office and between project counterparts be implemented; that the topic of gender be maintained in the Resident Representative's discourse, so that the Government may see its added value and place it on the national agenda, thus contributing to UNDP's positioning in this area; and that a gender strategy be produced based on a diagnosis to prepare transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, which presents an important window of opportunity for UNDP.

***Management Response:** Strategic attention to the topic of gender equality implies making gender a cross-cutting issue in the programme portfolio, seeking out collaboration opportunities with relevant agents and making topics such as female political participation and economic empowerment visible. We will explore new gender components for future collaborations.*

*The Mexico office has a gender strategy, which is currently being implemented.*

**Recommendation 10. International Context.** Attention should be paid to changes to the international agenda resulting from socio-political

changes in the region which may, in turn, lead to changes in international cooperation policy in crucial issues included in UNDP's agenda (climate change, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women) and may have an impact on topics of unemployment and crime. Similarly, variations due to protectionist market policies may affect commercial exchange, which would influence economic activity in Mexico, tax collection and public income, presenting a risk for funding of UNDP projects. There is also a risk for cooperation in economic areas, due to the renegotiation of free-trade agreements with North America and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also important to supervise the implementation of the Collaboration Agreement with USAID, in order to implement a programme with the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) and with the Secretariat of Public Administration (SEFP), in order to support compliance with the SDGs in Mexico through practices of open government, citizen participation and strengthening of transparency.

***Management Response:** The USAID and INAI project is already in operation and seeks to improve practices of citizen governance and strengthening of transparency.*



# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Assessments of Development Results (ADRs) on a national scale to gather and show evidence of the organization's contribution to development results in the countries in which it operates, in addition to the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and boosting national efforts to achieve sustainable human development. The purpose of the ADR is:

- To help to produce UNDP's next Country Programme Document (CPD).
- To strengthen UNDP's accountability to the interested parties.
- To strengthen UNDP's accountability to the Executive Board.

ADRs are independent assessments carried out within the framework of the general provisions of UNDP's Evaluation Policy. This is the first ADR to be conducted in Mexico and it was carried out in close collaboration with the Mexican Government, UNDP's country office and the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC). In compliance with its terms of reference, the evaluation analysed two UNDP programme cycles in Mexico, corresponding to the period 2008-2016, therefore covering the first three years of the 2014-2018 CPD

and taking into account the major interventions or projects which began in the previous programme cycle, laid out in the 2008-2013 CPD.

### 1.2 DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT OF THE COUNTRY

The United Mexican States, located in North America, shares a border with Guatemala and Belize to the south and with the United States of America to the north, and the country is the 11th most populous in the world. Seventy-nine percent of its more than 120 million inhabitants live in urban areas; of these, more than 20 million live in the capital, Mexico City, and in the surrounding cities.<sup>2</sup> The Mexican system of government, consolidated in the 1917 Constitution, is a representative democracy; the country is divided into 32 states, each led by an elected president for a single six-year term. Legislative power is held by two chambers, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, while judicial power is held by the Supreme Court of Justice.

Mexico is an upper middle-income country and its economy is the 11th largest in the world, based on its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$2.157 trillion in purchasing power parity).<sup>3</sup> Since 2011, after the global economic crisis, the country's GDP growth has been relatively stable (a yearly average of 2.8 percent<sup>4</sup>). The manufacturing sector accounts for 87 percent of its exports, followed in importance by crude oil<sup>5</sup>

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2 Government of Mexico, INEGI; OECD, OECD Territorial Reviews: Valle de México, Mexico, Mexico, 2015.

3 World Bank, Data bank. Available at: [data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-PPP-based-table](http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/GDP-PPP-based-table) (updated on 12 April 2017).

4 Government of Mexico, Economic Information Bank, INEGI. Available at: [www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/bie](http://www.inegi.org.mx/sistemas/bie) (consulted in May 2016).

5 For 2015, the International Energy Agency (IEA) reported that 2,812,000 barrels of oil were produced daily in Mexico, 3.56 percent of the world's total production, which positions the country as the 10th largest crude oil producer in the world.

(5.9 percent) and agricultural products (4.6 percent)<sup>6</sup>. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in 2015, foreign direct investment inflows to Mexico amounted to \$30 billion (15th in the world, sixth among emerging economies and second in Latin America and the Caribbean). Furthermore, the country is the 14th most important contributor to the United Nations budget.

The 2015 national report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) emphasized the country's main advances in complying with these goals, estimating that 84.3 percent of the indicators had been met at the end of that year. The national aggregate indicators show that income-based extreme poverty (\$1.25 per day) has decreased by half, primary education is universal and the gender gap in schooling has been reduced. Challenges remain in indicators of employment income, maternal and child mortality rates, health, the environment and inequality. It is estimated that 46.2 percent of the population lives in a situation of multidimensional poverty.<sup>7</sup> In 2016, Mexico put itself forward for a National Voluntary Review of its progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) before the High-Level Political Forum.

The country faces challenges related to governance, human rights, corruption<sup>8</sup> and safety. Organized crime has driven a situation of inse-

curity and violence, the consequence of which has been an increase in breaches of human rights. The Government has begun to introduce political and legal changes to establish a stronger national institutional framework to guarantee human rights for all.<sup>9</sup>

In terms of biodiversity, Mexico is among the few countries in the world considered to be megadiverse, with two large biogeographical areas which contain almost all of the planet's terrestrial ecosystems and two coasts.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with serious risks for its population and high economic costs. Like other parts of the planet, Mexico is suffering from an increase in temperatures and extreme weather events, such as droughts and tropical storms (cyclones and hurricanes).<sup>11</sup> In many coastal areas, the sea level has risen.<sup>12</sup> There is also an increasing loss of ecosystems across much of the national territory, deterioration of the air quality of metropolitan areas, soil degradation and growing pressure on water sources.<sup>13</sup>

On the other hand, the country's economic development models have led to increasing pressure on natural resources, which has accelerated environmental degradation. The rapid urbanization process caused by rural-urban migration and demographic growth also helps

6 INEGI, Administrative Records, Balanza comercial de mercancías de México, 2015.

7 With the General Social Development Law in 2004, Mexico began a process which led to a revision of the national concept of poverty, understanding multidimensional poverty to mean that a person is not guaranteed the exercise of at least one of his/her rights to social development and that his/her income is insufficient to acquire the goods and services that s/he requires to meet his/her needs (CONEVAL, 'Methodology for Multidimensional Poverty Measurement in Mexico', 2014; Poverty data: CONEVAL, Poverty measurement. Poverty in Mexico. Consulted in May 2016).

8 The 2016 National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) estimates that 77.9 percent of adults consider there to be corruption in Traffic Police, 66.7 percent have the same opinion of the Municipal Preventative Police and 63.3 percent of the criminal justice system (INEGI, ENVIPE 2016, p. 44).

9 United Nations, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Christof Heyns: Mission to Mexico', Human Rights Council, 2014.

10 National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), 'Natural Capital of Mexico', 2009.

11 Government of Mexico, *Compromisos de mitigación y adaptación ante el cambio climático para el periodo 2020-2030*.

12 Ibid.

13 For further details, see SEMARNAT, 'State of the Environment Report 2015', Mexico City, 2015. Available at: <http://apps1.semarnat.gob.mx/dgeia/informe15/index.html>



to explain this degradation.<sup>14</sup> Production models have led to an increase in requirements of raw materials. Poverty levels in the country have not decreased in the past three decades, which has influenced families in situations of poverty in rural areas to undertake illegal logging and to open up new land for crops.<sup>15</sup> The fall in agriculture commodity prices as a result of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1994 has led the country to increase production by harnessing new land for crops and pasture, which has led to the loss of large areas of forests, jungles and wetlands.<sup>16</sup> Since the 1980s, there has been a reorientation towards intensive exportation of hydrocarbons, which has led to an intensification of exploration and exploitation work involving oil and gas, the consequence of which is increasing damage to the marine and terrestrial ecosystems of oil-extraction areas.<sup>17</sup> The policy of protecting and stimulating mining is also a contributing factor towards increasing environmental damage in the country. Such damage has been particularly strong in buffer zones for natural protected areas.<sup>18</sup>

In order to address some of these problems, the Government established a climate change policy through approval of the General Law on Climate Change and the creation of institutions and initiatives.

The 2013-2018 National Development Plan (NDP) constitutes the federal Government's current strategy and defines the sectoral, institutional, regional and special programmes to promote economic growth and social development.

The five areas of the NDP's strategic goals can be summarized as follows: 1) democracy, good governance and safety; 2) social rights; 3) high-quality education; 4) sustainable growth and equal opportunities; and 5) international cooperation.<sup>19</sup> Since its election in 2012, the Government has worked to achieve important reforms related to employment, tax issues, elections, education, energy, political processes (such as the Transparency Reform and the new Protection Law), telecommunications, financial matters, competence and criminal procedures.

Mexico has led the diffusion of ideas, on both a regional and a global level, through the South-South Cooperation and Triangular Cooperation modalities. The federal Government created the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) in 2011, within the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, in order to coordinate cooperation for development from the perspective of both beneficiaries and suppliers.

### 1.3 UNDP IN MEXICO

UNDP has been present in Mexico since the signing of a cooperation agreement with the Government on 23 February 1961. Furthermore, the Mexican Government and the organization signed a Collaboration Framework Agreement in 2011, which establishes a strategic alliance in order to maximize the country's potential as a key agent in international development. Since 2008, UNDP has articulated its activities in two programme cycles: one for 2008-2012 (extended to 2013) and another for 2014-2018. The first

14 Conde, Cecilia and Saldaña-Zorrilla, Sergio O., 'Cambio climático en Latinoamérica y el Caribe: Impactos, vulnerabilidad y adaptación', *Revista Ambiente y Desarrollo*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, ISSN: 0121-7607, Santiago, Chile, 2008.

15 Conde, Cecilia, Saldaña, Sergio, and Magaña, Victor, 'Fighting Climate Change in a Divided World. Thematic Regional Paper: Latin America', *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, United Nations Development Programme, New York, USA, 2007, p.29.

16 Schatan, Claudia, 'Efectos del TLCAN en el cuidado del ambiente en México', *Comercio Exterior*, March 1996.

17 Barbosa Cano, Fabio, 'Las reservas y el potencial mexicano de petróleo crudo: pasado y presente de una explotación depredadora', p. 8, in Colmenares, Francisco et al. (coords.), 'Pemex, presente y futuro', UNAM, UAM, Autonomous University of Campeche, Plaza y Valdés, 2008.

18 Decelis Contreras, Rafael, 'Efectos de 23 años de política económica liberal 1982-2005', in Saxe-Fernández, John (coord.), *La energía en México: situación y alternativas*, UNAM, Mexico, 2009, pp. 14-31.

19 Government of Mexico, 'National Development Plan 2013-2018', 2013.

programme was based on the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and was closely aligned with the 2008-2012 UNDAF and with UNDP's 2008-2011 Strategic Plan. It was also linked to the 2007-2012 NDP. The programme focused on the areas of poverty reduction and inequality related to issues of money, society, gender, ethnicity, democratic governance, systemic competitiveness and environmental sustainability. The programme promoted public policies and technical assistance, in addition to Mexico's participation in multilateral forums fostered by UNDP, among which the following are notable: the XVI Conference of the Parties (COP 16) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), held in Cancun in 2010; the High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), held in Mexico City in 2014; and the presentation in 2016 of Mexico's Voluntary National Report at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, supported by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In the context of the country programme, international exchange of experiences with UNDP offices in other countries has been promoted, in order to strengthen the national capacity in the areas upon which the programme concentrates. The UNDP country programme and the UNDAF were extended by a year, to 2013, in order to align them with the work of other UNS agencies and with the

national strategies of the incoming Government, particularly the 2013-2018 NDP.

In view of the priorities defined in the five axes of the 2013-2018 NDP (Mexico at Peace; An Inclusive Mexico; Mexico with High-Quality Education; Prosperous Mexico; and Mexico, an Actor with Global Responsibility), the current (2014-2018) country programme focuses on: (a) sustainable human development, inclusion and equality (outcome 35); (b) productive economic development and competitiveness (outcome 36); (c) improved capabilities for the sustainable use of resources and resilience in the areas of the environment and climate change (outcome 37); (d) public and citizen safety, social cohesion and justice (outcome 38); (e) transparency and accountability (outcome 39); (f) citizen participation and human rights (outcome 40); and (g) leadership in international cooperation for development (outcome 41).

In 2015, the UNDP Office in Mexico undertook 46 projects with total implementation of \$21.05 million. In the period 2008-2015, 46 percent of projects were implemented by the country, 18 percent directly by UNDP, and 36 percent by other modalities (non-governmental organizations, other United Nations agencies). The expected results and the budget proposed in the previous and current programmes are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1. Results and proposed resources for the Country Programme (2008–2013)**

<b>Thematic area</b>	<b>Outcomes of the UNDP Country Programme (Outcome no. and explanation)</b>	<b>Proposed resources (USD)</b>
<b>Reduction of poverty</b>	25 – Public policies and society aim to meet the MDGs, promote human development and social responsibility.	11,500,000
	26 – Policies are formulated and applied for progress towards a socially competitive economy.	2,000,000
	27 – Sustainable chains and production processes are widespread.	15,000,000
	29 – Greater efficiency of public policies relating to social cohesion and social protection.	3,000,000
<b>The environment and sustainable development</b>	30 – Consolidation of management of public and citizen policy for sustainable development.	28,000,000
	31 – Strengthening of national and local capabilities for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change and for disaster risk prevention.	14,000,000

(Continued)

<b>Table 1. Results and proposed resources for the Country Programme (2008–2013)</b>		
<b>Thematic area</b>	<b>Outcomes of the UNDP Country Programme (Outcome no. and explanation)</b>	<b>Proposed resources (USD)</b>
<b>Democratic governance</b>	32 – Strengthening of public policy for gender and ethnic equality.	15,000,000
	28 – Consolidation of Mexico as a provider of cooperation.	12,500,000
	33 – The quality of democratic institutions and their services has improved.	17,000,000
	34 – Strengthening of the exercising of citizenship.	3,000,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>121,000,000</b>

Source: DP/CPD/MEX/2

<b>Table 2. Results and proposed resources for the Country Programme (2014-2018)</b>		
<b>Thematic area</b>	<b>Outcomes of the UNDP Country Programme (Outcome no. and explanation)</b>	<b>Proposed resources (USD)</b>
<b>Reduction of poverty</b>	35 – The Mexican State will have implemented a comprehensive social development strategy which guarantees compliance with human rights, by means of linking policies which contribute to poverty reduction, improvements to quality of life and reduction of inequality based on gender, age, ethnicity, income, geographical location and disability, supported by schemes for political dialogue and inclusive social participation.	5,795,000
	36 – The Mexican State will have strengthened and implemented public policies which foster sustained economic growth, competitiveness, decent work and employment quality, particularly for the benefit of women, young people, the indigenous populations, rural communities, migrants, older adults and the disabled.	5,100,000
	41 – The Mexican State will have strengthened its position as an effective development cooperator on a regional and global level and, for this purpose, will have consolidated a pertinent international cooperation platform.	4,160,000
<b>The environment</b>	37 – The three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society will have strengthened their capabilities for reversing environmental degradation and for maximizing natural resources in a sustainable and equitable way by making environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy a cross-topic issue in legislative, programming and decision-making processes.	60,000,000
<b>Democratic governance</b>	38 – The Mexican State will have implemented public policies and strategies relating to public and citizen safety to guarantee the exercising of human rights, considering citizen participation, in addition to social prevention of crime and violence, with emphasis upon individuals in situations of vulnerability and discrimination.	6,600,000
	39 – The Mexican State will have consolidated a government which effectively guarantees human rights, by means of strengthening transparency, access to information and accountability for combating corruption and the elimination of any form of discrimination.	11,095,000
	40 – The Mexican State will have generated synergies for building a participative citizen population which understands and fully exercises its human rights, influences inclusive public policies and accepts its responsibilities.	8,600,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>101,350,000</b>

Source: DP/CPD/MEX/1

## 1.4 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

This ADR, undertaken in 2016<sup>20</sup>, comprises two components:

- **UNDP's contribution by programme areas:** The ADR assessed the effectiveness of UNDP's contribution to development results in Mexico by means of its programme activities. Special attention was paid to assessing its contribution in relation to UNDP's general view of aiding countries to eradicate poverty and reduce inequalities and exclusion, in addition to its contribution to fostering gender equality and the empowerment of women.<sup>21</sup>
- **The quality of UNDP's contribution.** The ADR also assessed the quality of UNDP's contribution based on the following criteria:
  - Relevance of UNDP projects and results to the country's needs and national priorities, as well as their relationship with UNDP's mandate.
  - Efficiency of UNDP interventions in terms of use of human and financial resources (programmatic, managerial and operational efficiency).
  - Sustainability of the results to which UNDP contributes (design for sustainability, scope and extension, development of capabilities and implementation problems).

The ADR sought to present its findings and evaluations in line with the set of criteria mentioned below and based on an analysis of the CPD's

outcome areas, in order that evaluations, general conclusions and recommendations be produced for future action. The ADR assessed the specific factors that explain UNDP's performance, especially the principles of participation and parameters of alignment with UNDP's 2014-2017 Strategic Plan.<sup>22</sup> When assessing the above, the evaluation also examined certain specific country factors which supposedly have had an impact on UNDP's performance. Although the ADR focused on UNDP's performance and accountability, identifying problems and following up on some of the conclusions from recent audits, the focus of this assessment in the context of Mexico is to look towards the future, learn from past and present mistakes and recommend clear, realistic options for change and improvement.

The analysis involved the review of UNDP documents, strategic Government documents, UNS planning documents and project evaluation reports. A study was undertaken based on a sample of 72 of the 109 projects and initiatives implemented in the period under evaluation; these were selected on the basis of different criteria, such as coverage of thematic areas, programme cycles, maturity, geographic coverage, volume of funding, etc. Some were chosen at random, others deliberately. Close to 150 interviews were carried out with over 200 individuals from a range of different institutions and with beneficiaries. These interviews were individual and semi-structured and in groups (with counterparts, beneficiaries, the United Nations Country Team [UNCT], companies, etc.); certain interviews were conducted via telephone and Skype (for example, in New York). Furthermore, visits were also made on

20 From 2017 onwards, the 'Assessment of Development Results' is known as the 'Independent Country Programme Evaluation' (ICPE). In this report, the previous terminology is maintained, given that the assessment began before this change and was completed in 2017: a transition year in terms of the new name.

21 Using the system-wide action plan (SWAP) to improve gender equality and the empowerment of women in the United Nations System and the gender results effectiveness scale (GRES) developed by the IEO (UNDP, 'Evaluation of the UNDP Contribution to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment', August 2015, chapter 5; *UN System-Wide Action Plan for implementation of the CEB United Nations System-Wide Policy on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women*, April 2012).

22 These include: appropriation and strengthening of national capabilities; a human rights-based approach; sustainable human development; gender equality and the empowerment of women; voice and participation; South-South and Triangular Cooperation; an active role as citizens of the world; and universality.

the ground to some projects and areas (the states of Yucatán, Campeche, Quintana Roo, Chiapas, Oaxaca and Jalisco).<sup>23</sup> Among the individuals consulted were those belonging to the federal, state and municipal governments, civil society and academia, the private sector, UNDP country office and project staff, other United Nations System agencies and a wide range of beneficiaries, who were reached not only through travel previously planned with the UNDP and counterparts, but also randomly, by visiting homes, communal lands and communities in the outskirts of the pre-established locations.

In line with the ADR criteria, the evaluation focused on the period between 2008 and 2016 (until October), taking into account the present and past context, analysing overall data based on the experience and knowledge of each team member. The aim was to reach conclusions and identify the challenges that lie ahead for the country office and the different groups of ADR users. Information sources were triangulated: in other words, the same data, results or opinions were checked at different levels, with implementing partners and beneficiaries, in order to validate hypotheses and to obtain a comprehensive view in accordance with the different interested parties.

Of the evaluation's main limitations, the following can be mentioned: the staff turnover at UNDP's Mexico Office and in some Government counterparts and partners, which made it difficult to locate certain individuals with

information; lack of collaboration on the part of some relevant agents (except at the highest levels, where a great deal of interest and willingness was shown); difficulty in reaching certain areas for safety reasons (this was avoided through telephone interviews or secondary information); and a shortage of documentation in one of the thematic areas. Furthermore, given that visits for interviews on the ground and the selection of interviewees were mainly conducted following suggestions from UNDP and its counterparts, it was not always possible to triangulate information with independent or randomly chosen individuals (who had not been included in the proposed lists).

## 1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report contains a description of results in terms of contribution to development in two chapters: effectiveness (chapter 2) and quality, taking into account the aspects of relevance, efficiency and sustainability (chapter 3). Next, an analysis of UNDP's strategic positioning can be found, (chapter 4) alongside conclusions and recommendations (chapter 5). Outcomes were analysed by splitting them into four groups: those relating to poverty and economic development (35 and 36); to governance (38, 39 and 40, although they are very heterogeneous); to sustainable development, the environment and climate change (37); and to Mexico's international development cooperation (41) – in line with the numbering of the current CPD.

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23 Nuevo Becal and Conhuás communal lands (both in the municipality of Calakmul, Campeche); El Empedrado (municipality of Mascota, Jalisco); Nuevo San Juan Chamula (municipality of Las Margaritas), Las Pimientas (municipality of Ocozocoautla), Francisco Villa community (municipality of Jiquipilas), El Ocote (all of them in Chiapas); Noh Bec communal land (municipality of Felipe Carrillo Puerto) municipalities of Tulum, Bacalar and Holpechén (all in Quintana Roo); in addition to the cities of Mérida (Yucatán), Tuxtla Gutiérrez and Tapachula (Chiapas) and Oaxaca (in the state with the same name).





# UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS – EFFECTIVENESS

## 2.1 POVERTY REDUCTION, INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

### Outcomes

35 – The Mexican State will have implemented a comprehensive social development strategy which guarantees compliance with human rights, by means of linking policies which contribute to poverty reduction, improvements to quality of life and reduction of inequality based on gender, age, ethnicity, income, geographical location and disability, supported by schemes for political dialogue and inclusive social participation.

36 – The Mexican State will have strengthened and implemented public policies which foster sustained economic growth, competitiveness, decent work and employment quality, particularly for the benefit of women, young people, the indigenous populations, rural communities, migrants, older adults and the disabled.

### 2.1.1 OVERVIEW

Mexico is one of the signatory states to the 2030 Agenda to meet the Sustainable Development Goals. Although it has covered significant ground towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals, the country faces numerous challenges in the areas of poverty, discrimination and economic growth. For 2014, an estimated 55.3 million people (46.2 percent of the total population) lived in poverty, of which 11.4 million (9.5 percent) were in a situation of extreme poverty (in comparison to 10.6 percent in 2008).<sup>24</sup> Poverty, as a percentage of the population, is greater in rural areas

and indigenous communities (61.1 and 73.2 percent, respectively). Data for the same year show that 5.8 million young people were engaged in informal work and 1.3 million in unpaid work. In 2015, six million children between the ages of 3 and 17 did not attend school.<sup>25</sup> Poverty distribution is not homogeneous, since the rates are higher among those living in the south of the country, in rural areas and indigenous areas, and among women, older adults and children.

Mexico's female population of 57.5 million are considered vulnerable, as women are exposed to discrimination and multiple breaches of their political, economic, social and cultural rights. Women have a lower rate of participation in economic activities, since only 43.22 percent are part of the economically active population, in comparison to 78.55 percent of men.<sup>26</sup>

According to the 'Human Rights Situation in Mexico', published by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the serious breaches committed against indigenous peoples and communities in Mexico occur in two main areas: (i) violence in the context of mega-projects built on ancestral land and territories, authorized without the due process of prior, free and informed consultation and consent; or (ii) in the framework of their claims to land and non-compliance with the proper criminal proceedings.

Teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 (8.6 percent of the population) and young people

24 Unlike in other countries, Mexico uses the concept of multidimensional poverty which, in addition to income, takes into account socio-economic characteristics, such as education, housing conditions, access to services, health and social security. The figures mentioned here correspond to the CONEVAL measurements, the methodology and criteria of which are different to those used to monitor the MDGs (CONEVAL, 'Poverty Measurement in 2014').

25 Ibid.

26 Data from the 'National Survey of Demographic Dynamics' (ENADID) INEGI, 2014.

between the ages of 20 and 24 (8.3 percent) have the highest level of unemployment.<sup>27</sup> Many teenagers become addicted to alcohol, tobacco and narcotic drugs. Lack of guidance has resulted in a high rate of pregnancy among teenagers aged between 15 and 19; in 2014, these young mothers accounted for 77 per 1,000 births.<sup>28</sup>

The Social Development Secretariat (SEDESOL) and the Secretariat of Economy (SE) have programmes directed towards reducing poverty and promoting the country's economic growth and competitiveness. Among the SEDESOL programmes aimed at reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion are PROSPERA, Female Heads of Households Life Insurance, and the Pension Programme for the Elderly and Child Care. The SE programmes directed towards increasing productivity and promoting entrepreneurship are the National Micro Enterprises Funding Programme and the Enterprises National Fund.

Since 1992, UNDP has closely collaborated with SEDESOL, creating projects to strengthen institutional capacities and to combat poverty. On 24 June 2013, both entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding which describes the basis for their collaboration in the areas of tackling poverty, human development, social mobility, social capital, social cohesion, analysing social policy and evaluating social programmes. It is important to emphasize not only the participation of UNDP, SEDESOL and other agencies in institutional improvement, but also their contribution to positioning Mexico in the international debate on multidimensional poverty and the 2030 Agenda and in producing MDG and SDG aims and indicators.

Programmes involving United Nations System donors and agencies in tackling poverty and bolstering Mexican competitiveness range from drawing up studies, loans and consultancy to

direct interventions. The main donors are the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Twenty-one bodies belonging to the UNS and other institutions are represented in the country – such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) – alongside the embassies of countries that support development (Germany, Canada and the United Kingdom).

The focus of UNDP's two Country Programme Documents, which cover the evaluated cycles, continues to be analysis of public policies and specific programmes, contributing recommendations to improve their impact. Both programmes adopted an approach beyond poverty, also addressing individuals who live above the poverty line but who are still vulnerable or who own or want businesses with the potential for growth. For example, a significant proportion of the resources administered by UNDP were directed towards the functioning of the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) ConstruyeT Programme and towards the Supplier Development Programme and creating the National Entrepreneur Observatory (ONE). The CPDs also sought to build social capital, so as to drive a cooperative, participatory way of finding solutions to reduce poverty and inequality, in addition to supporting the Government in developing methodological instruments.

### 2.1.2 EFFICIENCY OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

Through both CPDs, UNDP has generally shown positive progress towards expected results relating to human development, social inclusion, tackling poverty, human growth and competitiveness. In the results-oriented annual reports (ROAR), significant progress can be observed for status indicators regarding achievement of

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27 INEGI-STPS, 'National Survey on Occupation and Employment' 2015.

28 INEGI, 'Data from the National Survey of Demographic Dynamics' (*ENADID*), INEGI, 2014.



the expected results. For their part, the results of interviews seem more varied, particularly in relation to medium- and long-term scope, since, on some occasions, the result did not have a long-lasting impact. The principal factors that support the extent of results are partners' active participation and ownership in project implementation, UNDP's transparency and its positive treatment of its counterparts. Factors that hinder the achievement of results are: changes in government, managerial staff turnover and a lack of budget, project monitoring and capacities in municipal administrations to incorporate interventions into government programmes which transcend the government cycle.

UNDP's strategy for contributing to reducing poverty and achieving social inclusion focused on producing and disseminating national and state Human Development Reports (HDRs), studies on social inclusion and food security and effective programme-based work on public policy, inclusion in employment, productive empowerment, transparency, accountability, citizen participation, and sustainable natural resource management and risk reduction, among others. Additionally, the organization has supported the Mexican Government in undertaking projects for the development of entrepreneurs and MSMEs with the goal of increasing economic growth and boosting competitiveness.

### **Human Development Index**

One of UNDP's main activities in the two evaluated cycles was the production of national and state Human Development Indices (HDI) and of the corresponding studies.

UNDP was involved in developing the HDIs, formulating recommendations, creating reliable databases and promoting the index to the national and state governments. The result was the production of over 10 documents relating to the HDI. However, the most significant outcome was that human development was brought to the table in Mexico. Thus, during the evaluation period, the area's scope went beyond publications and a high volume of state resources were

directed towards these topics. Some laws and programme operational rules were changed in favour of human development.

This increased influence of the human development approach was due to two factors. The first is internal to UNDP: between 2002 and 2012, priority was placed on raising awareness of the human development approach among decision-makers and on impactful research being used and generated. The second is an external factor, consisting of the fact that, over the same period, the federal Government was greatly receptive to the human development approach. The federal Administration embraced external evaluation and this impetus was maintained, albeit with more limited receptiveness, in the following six-year term.

However, in line with the perception of a few HDI experts, in 2012 certain internal and external changes affected the federal Government's use of the human development approach. Regarding the internal factor, UNDP headquarters redefined goals for local offices, with greater emphasis on real beneficiaries and less on the impact on decision-making relating to policies. Additionally, the interviewees considered that political inexperience within UNDP was made apparent, in terms of interacting with a Government representing a party in opposition to that of the outgoing Administration. Within the external factors, UNDP was perceived to be in a situation where the federal Administration is less receptive and, for this reason, the human development approach is more difficult to foster. These opinions were formed in a scenario in which SEDESOL considers its relationship with UNDP to have strengthened.

### **Social Inclusion**

UNDP carried out a range of projects relating to social inclusion, with a particular focus on the topics of gender, children, the disabled, indigenous populations and migrants.

On inclusion of vulnerable groups, projects were created which developed data collection meth-

odologies, the design of indicators and impact evaluations, with the aim of providing empirical evidence to decision-makers in relation to issues in which women, indigenous peoples, individuals in poverty and children are made more visible. Additionally, activities, documents and workshops were created and undertaken to raise awareness and reinforce the capacities of national and local institutions on equality topics, in order to change laws, produce specific programmes and modify internal procedures. The most noteworthy are skills training and development of material for the inclusion of children with disabilities in SEDESOL's Childcare programme and, consequently, improved access for their mothers to the employment market, alongside consultancy for the resolution of indigenous conflicts.

The long-term results of these social inclusion interventions varied on a project-to-project basis and greatly depended upon the continuity provided to them after changes in government or staff, working both for the institutions involved and UNDP itself. Furthermore, the long-term results depended on the sustainability and implementation strategies agreed upon between UNDP and its counterpart before embarking on the project.

As for initiatives relating to migrants, mixed results were found in terms of the social inclusion of migrants in their host neighbourhoods. On the one hand, in Tapachula, the project successfully established communication between the community and the migrant centre; on the other, in Oaxaca there was no continuity whatsoever, the new migrant centre managers knew nothing about the project and, when the project ended, the residents involved felt that they had wasted their time.

An additional social inclusion element is present in actions related to the ConstruyeT Social-Emotional Skills Programme, in which the needs and education of teenagers are taken into account. Of UNDP Mexico Office's projects, this is one of the largest where budget management and scope are concerned. The project, through teaching of social-emotional skills to students

and their teachers, directly or indirectly contributes to improving quality of life, reducing gender violence and inequality and improving academic attendance and results, which could translate into better citizens.

The National Programme for Integral Family Development and the Puebla Programme sought to improve the focus of food programmes intended for members of the population receiving social welfare. The aim of the projects was to direct food support in 32 states, to design indicators, to operate effectively and efficiently and to evaluate impact and perception. Short- and medium-term results did indeed emerge from these projects, since their developed methodologies and operational changes remain.

**Competitiveness and sustainable production chains were fostered through supplier development projects, while it was also possible to strengthen sustained economic growth through support of entrepreneurship and MSMEs.**

Through the production of various studies and the creation of a portal for supporting entrepreneurs, the National Entrepreneur Observatory (ONE) provided elements to aid the design of policies for developing entrepreneurs and MSMEs. The intended results are increased competitiveness, sustained economic development and high-quality employment creation. Short- and medium-term results are being achieved and any long-term results will depend on future administrations' ownership of the project and sustainability.

The Supplier Development Programme was an initiative with national and international scope which drove national growth and competitiveness over two terms of government. In the short and medium term, its aims were met, since a methodology was created for supplier development, which will remain as the project's intellectual legacy. This project directly affected small and medium enterprises (SMEs); with the support of their tractor companies, they became more competitive and generated employ-

ment by obtaining quality management certifications and adopting the supplier development methodology.

On questions related to social inclusion, human development and competitiveness, the main contributing factors for the achievement of results were: commitment from the federal Government and the implementation partners to these topics; the professionalism of UNDP staff and their attentiveness to partners' needs; UNDP's support for boosting dialogue between relevant Government players, CSOs and beneficiaries; UNDP's reputation as part of the UNS; the organization's access to experts; and the technical capacity of its team. Lack of continuity in some projects is mainly due to changes in government, staff turnover affecting both UNDP and implementation partners, and budgetary cuts. Technical problems were also reported in project operation, alongside significant differences between UNDP teams and their partners, resulting in a complex working relationship. Opportunities for improvement can be identified in order to achieve results on topics relating to bureaucratic delays produced by the organization and the federal Government, on the confusing transition of UNDP staff to join new management belonging to the country office, and the hiring of external consultants who often are delayed and do not appear to involve the best professionals or experts in Mexico or the world.

## 2.2 ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

### Outcome

37 – The three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society will have strengthened their capabilities for reversing environmental degradation and for maximizing natural resources in a sustainable and equitable way by making environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy a cross-topic issue in legislative, programming and decision-making processes.

### 2.2.1 OVERVIEW

Although environmental deterioration – accumulated over decades in Mexico due to the absence of an environmental component in development policies – significantly contributed to the loss of natural capital, over the past 10 years there have been growing efforts to reverse this degradation. After 2006, environmental topics have gradually been incorporated into the highest levels of the country's public policy (national development plans and sectoral programmes), with the aim of addressing the imbalances in this area and the delays in formulating joint Government-society solutions. Even so, application of government policies has been limited, especially in terms of including the different agents which converge in the country's ecosystems. For this reason, during the evaluation period, the challenge remained for government institutions to generate synergies with one another, with civil society and with international cooperation agencies. This same challenge has existed among UNS agencies. Inter-agency work is an area of opportunity within the UNS which would boost results as well as impact on cooperation with the Mexican Government.

With regard to climate change, Mexico has made multiple international commitments to mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. To this end, in 2012 the Mexican Government published the General Law on Climate Change, establishing goals such as a 30 percent reduction in emissions by 2020 and a 50 percent decrease by 2050, in comparison to levels in 2000.

Mexico is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which could lead to serious risks for its population and high economic costs. Both the number and the economic cost of climatological disasters have significantly increased in Mexico over the past 30 years. Floods originating from hurricanes and tropical storms affected the country the most, followed by droughts. The economic sector most affected by climatological disasters over the same period was agriculture, while the south-eastern states of the country

recorded the greatest economic losses.<sup>29</sup> Since 2006 Mexico has also recorded clear anomalies in temperature (in other words, warming as compared to the 1971–2000 reference average), as is shown in the Environment Report of the National Information System of the Secretariat of the Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT).<sup>30</sup> Records on historical impacts of climate change and social and economic development trends suggest that the country's vulnerability to climate change is an obstacle to long-term economic growth and to overcoming poverty.<sup>31</sup>

The country's energy sector faces challenges relating to increasing the participation of renewable energy in total power generation. In 2014, a constitutional reform package on energy was adopted, with a component on renewable energy. However, there is little evidence of progress on the development of renewable energy in the country.<sup>32</sup> On the contrary, the 2014 energy reform is encouraging an increase in private sector investment in fossil fuel generation. This could place investments in renewable energy at a relative disadvantage.

To address these problems, the federal Government established its Climate Change Policy. The General Climate Change Law constitutes a framework for a series of policies and initiatives.

These include the creation of new institutions, such as the Inter-Secretarial Commission on Climate Change (CICC), the Climate Change Council (C3) and the National Institute of Ecology and Climate Change (INECC), alongside the establishment of the National Climate Change Strategy, the 10–20–40 Vision and the 2014–2018 Special Climate Change Programme (PECC 2014–2018).<sup>33</sup> Also launched were a Climate Change Fund, new National Emissions Registry Regulations, the National Climate Change System and the Intended Nationally Determined Contribution for Mexico.<sup>34</sup>

The most significant contributor to this area between 2001 and 2014 was the United States, with \$2.05 billion.<sup>35</sup> One initiative is the Border 2020 Programme, a continuation of the Border 2012 Environmental Programme.<sup>36</sup> In 2016, Mexico, Canada and the United States signed a memorandum on cooperation in climate change and energy.<sup>37</sup> France was the second largest contributor, with \$1.3 billion<sup>38</sup>, and Germany the third, with \$829 million aimed at the environment and renewable energy. The German Government supports AMEXCID<sup>39</sup> and the Mexican-German Partnership project for Protection of the Environment. Another important donor is the Global Environment Fund (GEF), of which Mexico has been a mem-

29 Saldaña-Zorrilla and Sergio O., *Natural Disasters, Foreign Trade and Agriculture in Mexico: Public Policy for Reducing Economic Vulnerability*, ed. Springer Verlag, ISSN 2191-5547, ISBN 9783319173580, Library of Congress No. 2015940008, 2017.

30 SEMARNAT, 'Informe del Medio Ambiente: Cambio Climático', in *National System of Environmental and Natural Resources Information*, 2017.

31 Saldaña-Zorrilla, Sergio O., *Natural Disasters, Foreign Trade and Agriculture in Mexico: Public Policy for Reducing Economic Vulnerability*, ed. Springer Verlag, ISSN 2191-5547, ISBN 9783319173580, Library of Congress No. 2015940008, 2017.

32 Carrasco, Fidel, 'Energías renovables en México y Centroamérica', report by the Directorate-General for Clean Energy, Secretariat of Energy, Mexico City, 2015.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 USAID, *History of USAID in Mexico*, 2016.

36 SEMARNAT, 'Mexico-United States Environmental Programme. Border 2020', June 2012.

37 Secretariat of Energy, 'Firman México, Canadá y Estados Unidos Memorandum de Entendimiento sobre Cooperación en Cambio Climático y Energía', *Boletín informativo n.º 14*.

38 French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Mexico, Bilateral Relations. Economic Relations*, 2017.

39 Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, Mexico. *Relaciones con Alemania*, 2017.



ber since 1994. This organization has funded 63 projects in the country and Mexico has participated in 35 projects on a regional or global level. These projects focus on the areas of biodiversity, land degradation and climate change. The GEF was the fourth most significant contributor to Mexico, with \$280 million, and the third largest donor to UNDP (\$32 million between 2008 and 2015). Also notable is Norway's cooperation, due to its support of Mexico's commitments as part of the Mechanism for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Degradation (REDD+)<sup>40</sup> originating from the COP16.

In the 2008-2012 country programme, UNDP's work in the area of the environment focused on water resource management, forestry development, climate change and disaster prevention. UNDP sought to take a comprehensive approach with cross-cutting promotion of the environment and gender equality. During the current cycle, the environment has been maintained as a cross-cutting issue, linking it to social approaches (gender, multicultural), poverty reduction and competitiveness. The country programme aims to create a "low-emission, environmentally sustainable development strategy". UNDP's goals in this area are:

- Strengthening capacities at the three government levels (federal, state and municipal) and in the private sector, academia and civil society.
- Reversing environmental degradation and maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable, equal way.
- Integrating environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy into legislative, programming and decision-making processes.

Within this framework, UNDP is a key partner of the Government in mobilizing international resources for development cooperation, as the

organization is perceived as a catalyst for multilateral funding, as it is the case represented by the GEF, and by the Montreal Protocol. These resources contribute to Mexico's compliance with its international environmental commitments.

The change towards building resilience, sustainable resource management and reversing environmental degradation in Mexico is sought through cooperation with the local and federal Governments and, especially, through collaboration with counterparts such as SEMARNAT, the National Forestry Commission (CONAFOR), the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP), the National Commission for the Knowledge and Use of Biodiversity (CONABIO), INECC and the Secretariats involved in the CICC; with international bodies (the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], the World Bank, the IDB and the German Agency for International Cooperation [GIZ]), industrial sectors and CSOs. Cooperation schemes have been produced with the federal Government, with the aim of generating enabling mechanisms for sustainable economic development and of incorporating standards, criteria, methodologies and green-planning indicators. Through this, UNDP successfully fostered environmentally sustainable strategies for low-emission development and for disaster risks, with a gender and multicultural focus for poverty reduction. Support for these strategies consisted of strengthening capacities, innovative approaches, policies and participatory processes. The link was emphasized between people's capabilities and well-being and the environment, connecting environmental aspects with social approaches (gender and multicultural) and poverty reduction in order to improve the competitiveness of community enterprises (forestry certifications, for example).<sup>41</sup>

40 Further information at: [http://www.noruega.org.mx/News\\_and\\_events/Cooperacion-y-Proyectos-entre-Noruega-y-Mexico/](http://www.noruega.org.mx/News_and_events/Cooperacion-y-Proyectos-entre-Noruega-y-Mexico/)

41 UNDP, 'UNDP Integrated Work Plan (IWP) 2014'.

### 2.2.2 EFFECTIVENESS OF UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION

In general terms, **UNDP contributed considerably to compliance with this outcome.** The three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society strengthened their capabilities for reversing environmental degradation and for maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable and equitable way (see Annex 2, available online, for a table of results for the country programme and its indicators). This programme area achieved almost all of its goals. All exceptions are due to factors beyond the projects' scope. What is noteworthy is that the projects with the best results are those in which UNDP and its government counterpart established long-lasting partnerships with social organizations (especially communal land organizations) which led to empowerment. **From the design stage of its projects, UNDP has insisted on incorporating different development and social inclusion dimensions.** UNDP's effectiveness in building capacities in this programme area was very strong in the academic sector, which represents an important long-term asset.

Most interviewees from government counterparts acknowledged that, without UNDP's participation, it would have been impossible to achieve a large proportion of the recent results in their respective institutions, especially in terms of conservation, community policing, organization of producers, threat monitoring and early warning systems for disasters. Similarly, according to those consulted in south-eastern Mexico, many floods in recent years would have had a much higher cost were it not for UNDP's work. The interviewees also acknowledged that, without the organization, there would not have been the same drive behind environmental projects, diversification results, the integration of women into production activities and a wider view of development. Rapprochement between civil society and the Government would also have been more difficult, and the same applies to securing the resources with which the projects analysed during this evaluation currently operate.

Although most of the Mexican Government staff interviewed considered UNDP's support to be very advantageous, they also considered it very likely that projects and activities would be able to continue without it. Those initiatives would, perhaps, progress more slowly, or with reduced resources and trust, but UNDP's absence would no longer be a determining factor for their continuity (for example, climate change work would continue whatever the case).

In general, **Mexican Government employees have an excellent opinion of UNDP staff**, who they consider to be crucial for compliance with the Government's aims with regard to this outcome. In particular, there is a general consensus among CONANP staff of all levels that the commission could not successfully operate without UNDP's support; **they acknowledge both UNDP's successful management of financial resources from the GEF and from other international mechanisms** (such as the Montreal Protocol) and the fact that UNDP staff who work with them are more professional, committed and unwavering than the staff of this government entity itself.

Individuals consulted from government counterparts and from civil society considered **the fact that the UNDP has offices in Mexico to be very valuable.**

Within UNDP, there are opposing views on the **instability of the organization's management in recent years and its restructuring in 2015 and 2016.** While some consider this to have been positive, because it allowed UNDP to realign and reset itself, others consider that there has been a lack of coordination and clarity regarding the strategic directions that the organization wished to take during that period, even when the country office produced a Strategic Plan in early 2016, through a participatory process involving all areas and levels in order to ensure clarity on the path to be taken and the aims to be met.

The following **results** for UNDP in Mexico are particularly notable:

- It influenced the design of public policies and reporting instruments for the United Nations Framework Convention on **Climate Change** (UNFCCC).<sup>42</sup>
- It contributed to building capacities in the federal, state and municipal governments and in communities for identifying, managing and reducing **disaster risks**.<sup>43</sup>
- It contributed to skills training for businesses, the Government and inhabitants to reduce emissions from **polluting industry products and** improve waste management.<sup>44</sup>
- It aligned institutional efforts to increase **citizen participation** in the country's sustainable development.<sup>45</sup>
- It contributed to building capacities within the Government for:
  - Compliance with international commitments.
  - Measuring emissions (in progress).
  - Forestry monitoring (partially achieved).
  - Conserving biodiversity (in progress).
  - Controlling invasive species (in progress).
- It strengthened CONANP's 2040 Strategy by incorporating **climate change criteria** and provided useful analyses for evaluating vulnerability and resilience, key for implementing adaptation plans in Natural Protected Areas (ANP).<sup>46</sup>
- It led efforts to achieve the **sustainable forestry management certification**.
- It accompanied CONAFOR in designing and implementing the **National Forestry Monitoring System**.<sup>47</sup>

The most notable **positive impacts** include the building of capacities in local governments and society for producing **school contingency plans for disaster risks**, which generated a great number of benefits at a low cost, thanks to the implementation of the emergency plans. During field visits, it was possible to observe examples of **mangrove recuperation**, sustainable forest management, **skills training for groups of female leaders**, sustainable and diverse agriculture and livestock farming, strengthening of human development capacities, consideration of contingencies, **designing of risk management and prevention plans with schools**, enabling of the capacity for dialogue and round tables between counterparts, economic evaluation of local products (only partly achieved, for the topic of biodiversity) and organic certification of products. Also of importance are a range of post-graduate publications and studies focused on social projects in the social development sector.

There were also results from generating a risk atlas adapted to local conditions and a plan against risks with production information and a risk map (with CONAGUA). On the other hand, partnerships and round tables were created to strengthen the counterparts' preparedness; this was replicated in the state of Quintana Roo.

UNDP has influenced reflection on public policies, which has translated into the generation of laws, regulations, manuals, guides and other legal orders aimed at reversing environmental degradation and maximizing natural resources in a sustainable, equitable way, integrating new paradigms and conserving biodiversity. It has also contributed to adapting resources to local needs and to driving the national environmental education of rights and community policing through

42 UNDP, 'Results Oriented Annual Report 2015', UNDP, Mexico, 2016.

43 UNDP, 'Results Oriented Annual Report 2014', UNDP, Mexico, 2015; UNDP, 'ROAR Compilation 2008-2015', UNDP, Mexico.

44 Ibid.

45 UNDP, 'ROAR Compilation 2008-2015', UNDP, Mexico.

46 UNDP, 'Results Oriented Annual Report 2015', UNDP, Mexico, 2016.

47 Ibid.

joint responsibility between society and the Government for conserving natural resources.

On an institutional level, UNDP impacted on the re-engineering or institutional consolidation of CONANP. The results include an increase in community involvement and strengthening, bolstering of the climate change axes within the institution, increasing synergies with other public and private institutions on the topic and helping counterparts to achieve a long-term vision. The main results of UNDP with CONANP include its aid to express – on paper – the experience and social use of biodiversity in indigenous communities, human rights, biodiversity and the risks of climate change, in addition to mechanisms for operating strategies and programmes in vulnerable communities and with women. With CONANP, visible progress was achieved in topics of climate change, REDD+, rural development, adaptation, studies on biodiversity, community risks and civil protection.

UNDP contributed to improving sustainable forest management with social responsibility, for example through the Noh-Bec certification programme in the Yucatán peninsula and other programmes, such as the CONAFOR programme for the sustainable use of forests and for the conservation of biodiversity, which has components of competitiveness, markets and skills training for beneficiaries and staff. Also noteworthy is UNDP's contribution to CONAFOR's definition of certification criteria, which also take into account international standards.

In different communities, UNDP contributed towards providing skills training in first aid and risk management and to producing community evaluations. While it is true that these communities understood their needs, they were not able to express or systematize them until UNDP intervened, aiding their organization (particularly in topics relating to water management or risk prevention).

What limits achievements in some cases is the fact that civil society members who have strengthened their capacities in environmental matters are still few in terms of percentage of the target population. Furthermore, political issues (unconnected to UNDP) threaten the achievements of certain projects.<sup>48</sup>

In other cases, more time is needed to achieve results (for example, lack of economic evaluation of conservation) and there is insufficient monitoring with UNDP specialized staff, mainly due to them being few, which limits sustainability. However, in terms of time-frames, 80 percent of UNDP's current CPD has elapsed, so time still remains to achieve what was undertaken by the organization and its counterparts.

Where results and impact are concerned, achievements are mostly related to pilot projects or emblematic cases of communities or communal land which have not been replicated (or only partially), and most of these achievements did not lead to wider impacts. Several individuals consulted suggested that more communities be incorporated into the benefits of projects in this area.

UNDP has influenced reflection upon and definition of the context of diversity and the incorporation of new paradigms, and its work is considered important for adapting resources to local needs, offering environmental education and community policing through joint responsibility. It has also impacted upon practical achievements, such as in the case of the local certification seal (for example in honey production). During field visits to the Yucatán peninsula and the state of Chiapas, it was observed that, as a consequence of projects included in this evaluation's sample, government staff have built capacities to encourage communities to improve their production practices, guiding them towards sustainable agricultural production, and have deeply implanted the notion of conservation of natural resources among inhabitants. For example, there are examples of several com-

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48 For example, conflicts relating to the exploitation of sea cucumbers (in San Felipe de Río Lagartos).



munities which conserve their forests and, at the same, without cutting down a single tree, produce honey and generate higher income than would have been possible through tree logging in the area and through growing traditional products (corn, beans, etc.). Numerous successful cases of silvo-pastoral systems were also observed, such as the production of bovine and caprine cattle which graze in forests, providing high levels of productivity and good income for the (often female) inhabitants of areas which were previously marginalized and have a significant indigenous component. In terms of disaster risk management, on a community level the prevalence of a culture of risk reduction was observed, alongside a good level of preparedness and capacity for reacting to disasters (mechanisms for the quick installation of shelters in the community's school, medical services, etc.). There were also community policing teams to detect animal hunters in the area, among other measures which have become incorporated at the community level, associated with projects in which UNDP has participated, marking a clear turning point in these communities.

## 2.3 DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

### Outcomes

38 – The Mexican State will have implemented public policies and strategies relating to public and citizen safety to guarantee the exercising of human rights, considering citizen participation, in addition to social prevention of crime and violence, with emphasis upon individuals in situations of vulnerability and discrimination.

39 – The Mexican State will have consolidated a government which effectively guarantees human rights, by means of strengthening transparency, access to information and

accountability for combating corruption and the elimination of any type of discrimination.

40 – The Mexican State will have generated synergies for creating a participative citizen population which understands and fully exercises its human rights, influences inclusive public policies and accepts its responsibilities.

### 2.3.1. OVERVIEW

Mexico faces significant challenges relating to democratic governance, especially regarding human rights, corruption<sup>49</sup> and safety. Organized crime has led insecurity and violence in the country, resulting in an increase in breaches of human rights.<sup>50</sup>

Designing public policies with medium- and long-term impacts is affected by Mexico's electoral cycles: aside from federal elections every six years, there are annual local elections and, consequently, permanent turnover of high-level civil servants at all public administration levels and in the local legislative powers, which change priorities<sup>51</sup> because there is no professional career service on a subnational level and municipal terms last three years. Although periodic elections are held, the rules of electoral competition have been frequently modified, due to post-electoral disputes themselves.<sup>52</sup> In 2014, new rules for political parties and electoral institutions and procedures were passed and, since the year 2000, no single political party has held a legislative majority in any of the Congressional chambers; during the past two terms, majority legislative coalitions have been possible.

From the mid-1980s onwards, Mexico underwent a process of decentralizing public spending in favour of its states and municipalities in

49 The 2016 National Survey of Victimization and Perception of Public Security (ENVIPE) offers data on citizens' perception of corruption in public institutions (detailed in Note 7 of this report).

50 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 'The Human Rights Situation in Mexico', 2015.

51 In 2016 alone, there were elections in 17 states, where 968 new town councils, 448 local legislators and 13 governors were elected, while in 2015, elections were held in 17 states.

52 Between 2014 and 2016, Article 41 of the Constitution – which establishes the rules on competition and norms for political parties – was reformed five times.

sectors such as education, health, public safety and basic infrastructure. However, the country's tax system continues to be centralized. The federal Government collects 80 percent of public revenue, representing 19 percent of the country's GDP (data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD).<sup>53</sup> Decentralization has been carried out through federal Government transfers to subnational Governments, but it has not produced the expected results, due to the lack of transparency and low accountability which characterize many state and municipal Governments.<sup>54</sup>

### **Public and citizen safety (outcome 38)**

As stated by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), "the Mexican State's real challenge is to break the cycle of prevailing impunity with the mechanisms created over the past years, in order to achieve effective prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of the perpetrators of human rights violations and in order that progress in regulations generate real changes in the day-to-day lives of Mexican people"<sup>55</sup>.

According to the 2015 IACHR country report, Mexico has made progress in terms of human rights. However, conditions of insecurity remain.<sup>56</sup> Particularly concerning is the situation of insecurity in which individuals or groups in vulnerable conditions find themselves, such as women, children, migrants, indigenous peoples, human rights defenders and journalists. An analysis of

data reflects that women perceive a greater level of insecurity than men. Activists, human rights defenders and journalists risk death or 'disappearance' when coming into contact with corruption networks which connect local politicians and security forces to organized crime.<sup>57</sup>

The insecurity crisis has led the two most recent federal administrations to approach the problem directly. The current Government designed a new National Safety Strategy and a National Programme for Social Prevention of Violence and Crime, which seek to comprehensively tackle this problem. A reform on public safety is being debated, independent of policy on crime prevention and the fight against drug-related violence already implemented and of the new Adversarial Criminal Justice System, enacted in 2008, which is now applied to all states. However, human rights, insecurity and violence continue to pose significant challenges because of the fear generated by organized crime groups, who act with impunity in their own name and, on some occasions, in collusion with the country's authorities.<sup>58</sup>

The 2015 Global Impunity Index (GII) placed Mexico in the penultimate position in a ranking of 59 countries for which sufficient information was available. Mexico was allocated an index of 75.7 (out of 100), making it the country with the second-highest impunity among this group.<sup>59</sup>

UNDP considered that the change towards supporting citizen safety, to guarantee the exer-

53 OECD, 'Fiscal Decentralization Database'.

54 Mexican Institute for Competitiveness, State Budget Information Index, 2016 (consulted on 5 November 2016).

55 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR), 'Country Report, The Human Rights Situation in Mexico', 2015, p. 14.

56 The 2016 national survey on Victimization and Perception of Public Safety (ENVIPE) provides information on situations of murder near the victim's home (2010–2016). México Evalúa comparatively analyses these data (<http://mexicoevalua.org/2016/10/04/luz-y-sombra-del-homicidio-a-nivel-local/>). According to the ENVIPE, 59 percent of the survey respondents (in 2016) cited insecurity as the most concerning problem on a national level, with corruption (28.2 percent), impunity for criminals (20.3 percent) and drug-trafficking (16.1 percent) also mentioned.

57 CIVICUS, 'State of Civil Society Report 2015'.

58 Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 'Country Report, The Human Rights Situation in Mexico', December 2015, p. 231.

59 There is insufficient information to calculate the index in the 134 remaining United Nations countries. Centre for Studies on Impunity and Justice, 'Global Impunity Index Mexico, Executive Summary', UDLAP.

cise of human rights based on citizen participation and social prevention of crime in Mexico, can be achieved through collaboration with local and federal governments and particularly with counterparts such as Congress, political parties, the Electoral Tribunal of the Federal Judiciary, the National Electoral Institute (INE), the Specialized Prosecutor for the Attention of Electoral Crimes (FEPADE), the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI), CSOs and academia. UNDP drove initiatives for promoting citizen safety in three municipalities: Ciudad Juárez, Tijuana and Culiacán, facilitating the participation of young people in public outreach processes relating to citizen safety and participation and peaceful, non-violent culture. UNDP supported the implementation of strategies with a safety approach focused on citizens, dialogue and observation of their social conditioning factors, strengthening institutional capacities for creating public policies on the social prevention of crime and in favour of social cohesion, with a focus on rights and a gender perspective. It also promoted initiatives favouring gender equality, political rights and electoral justice, which facilitated changes in the legislative frameworks of states to harmonize and more deeply root the formal acknowledgement of gender equality rights and women's political-electoral rights. At the same time, these initiatives strengthened women's skills and training capacities to fully exercise their rights and influence public policies and decision-making.

### **Transparency, accountability, access to information, tackling corruption (outcome 39)**

In 2015, Mexico, with a score of 35 out of 100, was ranked 95th of the 168 countries evaluated in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which indicates a serious level of corruption in the public sector.<sup>60</sup> In Latin America, Mexico was ranked below its main economic partners and competitors: Chile (23rd) and Brazil (76th).<sup>61</sup>

The Government has made progress with political and legal changes by establishing a stronger national institutional framework to guarantee human rights for all.<sup>62</sup> In May 2015, the Senate enacted the anti-corruption constitutional reform (14 articles reformed), which created the National Anti-Corruption System and stipulated the creation of the General Law on the National Anti-Corruption System and the General Law on Administrative Responsibilities.<sup>63</sup> In this context, the Senate organized four work groups for CSOs to present their technical proposals for the operation of the National Anti-Corruption System. The civil society consultation process was extended to political parties, which contributed proposals in the formulation of the seven anti-corruption laws.<sup>64</sup>

In terms of transparency, in 2015 Mexico created the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI)<sup>65</sup> as an autonomous body to guarantee the rights of individuals to public information and to the protection of their personal data. In

60 Mexico shares its ranking with Armenia, Mali and the Philippines. The highest-ranking country continues to be Denmark (a score of 91 out of 100) and Somalia and North Korea are those perceived as most corrupt (a score of 8/100). Transparency International, 'Corruption Perception Index 2015'.

61 Mexican Transparency, 'México, estancado en percepción de la corrupción', 26 January 2016.

62 United Nations, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions, Christof Heyns: Mission to Mexico', Human Rights Council, 2014.

63 In 2016, the "#3de3" citizens' initiative – launched by Mexican Transparency and the Mexican Institute for Competitiveness (IMCO) to encourage candidates and legislators to make their declaration of assets, interests and taxes public – became a bill, reviewed by the Senate through new open parliament practices.

64 (i) National Anti-Corruption System; (ii) General [Law of] Responsibilities; (iii) Administrative Justice Tribunal; (iv) Attorney-General Organic [Law]; (v) Penal Code; (vi) Auditing; and (vii) Federal Public Administration, enacted on 18 July 2016.

65 The creation of the INAI is recorded in the Official Journal of the Federation (DOF) on 4 May 2015.

June of the same year, the National Transparency System (SNT) was implemented, incorporating the INAI, alongside the 32 guaranteeing bodies of the states, the Federal Superior Audit Office, the General Archive of the Nation and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography. The aim is to coordinate and evaluate actions relating to cross-cutting public policy on transparency, access to information and data protection, in addition to strengthening State accountability. In May 2016, the National Transparency Platform began to function as a technological instrument to facilitate the exercise of the right to information through the system of requests for access to information (ISAI), the judicial review management system (SIGEMI), the portal system for transparency obligations and the communication system between guaranteeing bodies and liable parties. In May 2016, a new Federal Law on Transparency and Access to Public Information was enacted.<sup>66</sup>

Through its administration of the Support Fund for Electoral Observation, UNDP concentrated its efforts on supporting the Mexican organizations that observed the elections in 2009 and 2012 and contributed to the organization's credibility, legitimacy and transparency regarding electoral processes.<sup>67</sup> UNDP collaborated with the Institutional Strengthening of Social Programmes Initiative (IPRO), a public, neutral and independent platform developed alongside Mexican Transparency, which systematized and organized information on federal and state social programmes to facilitate understanding of the country's social programmes, by sector, target population, number of beneficiaries, budget and minimum institutionalization standards, with the aim of protecting them during electoral periods.

The platform<sup>68</sup> has gathered substantial information from over 2,000 social programmes, provided voluntarily by federal agencies and states. The strategic partnership between UNDP and Mexican Transparency and the high technical standards in administering information have made the initiative a reference point for the bodies implementing social programmes.

Furthermore, UNDP supported the Mexican Government – through the Government Quality and Accountability initiative (México Estatal project), implemented through the Centre for Research and Teaching in Economics (CIDE) – in developing a system of indicators to socially monitor the performance of the country's states. The indicators are currently part of the institutional structure of the CIDE and the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI). The database created based on the México Estatal project<sup>69</sup> has contributed to improving the transparency of state governments and has allowed for the fundamental exercise of accountability. In addition, alongside Mexican Transparency, UNDP produced figures which link the good governance promoted by the México Estatal project with the MDGs and, as a result, the Government Quality and Accountability database has been strengthened.

#### **Participatory citizens (outcome 40)**

Over the past 20 years, Mexico has moved from a hegemonic party system to a moderate pluralist system.<sup>70</sup> The starting point of the citizenship-building process in Mexico is a situation of distrust of others, in the authorities and institutions responsible for the pursuit of justice, a lack of social links in networks outside family, neighbours and certain religious associations and disillusionment with the results of democracy.<sup>71</sup>

66 Published in the Official Journal of the Federation on 9 May 2016.

67 UNDP also collaborated with electoral observations in 1994, 1997, 2000, 2003 and 2006.

68 Further related information can be consulted at: <http://www.programassociales.org.mx>

69 Further information at: <http://www.mexicoestatal.cide.edu>

70 Sojo, Carlos, León-Manríquez, José Luis, Morales Rojas, Carla, Olivares Ferreto, Edith and León Segura, Gabriela, 'Evaluación de Efectos definida en el marco programático actual del PNUD México 2008-2012, Democratic Governance Programme. Outcomes 8, 9 and 10. Final Report', May 2012.

71 National Electoral Institute, 'Country Report on the Quality of Citizenship in Mexico', 2015.



In terms of electoral participation, Mexico is close to reaching the figures of consolidated democracies. This data comes in contrast to the average citizen's low level of political effectiveness (i.e., his/her ability to influence what the Government does). Mexicans have little involvement in other types of participation.<sup>72</sup> The southern region is where citizens are the most involved in protesting: most protest petitions are signed in this area (58 percent) and the highest participation in public demonstrations or protests takes place there (68 percent).<sup>73</sup>

According to the conclusions of the 2013-2018 Sectoral Governance Programme, citizen organization and participation levels in Mexico are low.<sup>74</sup> In response, efforts have been made to strengthen and promote an inclusive, participatory and respectful relationship among the Government, citizens and their organizations.<sup>75</sup> These efforts have been made through the Programme for a Close, Modern Government, the Special Programme for Indigenous Peoples (2014-2018) and the National Digital Strategy, which includes the Public Challenges tool<sup>76</sup>, the National Innovation Agents Project<sup>77</sup> and the Open Data Decree, published on 20 February 2015.

Mexico offers an improved backdrop for the stable growth of civil society.<sup>78</sup> In 2014, the

Commission for Support of the Activities of Civil Society Organizations was established as a permanent inter-secretarial commission, aiming to facilitate coordination for fostering activities undertaken by CSOs. There is also a Federal Register of Civil Society Organizations, which is the authorized body according to the Federal Law for Support of the Activities of Civil Society Organizations.<sup>79</sup> The Mexican Centre for Philanthropy (CEMEFI) groups together CSOs, companies and individuals who share a mission and work for different social and environmental causes.<sup>80</sup>

UNDP's work on participatory citizenship focused on encouraging citizen participation and human rights. During the previous cycle, UNDP formulated its plans for this area in terms of representation (of women and indigenous peoples) and civic awareness. The promotion of rights was part of the effort to foster civic awareness. Nevertheless, few initiatives were formulated during this cycle. Although the ConstruyeT project was intended to contribute to citizen participation, it was eventually considered that its contribution focused on social inclusion.

UNDP promotes citizens' knowledge of their rights and of ways to exercise them in a responsible, cohesive way, in addition to promoting responsibility and transparency in public admin-

72 The percentage of individuals who stated their involvement in any type of political activity other than voting stands at 12 percent for attendance of local council meetings and 2 percent for strike participation. All of these figures are significantly below those of consolidated democracies.

73 National Electoral Institute, *'Country Report on the Quality of Citizenship in Mexico'*, 2015.

74 For example, the 2012 National Survey on Political Culture and Citizen Practices (ENCUP) reveals that, in the opinion of 48 percent of survey respondents, politics is a 'very difficult' topic and 65 percent have little interest in politics. Furthermore, 69 percent of Mexicans report distrust of most people and 65 percent state that they have not teamed with others to solve a problem together. Secretariat of Governance, *'2013-2018 Sectoral Governance Programme'*, Official Journal of the Federation, Mexico, 12 December 2013.

75 Three courses of action have been formulated: (i) promoting citizen participation mechanisms in Federal Public Administration agencies and entities; (ii) fostering citizen participation through strengthening the capacities of CSOs; and (iii) driving actions which foster the activities of CSOs.

76 See Mexico, Government of the Republic, *Retos Públicos*, at: <http://retos.datos.gob.mx/>

77 See Mexico, Presidency of the Republic, at: <http://www.presidencia.gob.mx/agentesdeinnovacion/#proyectos>

78 CIVICUS, 'A Snapshot of Civil Society in Mexico. Analytical Report on the CIVICUS Civil Society Index'.

79 In April 2014, 25,534 organizations were recorded in the Federal Register of Civil Society Organizations. Mexican Centre for Philanthropy (CEMEFI), 'Entorno regulatorio de las organizaciones de la sociedad civil en México', p. 15.

80 In 2015, there were over 1,500 members, of which 97 were associations, 87 social foundations and 1,143 affiliated institutions (Mexican Centre for Philanthropy, 'Informe anual 2015').

istration. In the current country programme, UNDP explains its aims for this outcome in terms of active citizenship, participation and the closing of social gaps. Rights explicitly refer to electoral political rights that include women and indigenous groups and young people.

In the State of Zacatecas, March 2012 saw the launch of a Co-Investment Fund for Human Development. A Citizen Council was established aiming to ensure public funding for CSOs to undertake projects which contributed to achieving the goals established in the 2011-2016 State Development Plan. The aim of the initiative was to bring together knowledge, experiences and resources from CSOs and the Government of Zacatecas, in order to promote wide citizen participation in development issues such as the expansion of opportunities, human development, improvement of individuals' and families' quality of life, promotion of freedom, human rights and safety, and employment. It also sought to correct existing inequalities and guarantee sustainable development for future generations.

Within the framework of the Mérida Initiative with the United States, there is cooperation linked to tackling violence produced by drug trafficking on the border. The European Union, through the Social Cohesion Laboratory II, launched in 2015, aims to promote structural reforms, innovative public policies and good institutional practices to improve equality of opportunities in access to basic public services, employment, justice, safety and human rights. In 2015, the Germany Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) approved two financial mechanisms, in the context of the Binational Commission, for actions relating to governance and human rights and an initiative to support civil society actions.

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

UNDP's contribution during the previous programme cycle was more significant on a national level, due to the democratic governance areas in which it intervened. In the current cycle,

although most projects comply with the formulated goals, many of their generated outputs are deliverables which do not directly contribute to achieving the outcome.

UNDP, during the 2008-2013 cycle, supported the strengthening of the electoral system and formulation and evaluation of public safety strategies. Furthermore, it cooperated with the executive, legislative and judicial branches to formulate reform processes and supported dialogue and coordination between public powers and between different levels of Government. These projects were directed towards building and consolidating responsible institutions and mechanisms to strengthen CSOs and promote active citizenship, based upon transparency, participation and the closing of social gaps, with an emphasis on the electoral-political rights of women, indigenous peoples and young people.

#### **Public and citizen safety (outcome 38)**

UNDP contributed, in terms of harmonization of legislation, to laying the foundations for modifying the legal framework in several of the country's states, with the aim of incorporating the topic of violence against women, based on the criteria established in the General Law of Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence (2007). It also facilitated changes to certain states' legislative framework where women's political-electoral rights are concerned; for example, by increasing the gender quota in the representation system and the commitment of some state Congresses to allocate a certain percentage of their budget to skills training, promotion and political development activities for women. Regarding capacity-building, UNDP contributed to generating information on women's political-electoral rights, particularly in relation to access to electoral justice. It also promoted the building of tools to comparatively measure the effectiveness of state legislation, in addition to disseminating all of this through consultations on women's political-electoral rights.

In the current programme cycle, two initiatives have been developed: one on the protection of



vulnerable migrants in transit and the other on citizen safety in municipalities. The former promoted development of the capacities of CSOs in shelters to improve their assistance to migrants and drove the creation of protection networks for migrants in transit, in order to improve the perceptions of the population, with the aim of promoting peaceful coexistence. Female participation in the community was also fostered, an educational tool on safety protocols for organizations was developed and the necessary skills training was provided to those organizations. In the project to promote citizen safety in municipalities, awareness-raising activities for agents were undertaken and contributions were made to making the problem of violence among young people more visible. To these ends, a methodology was designed regarding the production of Youth Action Plans for their presentation to local councils.

While these projects contributed to strengthening the capacities of the Mexican State to implement policies and strategies on public and citizen safety, achievement was limited due to the fact that the specific project goals do not influence the production or strengthening of public policies specific to the topic.

**Transparency, accountability, access to information and tackling corruption (outcome 39)**

UNDP contributed to improving transparency and accountability through two main routes: skills training in electoral observation for CSOs and shielding of social programmes from the effects of elections, particularly thanks to the building and use of a database which characterizes over 2,500 social programmes operated by the federal Government and by practically all state Governments. Among other uses, this helps to identify the vulnerability of the aforementioned programmes to possible political-electoral manipulation. In this context, the vulnerability of social programmes to political-electoral processes was reduced by means of the IPRO platform, the benefits of which included: (i) increasing citizens' trust in the functioning of

social programmes, particularly during election periods; (ii) facilitating independent analysis of social policy, improving auditing and evaluation of social programmes; and (iii) strengthening Mexico's commitment to accountability and improvements to the Government's institutional performance in the framework of the Open Government Partnership and Open Data. The IPRO initiative, moreover, contributed to electoral observation having a more comprehensive vision, focusing not only on what happens on election day, but also on the complete electoral cycle, on the processes which occur between cycles and beyond the authorities which organize elections, so as to include the institutions which provide electoral justice.

Through the México Estatal project, systematic information was generated about government quality and the institutional mechanisms for accountability in the country's 32 states, allowing for comparison of state performance and recommendations to be made at said scale to strengthen them, objectively using the created indicators to evaluate public administration and accountability mechanisms. Furthermore, improved decision-making by state authorities was encouraged, based on timely information and systematic evidence which, in turn, improved inter-institutional coordination and simplification of processes, accountability and transparency. Similarly, contributions were made to generating knowledge of political participation mechanisms in indigenous constituencies, in order to develop capacities and a monitoring system.

In the context of the projects regarding good practice for access to electoral justice and the rights of indigenous peoples, both implemented in Oaxaca in 2013, 144 conflicts were addressed thanks to the guidelines developed and approved for mediation and to skills training undertaken for conflict resolution, and only 13 were unable to be resolved. In the second project, an analysis was carried out of the best practices of jurisdictional bodies in eight or nine countries in relation to indigenous peoples and positive practices were identified.

### Participatory citizens (outcome 40)

In order to generate synergies for creating participatory citizens who understand and exercise their human rights, impact on inclusive public policies and accept their responsibilities, UNDP supported the Government through three projects. The first, Comprehensive Educational Processes and Community Shaping, was formulated as an instrument to develop skills and capacities among young people for exercising active citizenship in accordance with the National Strategy of Civic Education, promoted by the National Electoral Institute. For this, a citizenship-building model was produced, a group of 20 experts were trained, gender equality was promoted and youth leadership was strengthened, although no evaluation of the impact of the developed model has been carried out.

The second project, the Accompaniment Process for the Jalisco State Development Plan, had access to resources for the development and competitiveness of the state's Economic and Social Council and was called to strengthen and generate state capacities for addressing development challenges in the context of sustainable human development, through the implementation of comprehensive, coordinated initiatives which responded to the identified needs of the state Government. In this context, the project formulated a model for citizen consultation, incorporation and social ownership of the Jalisco State Development Plan, established the support mechanisms for implementation, diffusion and participatory evaluation of the Plan and developed instruments which allowed its impact on the population's well-being to be evaluated.

The third project, Guidelines for Citizen Participation in Federal Public Administration, is about to promote mechanisms for the participation and involvement of society and to open dialogue and consultation processes between government, legislative and civil society agents, in addition to designing indicators and a system of institutional and citizen monitoring on the topic.

## 2.4 COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT

### Outcome

41 – The Mexican State will have strengthened its position as an effective development cooperator at regional and global level and, for this purpose, will have consolidated a pertinent international cooperation platform.

### 2.4.1 OVERVIEW

Mexico's cooperation for development has evolved alongside the country's economic, political, social and technological progress. There have been significant advances in the quantity and quality of its cooperation and in the development of innovative paradigms for making Mexico's role as a development cooperator more relevant and efficient, although important obstacles remain to achieving its positioning on a regional and international level.

### South-South and Triangular Cooperation

Mexico has progressed in terms of developing a legal and institutional framework for international development cooperation which has laid the foundations for positioning the country as an effective development cooperator, on a regional and global level, through South-South (SSC) and Triangular Cooperation (TrC).

Currently the federal Government has enacted the International Development Cooperation Law (LCID)<sup>81</sup>, by virtue of which the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) was created. AMEXCID is a deconcentrated body of the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs (SRE) which allows complying with the strategies, aims and courses of action on international development cooperation laid out in the SRE's Sectoral Plan. A National International Development Cooperation Fund (FONCID) was articulated and launched as a public trust. Furthermore, in the context of the 2013-2018 CPD, and in line with the agreed

81 Published in the Official Journal of the Federation on 6 April 2011.

content of the LCID, the International Development Cooperation Programme (PROCID) is being implemented: a document which lays the foundations for planning and carrying out Mexican policy in this area. PROCID has four aims: (1) to strengthen the instruments, tools and capacities of the Mexican International Development Cooperation system for improved cooperation management; (2) to broaden and promote international development cooperation with strategic countries and regions (SSC and TrC); (3) to maintain strategic relations with cooperation providers in order to attract resources and capacities which favour the nation, aligning with the country's priorities; and (4) to increase Mexico's presence in the world through promoting strength and opportunities relating to economics, tourism and culture.

AMEXCID currently coordinates and contributes to planning the provision and receipt of international cooperation with several different federal Government agencies and cooperating partners for Mexico's development. AMEXCID focuses its activities as a provider of technical and scientific cooperation in priority sectors (health, the environment, education, infrastructure, science and technology) and also shares the experiences<sup>82</sup>, good practice and knowledge of Mexican institutions. As a recipient, it coordinates negotiation processes with cooperating partners to consolidate collaboration programmes and contribute to the country's priorities and needs.

The 2013-2018 Foreign Affairs Sector Programme reflects Mexico's growing interest in contributing to global prosperity through international cooperation, established in the 2013-2018 CPD, as part of the Mexico, an Actor with Global Responsibility goal, and in its aims to broaden and strengthen Mexico's presence in the world.

## Mexico as a cooperation provider

Given the scale of its economy, the size of its population and the volume of its resources, Mexico is a relevant country as an international development cooperator on a global level and in the region of Latin American and the Caribbean. Over the past years, it has become an important investor in Latin America, which includes its participation in mechanisms to drive trade, investment and exchange with Central America and the Caribbean. Furthermore, it has fostered the development of two important mechanisms which go beyond business, trade and investment to promote its relations with Central America: the Tuxtla Mechanism for Dialogue and Consensus-Building and the Mesoamerican Cooperation Programme.<sup>83</sup>

For several years, Mexico has played an increasing role as a cooperation provider. According to the 2015 Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero-America<sup>84</sup>, in 2013 Mexico provided a total of 74 projects and 59 actions and received 32 projects and 14 horizontal South-South bilateral cooperation actions, of which 75 percent were projects in the economic and social areas, 12.2 percent in institutional strengthening and 8 percent in the environment. In terms of provision, Mexico is the third most important country, after Argentina and Brazil.

AMEXCID emphasizes the region of Mesoamerica and the Caribbean as a priority for promoting integration and achieving joint development.<sup>85</sup> Among others, it supports the following programmes and mechanisms:

- The Mesoamerica Integration and Development Project (MIDP): a mechanism for high-level political dialogue which includes technical forums to build consensus and join cooperation, development and integra-

82 Mexico has shared its electoral management experience with Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

83 Latin American and Caribbean Economic System (SELA), 'Assessment of the Economic and Cooperation Relations between Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico', 2015, p. 3

84 Ibero-American General Secretariat (SEGIB), '2015 Report on South-South Cooperation in Ibero America', July 2015.

85 Mexican Agency for Development Cooperation, ¿Qué hacemos? (institutional website).

tion efforts which translate into peace and prosperity for the region.

- The Infrastructure Trust Fund for Mesoamerican and Caribbean Countries (Yucatán Fund): a financial instrument for supporting the implementation of infrastructure projects which contribute to the region's connectivity and economic development.
- The Mesoamerican Cooperation Programme (PMC): a programme which promotes exchange of knowledge and experiences in the sectors of education, health, the environment, agriculture and fishing, disaster prevention and tourism.

In addition to UNDP's collaboration, AMEXCID has the support of German and Japanese cooperation entities. The German Government supports AMEXCID in its role as a development partner for other countries in the region through the AMEXCID's Institutional Strengthening project.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, the German agency GIZ has collaborated with AMEXCID in undertaking skills training workshops on civil society and efficient development cooperation and has produced a collaboration strategy to support the participation of the private sector. Other joint initiatives between AMEXCID and the GIZ include support for the functioning of the International Development Cooperation Fund (FONCID). For its part, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has collaborated with AMEXCID in the area of monitoring and evaluation. In November 2014, AMEXCID signed an agreement with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to facilitate the flow of information between these two institutions. In February 2015, AMEXCID undertook an exercise in civil servant exchange with the British Department for International Development, to support AMEXCID in the Global Partnership for Effective Development

Cooperation (GPEDC). The United Kingdom also contributed to the international workshop: 'Interrelationships for Sustainable Development: Latest Steps towards the Post-2015 Development Agenda' in March 2015.<sup>87</sup>

UNDP's assistance centred, from 2001 onwards, on developing capacities and technical support for the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs for developing the Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP). This initiative continued and allowed for transition to the Mesoamerica Project which, during the previous programme cycle (2008-2013), was incorporated into AMEXCID and is part of its organic structure.

In the current country programme (2014-2018), UNDP continues to support Mexico, promoting consolidation of AMEXCID through the project for institutional strengthening of this body. The 2014-2018 programme refers to Mexico's double role, as a recipient and provider of international cooperation. In its role as provider, of note is the fact that Mexico's experience offers lessons that could be useful for other countries. UNDP's strategy in this context is focused on identifying, systematizing and disseminating good practices and evaluating experiences to foster exchange of knowledge and capacities. Furthermore, UNDP is collaborating with the Mexican Government to produce the country's response to compliance with the SDGs established in the 2030 Agenda.

The federal Government has established collaboration schemes with other cooperation institutions to strengthen Mexico's participation in multilateral platforms and to reinforce the country as a key player in international cooperation. Thus, Mexico has consolidated itself as an effective development cooperator and a regional leader for development by means of collaboration between AMEXCID, the UNS and international bodies such as the GIZ, JICA, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID), the Norwe-

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86 GIZ, 'Institutional Strengthening Project for AMEXCID'.

87 Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, '3er Informe de labores 2014-2015, PROCID: Logros 2014 and PROCID: Logros 2015'.



gian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

UNDP provided technical assistance to Mexico for the development of institutional capacities in SSC and TrC. Through identifying, systematizing and disseminating good practices, based on documenting and evaluating experiences, UNDP contributed to the country meeting its aims in terms of positioning on the international cooperation stage. Centres of excellence were also strengthened and established for the exchange of knowledge and capacities. Contributions were made to producing the Post-2015 Agenda, supporting consultation processes, the defining of indicators and monitoring and implementation initiatives.

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

Between 2008 and 2015, the Mesoamerican Integration and Development Project (MIDP) managed a total of 107 financial operations worth a total value of \$3,077.4 million (with financial support from the IDB, the Central American Bank for Economic Integration [CABEI], the CAF-Development Bank of Latin America and the AMEXCID Yucatán Fund). The MIDP is considered a regional instrument for bringing together the cooperation, development and integration efforts of the countries in the region and has consolidated itself as a high-level forum where leaders meet to analyse regional priorities.

In the context of the current programme cycle (2014-2018), UNDP committed to provid-

ing technical assistance to develop institutional capacities in SSC; more specifically, by establishing centres of excellence and a national cooperation register, exchanging experiences and strengthening AMEXCID. UNDP collaborated with this body in order to foster the 2014-2018 International Development Cooperation Programme (PROCID) and to conclude and launch the National Registry for International Development Cooperation (RENCID), which has allowed for the creation of a database which facilitates planning, quantification and accountability for the provision and receipt of international development cooperation.

UNDP coordinated efforts for the joint production, between AMEXCID and the United Nations agencies in Mexico, of a diagnosis of the different aspects of UN support to Mexico's SSC. The published report, 'Towards a Global Partnership for Development: The UN and Mexico's SSC' gathers and systematizes the UN's experiences where Mexican SSC is concerned. The document highlights how the joint AMEXCID and UNDP project – aimed at consolidating the Mexican agency institutionally and operationally – has supported SSC. The distribution of this document among Mexico's diplomatic delegations around the world has allowed AMEXCID to position itself institutionally as a cooperation agency.

Backed by UNDP, Mexico hosted the first High-Level Meeting of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) in April 2014, which promoted SSC and TrC as its central topic and contributed to defining mechanisms for implementing the 2030 Agenda.





## Chapter 3

# UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT RESULTS – RELEVANCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

### 3.1 RELEVANCE

#### RELEVANCE IN TERMS OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES AND UNDP'S MANDATE

In general, in all thematic areas, UNDP's activities in Mexico have aligned with the goals, aims, strategies and courses of action featured in the country's National Development Plans for each sexennial. Furthermore, the organization has developed complementary activities to those of the federal Government (executive, legislative and judicial branches) and the state governments in relation to sustainable human development, the Millennium Development Goals and the international agreements signed by Mexico regarding UNDP's actions. Moreover, projects have been aligned with the Government's special and sectoral programmes. Specifically, with regard to the environment, UNDP has been forced to adapt to weakened implementation of the Government's sustainable development and climate change agenda over the past four years. UNDP's other reference points are its 2008-2011 and 2014-2017 Strategic Plans and the United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks for 2008-2013 and 2014-2019, which contain, respectively, the programme priorities of UNDP on an international level and as a cooperation agency belonging to the United Nations System in Mexico. In the vast majority of cases, UNDP supported the planning of activities based on thematic diagnoses and consultations with the partners and beneficiaries involved. The projects in which UNDP participated incorporated the dimensions of sustainable human development and were undertaken based on the communities' demands and considering local and indigenous needs.

UNDP projects relating to the Human Development Index, social inclusion, gender, exercise of citizenship, competitiveness and employment generation were aligned with the national priorities established in the axes of the 2007-2012 NDP for developing a competitive economy that generates employment and equal opportunities. In the period between 2008 and 2012, in the context of the MDGs, social cohesion and human development, the Country Programme Document places particular importance on advocating knowledge of human development through the dissemination of the national HDI, state HDIs and case studies on human development, and through evaluations of the effects of public policies on inequality. These topics were reflected, in one way or another, in projects relating to gender and ethnic equality. With regard to democracy and governance, the goal of fostering civic awareness by promoting citizens' knowledge of their rights was maintained.

Taking as a starting point the 2013-2018 NDP, UNDP prioritized collaboration on equality, inclusion and equity. This was reflected through outcomes 35 and 36 and the corresponding projects, such as those on the HDI, social inclusion, gender equality, economic growth and competitiveness, aligned with the goals and aims of An Inclusive Mexico to guarantee the effective exercise of social rights, with high-quality education, in order to ensure comprehensive development for all Mexicans and highly trained human capital. It was also aligned with Prosperous Mexico, by developing evaluation mechanisms for the effective use of public resources intended for promoting and enforcing equality of opportunities for women and men and developing the country's strategic sectors, supporting the suc-

successful insertion of micro, small and medium enterprises into value chains with the greatest potential for growth and employment generation. UNDP's activities were consistent with human development needs relating to the social inclusion of children, young people, indigenous peoples, women, older adults and migrants, with research and information needs and with recommendations for human development topics, such as social mobility, public spending on children or food insecurity. While in the 2008-2012 CPD (extended to 2013), UNDP sought closer dialogue with the Government and addressed the national needs, the 2014-2018 CPD refers to alignment with UNDP's programme priorities in the UNDAF and in the Strategic Plan, meaning that it must address the Government's needs and, at the same time, drive its own agenda.

Regarding disaster prevention and reduction, UNDP incorporated and adapted to needs and provided its counterparts with pertinent input for producing strategies. It also supported them in implementing identified actions, analysed their effectiveness and proposed improvements for the above-mentioned strategies, allowing them to contribute to Mexico's compliance with national and international goals set forth in the environmental agreements the country has signed.

UNDP contributed to the NDP and the Environment and Natural Resources Sectoral Programme through actions as part of citizenship-building projects, which go from the local to the national level. With regard to conservation of biodiversity, the organization's alignment with national priorities has become increasingly effective. UNDP's work with CONANP has successfully incorporated goals from the MDGs, the SDGs, the UNDAF, the UNFCCC and the 2040 Strategy into planning for joint projects, prioritizing the axes of the environment, disaster risk management and climate change. Emergency and disaster prevention plans have received UNDP input on a national, state, municipal and community level, with a clear influence from the organization within the respective institutions. Regarding forestry, UNDP has aligned with the

National Strategy for Sustainable Forest Management, incorporated into national policy on forest management. This was achieved through information on local needs (gathered through community workshops), the implementation of demonstrative models, supporting processes for certification and integration of biodiversity criteria, the promotion of an agenda for competitiveness and cost-effectiveness for companies and the professionalization of community-based forest enterprises, among others. The most recent project includes diagnoses and meetings into which UNDP introduced the MDGs and, more recently, the SDGs, from the design phase to the implementation phase. However, in practice, some individuals at CONAFOR suggest that UNDP should improve its highest level management, in order to boost the alignment process. In terms of climate change, UNDP has provided continuity to renewable energy policy and maintains a link with the National Climate Change Strategy. It has also been a key player in terms of progress towards approving and applying the Energy Transition Law. UNDP has also underlined the importance of aligning climate change goals with those of economic efficiency and industrial policy. This allowed for the meeting of goals for implementing alternative energies for social housing, with priority placed on areas with high sunshine levels. This work was based upon a consultation on local needs with the agents involved, for which regional workshops were organized.

The central topics of the projects implemented in the area of governance were the most relevant and pertinent for the country. They are congruent with the MDGs, the problems previously identified and the national Governments' development plans in the two periods covered by the evaluation. Topics relating to gender equality and violence against women, alongside those of public and citizen safety, are extremely relevant within the Mexican public agenda. All projects are vertically aligned with national laws, plans and programmes and with the international commitments made by Mexico in both areas. For example, the Strengthening National

Capacities to Implement National Legislation and Non-Violence project was aligned with national legislation, followed the recommendations from the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and addressed the need to harmonize state laws with national law. The Migrants project, through which a general diagnosis was made on the situation of migrants, backed by the HDIs and to which the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF contributed, was aligned with the NDP and the National Migration Programme. UNDP diagnosed social topics in order to identify the cause of deteriorating social fabric and to work at a participatory level. As a result, before implementing the project, the population's sentiments were clearly mapped, alongside the existing problems, ways of intervention and community characteristics. Relevant agents were also identified in migrant areas, including areas of opportunity for cultural and sports activities and ways of getting to know one another.

In the design and implementation of initiatives for strengthening the Mexican State's position as an effective development cooperator on a regional level, project aims were aligned with national development plans and UNDP's strategic aims on a regional and global level. The activities undertaken by UNDP, in the context of its 2008-2013 and 2014-2018 country programmes, are aligned with the development priorities identified by the Mexican State. Similarly, its strategies are based on UNDP's 2008-2011 and 2014-2017 Strategic Plans, the 2008-2012 and 2014-2019 UNDAFs and the commitments made to compliance with the MDGs and to programming the Post-2015 Agenda in the direction of defining the 2030 Development Agenda of the SDGs. In the 2008-2013 CPD, Mexico's consolidation as a cooperation provider was planned in accordance with the priority established in the axis of effective democracy and responsible foreign policy of the 2006-2012 NDP. Furthermore, UNDP took into consideration the results of consultations with different sectors of Mexican society to produce Vision 2030, articulated around the

concept of sustainable human development and which reflects the country's commitment to the UN's development goals. The current country programme cycle (2014-2018) is consistent with the fifth axis of the 2013-2018 NDP: successfully transforming Mexico into an agent with global responsibility, allowing for a pertinent international cooperation platform to be consolidated, to which the country can contribute in the high-specialization areas which represent its comparative advantages, addressing, at the same time, the development challenges which it continues to face by identifying good practices and lessons learned.

UNDP's activities were in line with the commitments made by the UNS in the 2008-2012 UNDAF in the context of the area of cooperation in competitive, sustainable, equitable and inclusive economic development, which it established as aim number three when designing proposals for broadening Mexico's cooperation with other Latin American and Caribbean countries, and with other parts of the world, particularly in the areas of economics, energy, employment, the environment and education. Similarly, UNDP's activities were aligned with the 2014-2019 UNDAF in the area of cooperation, identified as a partnership for sustainable development, which expects the UNS to focus on: (1) consultancy and methodologies for identifying, systematising and exchanging good practices; (2) integration of subregional, regional and international centres of excellence, in order to identify areas of high-level specialization in which Mexico has comparative advantages; (3) strengthening national capacities for managing international cooperation; (4) support for the international cooperation strategy on human rights; (5) facilitation of dialogue to reach social-political consensus between different agents, particularly civil society; (6) support for designing awareness-raising campaigns on Mexico's international cooperation abroad; and (7) support and advocacy for consolidating associations on a regional and international level on relevant global topics which generate debate and national public opinion on global development agendas.

UNDP currently works to identify, systematize and disseminate good practices by documenting and evaluating experiences and strengthening and establishing centres of excellence for the exchange of knowledge and capacities. Furthermore, it contributes to building the 2030 Agenda, supporting consultation processes, the definition of indicators and follow-up and implementation initiatives that will allow the Mexican Government to incorporate the SDG commitments into its NDP.

### RELEVANCE OF APPROACHES

The methods, resources, models and conceptual frameworks used by UNDP were relevant for achieving the planned results since, in most cases, they were based on listening to local needs, producing diagnoses and analyses of existing information, encouraging dialogue between agents, developing and adapting recognized methodologies, orienting public policies and laws, facilitating skills training and workshops and monitoring and evaluation. These strategies were aimed at achieving social inclusion, poverty reduction, quality of life, economic growth and competitiveness.

Most UNDP interventions in Mexico were directed towards the highest levels of government and were very relevant, since they contributed to guiding change, to federal or state public policies and to raising awareness among civil servants. On the other hand, UNDP also maintained projects with relevant combined effects which include elements of change to public policies or the design of methodologies and direct interventions for the local-level population.

The pertinence of the approaches, models and conceptual frameworks applied by UNDP to environmental topics was very highly valued, especially in the proposed field visits, which prioritized the most successful locations. Sometimes, certain beneficiaries located outside these areas and visited at random had opposing opinions. In the chemical materials projects, they considered UNDP to perfectly understand Mexico's international commitments on this topic, in

addition to market needs, signifying that the plan formulated for the whole sector was considered appropriate. UNDP's approaches and methodologies were generally considered to be highly relevant, since they bridge the gap between the UN's agenda and that of Mexico. CONANP beneficiaries highly valued the fact that UNDP projects had consulted them on local needs through workshops, forums, focus groups, interviews, etc. In general, a high level of respect and trust – and sometimes gratitude – towards UNDP staff is perceived among the beneficiaries of these projects (common land owners, farmers).

Where forestry is concerned, programme operational rules have incorporated biodiversity criteria and requirements as factors for awarding subsidies, a result of UNDP's influence. It is indicated, for example, that CONAFOR's criteria for biodiversity conservation were created alongside UNDP and greatly aid compliance with international certification for producers. The positive influence of UNDP's approaches and conceptual frameworks are also present in the Methodological Guides for CONAFOR's Sustainable Management Plans, which are publicly accessible. However, some interviewees commented that UNDP, on occasion, oversteps the mark in its guiding role for forestry projects because – they say – it has tried to intervene in areas for which it does not have the necessary technical knowledge.

UNDP is considered to be an important strategic partner for positioning the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) and the international cooperation agenda on a regional level. For AMEXCID's institutional strengthening initiative, a review was carried out of UNDP's experiences in other countries (China, Turkey and Brazil), its strategies, results and actions, and the best tools were chosen for application to AMEXCID. The Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP)/Mesoamerica Project (MIDP) has encompassed three government periods: 2000-2006, 2006-2012 and 2012-2018. During the first transition, UNDP was considered fundamental, as the PPP evolved into the Mesoamerica Project. The change in name was



due to a Government strategy to create a joint agenda for the 10 countries of the Mesoamerican region. The project office, during these three periods, has undergone many changes based on decisions made by the Presidency of the Republic, in terms of national priorities and relating to the change in strategy from the PPP to the MIDP. With UNDP, methodologies were designed to train individuals as they arrived. Moreover, there were administrative changes within UNDP which required awareness-raising efforts on the Government's part.

### 3.2 PROGRAMMATIC EFFICIENCY

In the area of **environment**, UNDP's programme efficiency was rated as good, with an adequate use of project resources. Administrative procedures are perceived to be rigid and costly. Accountability mechanisms forced UNDP counterparts to undertake additional procedures, although these aim to guarantee transparency in the use of resources. Its financial mechanism is considered to be practical and valid, although its efficiency could be improved.<sup>88</sup>

While the Government's implementing partners rated UNDP's efficiency as high, non-governmental partners considered it to be moderate. UNDP's management and functioning is considered to have been successful and was, in general, efficient, fast and transparent. In most cases, it acted without significant delays. Generally, project time-frames are extended but the logical frameworks for all projects allow for extensions to be undertaken in a controlled way.<sup>89</sup> Certain delays in delivering the outputs of UNDP projects with CONAFOR, CONANP and SEMARNAT have been due to changes in government. Through UNDP mediation, civil soci-

ety has drawn significantly closer to these topics. UNDP is recognized as the only institution providing medium- and long-term continuity to Mexico's environmental agenda. In the absence of State policy on environmental issues which surpasses the duration of federal government administrations – six years – UNDP has insisted that the incoming administrations do not interrupt projects.

During visits to beneficiaries not included in the itinerary proposed by UNDP, no significant successful results were observed beyond pilots. Although UNDP cannot be held responsible for the above, it would be desirable for future strategies to be formulated with the aim of increasing replication of success stories in more communal land or communities (scaling out).

Good hiring policies were observed, with few exceptions. In several cases, staff were limited in number. Team procurement processes are slow, which mainly affects those with problems relating to government resources. In general, it is easier to secure and administer resources via UNDP than through the Government. There are often delays in UNDP's allocation of funds; however, in the technical area, its delivery was very punctual. The organization's budgetary flexibility was highly valued. It is acknowledged that, although there has recently been a smaller budget for projects with UNDP – due to several factors – priority has been placed on maintaining consulting staff as intact as possible, with cuts made to budgets for other planned activities. Also highly valued was UNDP's very careful attitude in generating synergies and in saving money and time, through the fusion of activities (match) from different projects and even through successfully progressing with goals from several different projects

88 It should be noted that, in general, and not only in this thematic area, the exchange rate between the Mexican peso and the dollar – very unfavourable over the past two years – has meant that originally budgeted funds are no longer sufficient for many projects.

89 Project quarterly reports indicate any delays in the corresponding electronic platforms. Annual reports incorporate everything. On an internal level, ROARs, annual audits, mid-term evaluations (in the case of GEF projects) and final reports for all projects allow for monitoring of compliance with time-frames. Atlas also makes having standards compulsory. The Procurement Committees for purchasing facilitate the undertaking of tenders strictly in line with UNDP regulations. Complementary to this, all projects are evaluated through the implementing partners' own mechanisms.

at the same time. Despite the disadvantages highlighted, administrative in nature, UNDP's processes are perceived to have increasingly simplified over the course of time.<sup>90</sup>

In the area of **poverty reduction and promoting competitiveness**, evidence suggests that every project has been implemented with specific end dates and estimated costs. In relation to costs, in general, there was a perception of transparency in financial management when in the hands of UNDP. In some cases, there was mention of problems in understanding how UNDP's costing and expenditure-checking system worked, in addition to rigidity in spending itemization or confusion regarding account management, or in the fact that financial studies on UNDP's projects are presented in English and costs are established in dollars.

In order to increase efficiency, it was suggested that synergies between projects be increased before political transitions, using the same consultants between projects, so as not to lose expert human capital. Currently, a consultant cannot work on more than one project and, consequently, they are more difficult to retain and opt for other work. For ConstruyeT projects, the use of worksheets and skills training online through videos were highlighted as innovative resources that saved on costs for the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). According to partners, UNDP staff are highly trained and very attentive, have response capacity and provide rapid support when requested. In some cases, opportunities for improvement were mentioned. For example, the organization should bear in mind that it is working with counterparts who are highly prepared and, therefore, its support is expected to include expert staff at the highest level who can contribute something new or different. Another

suggested improvement was the identification of mechanisms to neutralize differences of opinion between project staff and UNDP staff, which lead to an inefficient working environment. It was mentioned that high turnover<sup>91</sup> among UNDP staff, particularly over the past years, has translated into a loss of trained staff and a lack of continuity in certain projects.

UNDP was generally considered to respect the established project time-frames. Where they occurred, delays were attributed indistinctly to partners and to UNDP. Relevant comments were made regarding the long waiting times for signing project documents or for being able to make changes to them.

Some UNDP activities have been threatened by the insecurity of staff in the field, such as in the state of Guerrero. However, this threat was resolved by taking precautions based on a strict safety protocol coordinated by CONANP's state-level management.

In terms of **governance**, efficiency was considered to be very good and is strengthened when work is supported by strategic partners. Programmed activities were, in general, carried out within the expected time-frames. An example of good practice is the maximization of existing resources when projects are undertaken through strategic partnerships with well-positioned agents with a high level of experience in the subject (for example, México Estatal and its partnership with the CIDE, the institutionalization of social policy in partnership with CONEVAL and Mexican Transparency, the migration in transit project with the agents described in the previous section, etc.). Agents perceive UNDP to be an institution that operates with a high level of transparency. Its administrative procedures for formalizing con-

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90 For example, CONABIO staff indicated that, with only \$6.9 million, the invasive species project has led to a great number of results (especially in comparison to other GEF projects with \$10 million-15 million). UNDP's transparency is highly valued since, although this project's financial management is not verifiable by the Federal Superior Audit Office, UNDP monitors every cent.

91 Over the past eight years, there have been six UNDP Country Directors, each with his/her own vision. Perceptions of new administrations are diverse, although there is uncertainty every time that a new director arrives or managerial staff change.



tracts and agreements were sometimes cited as obstacles to providing an immediate response to partners' needs.

On development **cooperation**, efficiency was also very good. In a timely manner, UNDP facilitated planning and the multi-annual budget required by the Mexican Government in the area of development cooperation. The SRE and later AMEXCID underwent a learning process on what multi-annual projects represented. First, with the PPP, then with the MIDP and now with AMEXCID, efficiency is noteworthy in terms of planning, budgeting and follow-up. These were achieved with UNDP's collaboration and the use of its methodology for hiring staff, which facilitated the training of human resources who remained in the Mexican State. UNDP's backing was also efficient in projecting the PPP/MIDP, based on which development banking took an interest in the MIDP's projects (the IDB, the CABEI and the Banco Espíritu Santo-funded initiatives, in this context). UNDP also contributed through rapprochement of sectoral initiatives. The Mesoamerica project, which has nine topics, needed significant inter-institutional coordination.

Partners agree that UNDP has clear administrative procedures which serve to establish limits. In terms of follow-up, communication with UNDP is, in general, very close and project board meetings are held, both at the UNDP offices and at the implementation agencies' offices. As a tracking and evaluation mechanism, quarterly and annual reports and independent annual audits were particularly noteworthy. Timeframes and estimated costs were respected. UNDP sometimes delays the publication of vacancies, which weakens its technical teams. It was mentioned that visits by high-level figures from UNDP and the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs require a great deal of time, effort and resources from the UNDP office for preparing content and logistics.

Evidence was cited of implementation of the Mesoamerica Project slowing down. In one of the changes to managerial and administrative staff in Government and UNDP offices, the new office-holders did not establish a productive working link, which created a period of instability lasting two years.

In the case of the project for strengthening AMEXCID, reported problems were quality and delays in delivering contracted outputs<sup>92</sup>, considered very important for the agency to make timely impact on a national level. For funding of National Implementation Modality (NIM) projects, it was considered particularly important to take note of the fact that the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit banned voluntary contributions to international bodies. This topic is being directly approached between AMEXCID and the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit to guarantee permanence for the staff of the Mexican agency contracted by UNDP beyond 2017.

### 3.3 ADMINISTRATIVE EFFICIENCY

Based on the review and analysis of quantitative data on administrative systems and projects, and on interviews with UNDP staff in Mexico, it is possible to reach several conclusions, detailed below.

**The UNDP country office currently has healthy financial management and systems, which show significant improvements** in comparison to previous audit reports which raised issues related to shortcomings in financial controls and the absence of a plan for mobilizing resources (2006), in addition to a 'partially satisfactory' result, due to a series of factors (2011). For the 2015 tax year, audits of 15 projects using the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers method gave an 'unqualified' opinion and a 'satisfactory' score. The financial management dashboard (in Atlas), which displays several aggregate

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92 The development of centres of excellence and the work regarding SDG communication agents.

financial indicators, has shown a 'green' rating for the past five years.

**Financial sustainability is between moderate and strong, considering budgetary reserves.**

However, the proportion of cost-sharing has constantly decreased. The Mexico office has implemented a cost-recovery policy, which formalizes mechanisms which allow UNDP's sources of funding to be complemented to cover certain costs linked to the implementation of programmes, funded with resources other than regular resources (other resources). By virtue of this policy, UNDP applies a fee to General Management Support and Implementation Support System services.<sup>93</sup> The sum attributed to cost-recovery has increased from \$88,000 in 2010 to \$163,000 in 2015. The country office has reached a healthy level of extra-budgetary funds over the past three years, which partially covers staff wages and, in general, operational costs.

Taking into account Mexico's status as an upper-middle income country, **the Government was the programme's main source of funding** during the evaluated period. There was a minimum amount of core funding, originating from UNDP's regular budget, since Mexico 'graduated' in 2008. For this reason, the programme's work depends solely on the mobilization of resources, particularly national ones. The peak of Government contribution was during the period 2009-2012, when it contributed, on average, 73 percent of funding. Its contribution has declined recently, to 49 percent in 2015, which explains a reduced level of total commitment on the country office's part. In Mexico, a high proportion of projects are implemented with the NIM modality, in which the UNDP country office is responsible for all human resources and administrative procedures.

These activities focused on the spheres of governance and poverty reduction, while sustainable development was largely funded through contributions from the GEF and the Montreal Protocol. Given that many projects are based on the Government's participation in funding costs, their viability may be compromised as a consequence of changes in Government which may imply substantial variations to national programme priorities.

Regarding human resources, UNDP in Mexico manages and reports<sup>94</sup> one of the highest numbers of service contracts among UNDP offices in the world. The high number of service contracts (496<sup>95</sup>) has had an impact on the country office's administrative and operational capacity. They are mostly concentrated in two national institutions, CONANP (265) and AMEXCID (91). Over 70 additional contracts correspond to the area of the environment (PIMS, CONABIO, GEF, Sixth Communication on Climate Change, disaster risk management, etc.). In total, 521 individuals work for UNDP (including its staff and service contracts). Seventy-nine percent of the country office staff (409 posts) are funded through the Government's contribution.

Office data shows that, since 2013, service contracts were the largest source of spending (52 percent), attributable to programmes such as CONANP. In other areas, such as in cooperation, work is also almost exclusively carried out through service contracts via AMEXCID. Social development has a donation component through the ConstruyeT project.

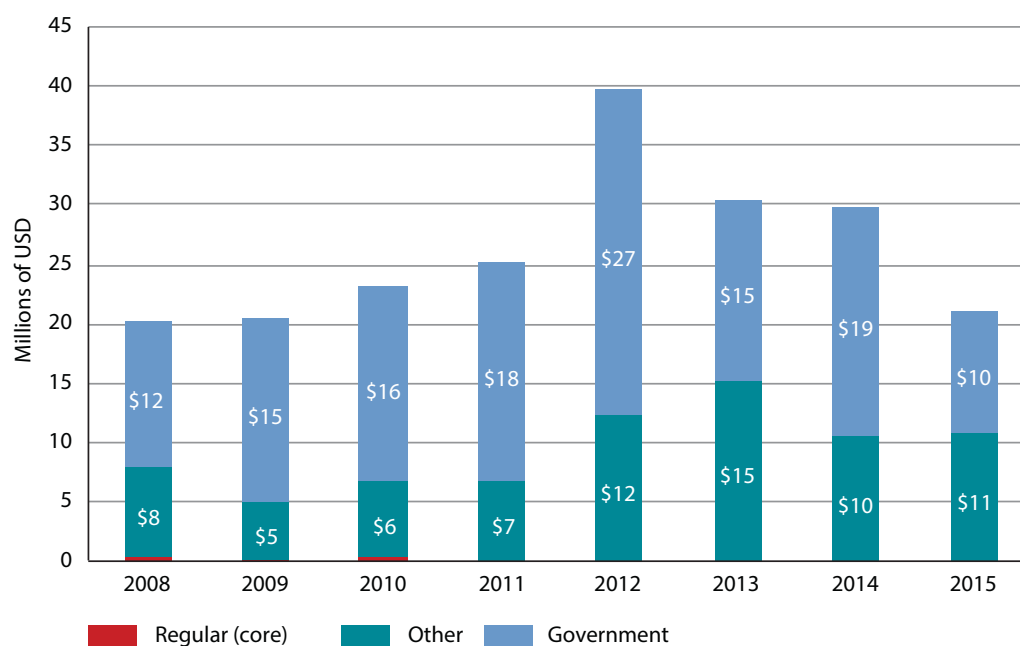
**The senior management of the UNDP country office has recently undergone a transition, which has caused turnover at this level.** Over

93 Cost-recovery by UNDP is applied to two service categories: i) GMS, which are general services for supervision, management and quality control; and ii) ISS, which are support services linked to implementation (hiring of staff, payments and financial transactions, organization of activities, travel, etc.).

94 It should be noted that this is also because the country office is a pilot for incorporating all service contracts into the ATLAS system through eServices.

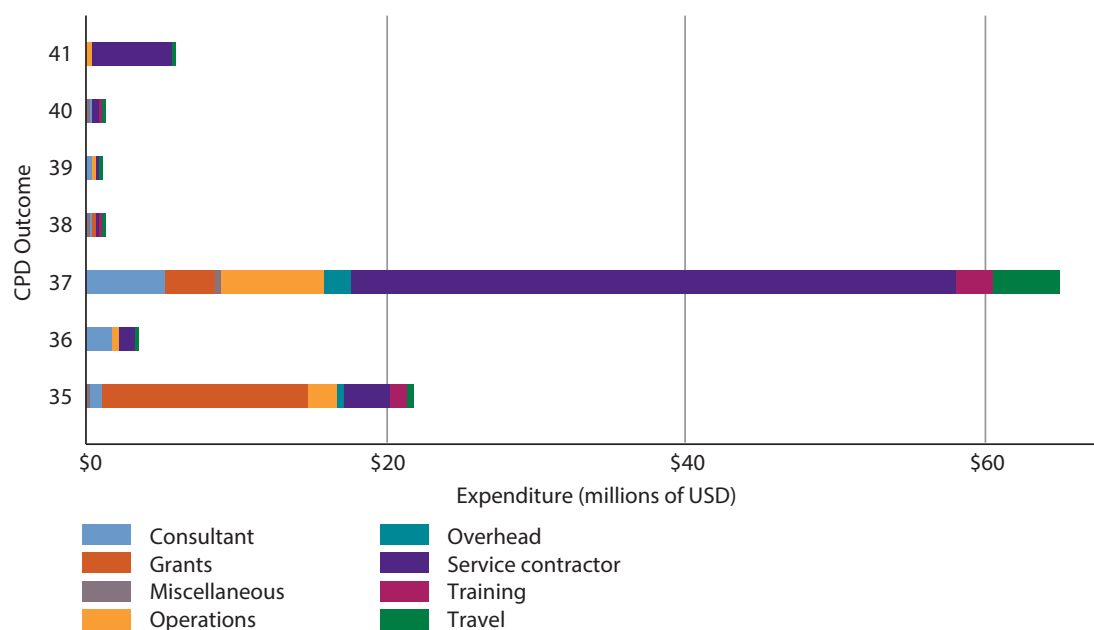
95 It is estimated that 17 service contracts support work within the office and most of them support projects with national partners. In addition to these service contracts, 18 fixed-term appointment (FTA) contracts were calculated, alongside four United Nations volunteers and two programme assistants (PAs).

**Figure 1. Evolution of the UNDP country office's funding by source, 2008-2015**



Source: Atlas Snapshot (2016)

**Figure 2. Expenditure per outcome, 2013-2015**



Source: Atlas (2016)

the course of a year, the office has had two Resident Representatives and one Deputy Resident Representative, who acted for six months. The posts of Resident Representative and Coordinator and of Country Director were occupied in February and July 2016, respectively. During that same year, of the 18 fixed-term appointment (FTA) employees, five had held their posts for a year or less and two posts were vacant. Posts in the operations unit were occupied for longer periods of time: an average of eight years, in comparison to 2.5 years for programme staff.

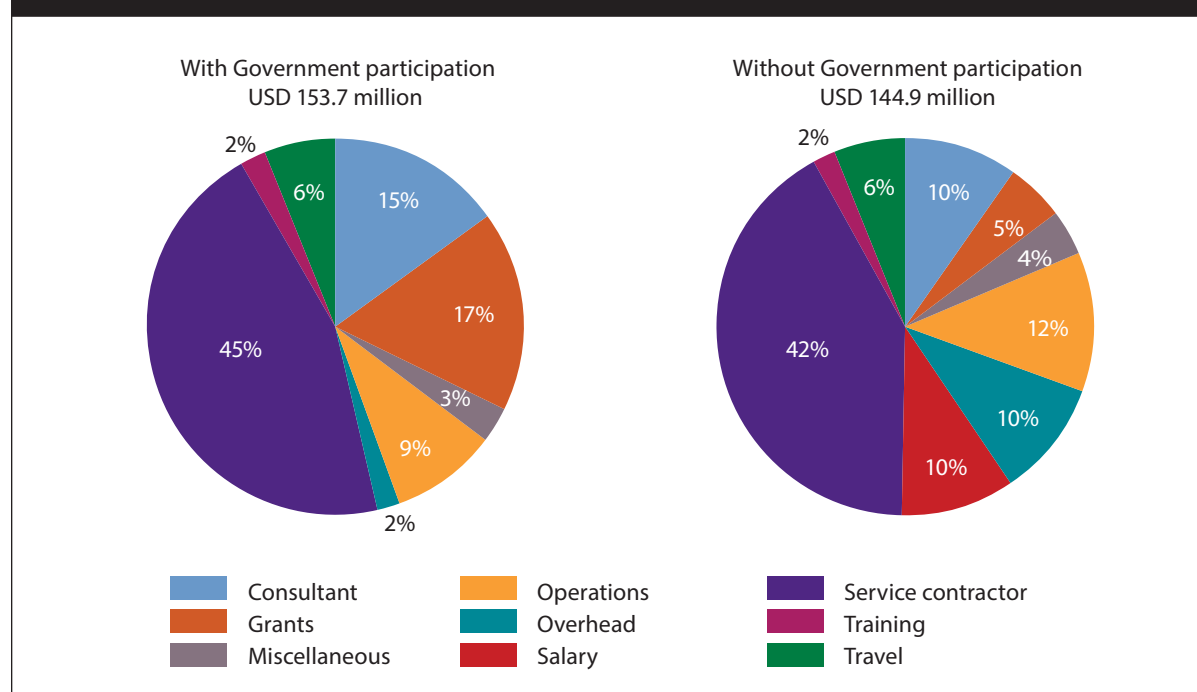
With regard to the **office environment**, the 2014 Global Staff Survey indicates that **staff are generally committed and empowered**. Lower levels of performance are largely related to shortcomings in knowledge management (how to access experience, how to inform staff and how cooperation is undertaken at the managerial level). The gender gap is slightly wider than the recom-

mended level (five points instead of a maximum of four).

General costs for projects funded by the Government have a larger proportion of donations and consultants. The proportion of service contracts remains practically the same for both types of projects, although it has constantly increased since 2008, to almost 73 percent of expenditure in 2015 (which is not represented in the 2008-2015 aggregate figure).

**Government partners rated UNDP at a low level in terms of cost-effectiveness.** The 2015 Partnership Survey for UNDP in Mexico indicated a lower-than-average cost-effectiveness. Only 28 percent of the survey respondents considered UNDP's cost-effectiveness to be favourable, far below the regional and corporate averages (35 and 44 percent, respectively). However, partners are generally satisfied with UNDP's com-

**Figure 3. Expenditure on projects with and without Government participation in funding, 2008-2015<sup>96</sup>**



Source: Atlas (2016)

96 The analysis, based on account codes, excludes United Nations common funds associated with the managerial activities (safety and local) of the United Nations System Resident Coordinator.

mitment in Mexico (88 percent), slightly higher than the regional and corporate average. This suggests that, despite general satisfaction, partners see a gap in terms of efficiency.

**Results-based management (RBM) within the country office presents a higher-than-average level of professionalism.** The Mexico office was highly valued in terms of its performance in line with the internal quality evaluation carried out annually by UNDP headquarters. In fact, there was notable improvement in the quality of ROARs between 2011 and 2012, which has kept the highest rating since then. The amount spent on monitoring and evaluation as a percentage of total programme spending has also increased, from less than 1 percent in 2014 to 2.3 percent in 2015. Partners' satisfaction with UNDP's approach in relation to RBM was positive in comparison to the regional and global averages.

### 3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability and ownership in the different focus areas in which UNDP in Mexico works can, on average, be ranked between moderate and good, with heterogeneous results and similar factors which favoured sustainability and ownership, and with other shared factors which limit them. In general, projects requested by the Mexican Government showed good levels of sustainability during the administration in which they were implemented. However, this sustainability tends to dissipate once the government period ends, whether due to an agenda change or to political proselytism. The current decrease in public revenue is another risk to sustainability, as long as ownership on the part of society (communities, businesspeople, etc.) continues to be the exception, as up until now. Therefore, the dissemination of information and project results is an opportunity for UNDP in Mexico.

Starting with the area of the environment, which covers a large proportion of UNDP's activities in the country and the projects of which naturally have a time and sustainability component different to that of other thematic areas,

there has been a good level of ownership and empowerment through training, skills training and strengthening of local capacities. This in turn has allowed beneficiaries and their leaders to track and provide continuity to results. However, continuity is not always provided by other involved agents, especially government counterparts. The main risk to the sustainability of this outcome does not depend on UNDP, but rather on changes in government, management and political will. Some projects have formed groups which will continue activities linked to this outcome (especially those which have achieved socio-economic cost-effectiveness) and there are cases in which UNDP has withdrawn and state or local authorities have taken on its functions. Sustainability often depends on communities; in the case of emergency plans and disaster risk prevention plans, it also depends upon municipalities following up with community plans, in addition to political and technical continuity in institutions.

For example, with regard to climate change topics, work involving skills training and awareness-raising for young people and students reinforces communities. If community groups are well positioned on an environmental level, they strengthen the community. However, political instability may thwart what is done and achieved. In these topics, there has been a certain level of ownership on the part of some participants from the renewable energy market, but not enough to be able to dispense with UNDP, particularly with its support for securing funding with windfall resources, such as those from the GEF.

There are multiple support factors for the sustainability of the projects in which UNDP has participated in Mexico, such as: certification for companies which produce and distribute photo-voltaic equipment; green mortgages which generate requirements and demands in the user; the fact that the testing laboratories in Guanajuato complement the certification cluster for producers of solar heaters; the fact that the UNDP programme did not limit itself to the Institute of the National Fund for Work-



ers' Housing (INFONAVIT), instead expanding to SMEs and the tourism sector; and the SAGARPA AGRONEGOCIOS programme adopting the solar heater project model through the FIRCO Shared Risk Trust.<sup>97</sup> There was also continuity in the implementation of the funding component for photo-voltaic energy, mobilizing national resources (FOTEASE) and incorporating development banking (BANCO-MEXT), in order to create guarantee funds for Solar Water Heating Systems. The private sector was involved in both the chemical and mining sectors in creating low-emission development strategies (LEDS) and with funding for biodiversity through the creation of the Mexican Alliance for Biodiversity, alongside the Banks of Mexico Association. Similarly, in the Sixth National Communication project with the INECC, there has been an impact on the creation of public-private dialogue with the different industrial sectors for the creation of sectoral GHG baselines.

Structural factors that have contributed to sustainability include ownership of aims by government institutions, the approval of laws and other regulations on the topic and the involvement of CSOs, which help to sustain results despite changes to the federal administration.

However, still to be addressed are: the need for project results to penetrate wider sectors of society; excessive dependence on direct subsidies; and lacking involvement of businesspeople in environmental and climate change topics. Another obstacle is that society has not taken ownership of the principal topics of climate change beyond small demonstrative cases. UNDP does not have an exit strategy for these purposes. For example, in terms of the environment, awareness-raising and information campaigns are needed for the people; dissemination within society is a huge challenge.

In the case of chemical product management, sustainability is perceived to be insufficient. Even when UNDP's contribution to destroying polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) was good, the goal of destroying 41 tonnes of PCB is not progressing at the necessary speed, despite the willingness shown by SEMARNAT.<sup>98</sup> Achieving such a goal requires a successful exit strategy to be found for the fact that, for businesspeople, PCB destruction is an added cost. UNDP has contributed to the area of PCB destruction through support focused on producing information, an integrated management system, a standard which goes beyond destruction (to avoid cross-contamination), holding workshops for the certification of correct environmental management, identifying installed capacities and marking out a pathway towards PCB destruction. However, the sustainability of this entire effort lies in the creation of industry capacities.

CONANP staff indicate that management programmes support sustainability beyond UNDP projects because they train land users, forest rangers and municipal authorities. UNDP-CONANP staff have a constant presence on the ground and communities in protected natural areas trust them. However, there continues to be a permanent threat from mining companies, the interests of which often conflict with the aims of these projects. Fortunately, in the end there are negotiations and agreements, although with a very weak environmental position. This is an area in which UNDP should intervene at a high level. Participation of indigenous communities in these projects' aims is almost exclusively determined by interest in obtaining money from the Government. In the case of community forest ranger brigades organized with CONANP, solidly-built capacities still depend too heavily on the granting of subsidies. These projects' sustainability is supported by the fact that inhabitants already have a team, they are trained and are able to train

97 FIRCO is a repository of international funds, especially from the IDB, for sustainable development in the field.

98 Capacities are being built inside and outside SEMARNAT through trans-sexennial projects. Initiatives from the GEF5, GEF6 and GEF7 portfolios are coming to a close in 2017: 14, 12 and 10 projects, respectively. When they end, they will need to follow up on approximately 30 projects, which will require further resources.



new forest rangers in their community and other groups. Also in relation to sustainable rural production, the inhabitants of several communities are highly trained to teach others to plant and harvest sustainably. However, these individuals still depend on the subsidy that they receive for undertaking sustainable activities, which means that, without this money, they would most likely abandon sustainable practices, and UNDP does not appear to have an exit strategy.

There are important sustainability factors in biodiversity projects. Economic arguments have persuaded communities, businesses and the authorities regarding losses produced by invasive species. However, the shortage of public resources is limiting and budgetary cuts threaten to curb the flow of resources for controlling invasive species. Fortunately, there are training instruments for the future which cost close to nothing, such as automated training courses (online) that allow for teaching to be sustained at a low cost.

Regarding forest management, CONAFOR has incorporated laws where the project has successfully incorporated gender<sup>99</sup> and biodiversity conservation requirements. Two interviewees from the commission commented that they see the change of federal Government in 2018 as a risk, in addition to the lack of specialized support from CONAFOR, suggesting that there should be strategies for guiding projects which benefit from subsidies from this body. Although operational rules, manuals and skills training for staff and producers were produced, alongside manuals for sustaining these projects, it is still necessary to reproduce these results on a larger scale. In the opinion of other interviewees, the Mexican Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Production is difficult to meet without institutional guidance. UNDP and CONAFOR have worked with CONABIO on forestry monitoring, as well

as on biodiversity monitoring, which involved other institutions (such as CONANP, foundations, INECC, etc.), successfully incorporating aspects to guarantee their sustainability. Furthermore, biodiversity topics have been incorporated into public policies, leading Mexico to more advanced monitoring in this respect. Nevertheless, one interviewee considered the above to depend on having resources available to hire high-level experts, since cuts to CONAFOR staff<sup>100</sup> impact on sustainability. CONAFOR operating staff hope that UNDP will continue to support them and indicate that, without the programme, organization for monitoring biodiversity will be uncertain and interest in the topic may be lost. In most interviewees' view, the factors which support sustainability in this area include the existence of a more solid institutional structure, interest on the part of social organizations and the fact that the concept of community-based forest enterprises has been rooted using well-defined operation mechanisms. At the same time, hiring of high-level staff is important for improving the system but not essential for operating it. CONAFOR has established modifications to its internal statutes and created an area (with civil servants from the commission itself) devoted to tracking the system. Several processes are being automated, which will make the platform more cost-effective in the medium term and, therefore, a high volume of staff will not be required. An unfavourable factor for sustainability is that, whilst there is growing coverage for sustainable forest production units, it is difficult to find more experts in technological modernization and diversification, transferral of the latest technology and permanent credit financing mechanisms, which do not flow by themselves in the forestry sector.

For the implementation of the REDD+ mechanism, relatively unfavourable sustainability is on the horizon. The monitoring system was incorporated into the Mexican Government. How-

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99 Twenty-five percent admitted women, which is unusual for this sector.

100 Many CONAFOR employees trained in topics of UNDP projects have moved on; therefore, there is likely to be a lack of leadership and capacity to continue with results. If this does not change, the resulting cost will be high, because approximately \$50 million has been invested over the past five years. Nevertheless, skills training has also been provided to government workers in order to provide the monitoring system with continuity.

ever, sustainability is threatened by budgetary cuts, while the price of oil affects public revenue and the dollar places purchasing power at a disadvantage. However, the Centre for Excellence is protected by agreements made between the member states of the Mesoamerican Strategy for Environmental Sustainability (EMSA). Its continuity depends on other factors beyond the financial sphere. UNDP and its partners seek to consolidate a financial sustainability strategy which includes budgetary participation from all the countries in the region.

In terms of preparing national communications on climate change, there has been capacity-building, but these capacities are dispersed among consultants and only partially exist among government staff. The project has allowed Mexico to maintain global leadership in preparing the national communications of countries which do not feature in Annex 1 of the UNFCCC, has aided the updating of databases on topics of mitigation and adaptation, and has allowed for the involvement of a wide-ranging technical-scientific community. The updated information from the Fifth Communication allows for a critical and quantitative evaluation to be carried out on progress, comparing it with compliance with Mexico's goals. The country has an important network of scientists in its universities<sup>101</sup> and the capacities of INECC, after the conclusion of the Fifth National Communication, have allowed for GHG inventories to be updated. However, INECC has seen reductions to its budget for retaining its own staff to produce national communications.

The problem of dispersed capacities among consultants who conduct almost every study is serious, since only a low percentage of studies are conducted in-house. By contracting a high number of consultants to carry out project activities, a high risk is run of low sustainability of results once projects have concluded and no exit strategy to this end can be detected.

In the area of poverty reduction and inclusive development, results in terms of sustainability are also mixed. When projects have been requested by the Government or civil society or were proposed by UNDP, based on interest in designing long-term policies, greater sustainability is present, even after the organization's withdrawal (as in the cases of: the SEP project ConstruyeT; the SEDESOL project Development of Capacities for the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in the framework of the programme Childcare to Support Working Mothers; and the Institutional Social Inclusion Strategy for Gender Equality, Non-Discrimination and Employment Inclusion for Women, the Disabled and the LGBTTTI Community in Petróleos Mexicanos, PEMEX). The Development of Capacities for the Inclusion of Children with Disabilities project, in which SEDESOL and the National System for Integral Family Development (SNDIF) collaborate, was designed with pilot tests to act as an example on an international level and with the intention of increasing its coverage in the future. In awareness-raising projects for gender issues in states and PEMEX, Supplier Development or ConstruyeT projects, capacities were created among the beneficiaries or intermediaries which remain after the end of the initiative. On the other hand, certain beneficiaries comment on the lack of continuity of some projects and the fact that certain activities ended early with non-sustainable results. The main challenges in terms of sustainability are staff turnover within implementing partners and within UNDP, no champions to drive projects, changes of sexennial and priorities and a lack of budget to continue with the next project phase.

In the area of governance, sustainability is generally medium-low, except in institutionalized initiatives. This is not necessarily attributable to UNDP but, instead, to the instability in the incorporation of results into government agencies. There is often no continuity in the work undertaken neither on the part of UNDP nor

101 The scope of UNDP-Government cooperation could be widened and, in producing the Sixth National Communication, a critical analysis of progress in mitigation and adaptation could be incorporated, putting into perspective the percentage of the total which corresponds to the goals formulated for 2020/2030.

the Mexican Government, which makes it difficult to institutionalize the results of projects in continuous processes, since turnover of trained staff often implies that project results are lost. The main obstacle to project sustainability is probably interaction with government agents, since changes in government (at any level) imply drastic changes to public administration staff, which affects project continuity. Political-electoral times distract the attention of public agents and decrease their interest in projects. In several cases, greater civil society involvement favours sustainability, since the affected parties take ownership of processes. Sustainability also improves when a prestigious agent, well-positioned on a national level (NGO or academic institution), is involved, since an image of political neutrality is consolidated, but also because they will probably continue to work on the topic once UNDP's support comes to an end.

In the area of cooperation, most results are institutionalized; however, certain outputs are non-established documents. The Mesoamerican

Integration and Development Project (MIDP), which is funded by multiple sources through the Development Cooperation Fund, is now part of public policy on international cooperation and is institutionally rooted in AMEXCID. Trained experts belong to AMEXCID's organizational structure and are trained in UNDP's budgetary and multi-annual planning methodology. Ownership, therefore, falls upon the teams incorporated into and trained at AMEXCID. UNDP and the part of the training programme for seeking out specialized profiles may help, in turn, to maintain the course of action in time, thanks to the teams which participated in the programme. The methodology created is used in the National Registry for International Development Cooperation (RENCID) to identify good practices. Methodology for mapping subnational agents was one of the clauses agreed with the company which carries this out, in order to pass on to it the information and the methodology. In terms of ownership, the lessons learned and information transfers through skills training will remain at AMEXCID.



# UNDP'S STRATEGIC POSITIONING

This chapter, based on the general results and perceptions gathered during the evaluation, discusses the strategic positioning of UNDP in Mexico through its capacity to respond to the country's main development challenges and to address emerging issues and situations.

UNDP's comparative advantages are analysed in comparison to other United Nations System agencies and international partners, alongside the organization's use of its main criteria for developing international cooperation: the principles of ownership, strengthening of national capacities and the promotion of the economic, social, civil and cultural rights established by the United Nations. Other topics analysed in this chapter are the approach to the sustainable human development paradigm, gender equality and the empowerment of women, citizen participation, advances in South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the application of international platforms in development plans, programmes and policies, and the effective exercise of UNDP's coordination function within the UNS for development.

### 4.1 ALIGNMENT OF UNDP'S COOPERATION PROGRAMMES

UNDP's 2014-2018 cooperation programme was produced based on the guidelines established by the 2014-2019 UNDAF, which in turn was based on the five agreements made in the Pact for Mexico.<sup>102</sup> This agreement defined the national programme foundations in the social, economic and political spheres through 95 commitments, with a time horizon up to

December 2018, contained in five chapters: (1) rights-based society; (2) economic growth, employment and competitiveness; (3) safety and justice; (4) transparency, accountability and tackling corruption; and (5) democratic governance. Taking the Pact's guidelines as a starting point, the five goals of the 2013-2018 National Development Plan were established: Mexico at Peace; An Inclusive Mexico; Mexico with High-Quality Education; Prosperous Mexico; and Mexico, an Actor with Global Responsibility.

The 2014-2019 UNDAF, signed on 13 March 2013, is divided into six cooperation areas: (1) equality, equity and social inclusion; (2) productive economic development, competitiveness and decent work; (3) environmental sustainability and green economy; (4) citizen safety, social cohesion and justice; (5) democratic governance; and (6) global partnership for development. It also contains 13 related direct outcomes. The direct outcomes that comprise UNDP's contribution are:

- In cooperation area I, direct outcome 1, on the implementation of a comprehensive social development strategy.
- In cooperation area II, direct outcome 5, on the strengthening and implementation of public policies which foster sustained economic growth and competitiveness.
- In cooperation area III, direct outcome 6, on the strengthening of national capacities to reverse environmental degradation and to maximize natural resources in a sustainable way.

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102 Political agreement signed on 2 December 2012 by the three main Mexican parties – the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the National Action Party (PAN) and the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) – and later joined by the Ecologist Green Party (PVE).



- In cooperation area IV, direct outcome 7, on the implementation of public policies and strategies relating to public and citizen safety.
- In cooperation area V, direct outcome 11, on the strengthening of transparency, access to information and accountability for tackling corruption, and direct outcome 12, on creating participatory citizens.
- In cooperation area VI, direct outcome 13, on the strengthening of Mexico's position as an effective cooperator for regional and global development.

The UNDP programme also considers the priorities proposed in UNDP's 2014-2017 Global Programme: (a) the Post-2015 Development Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals; (b) inclusive and sustainable development pathways; (c) climate and disaster risks; (d) inclusive

and effective governance; and (e) gender equality and women's empowerment. The country programme also takes into account the four results defined in the 2014-2017 Regional Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean, developed based on the guidelines established in the Global Programme: (a) inclusive and sustainable growth and development, with the incorporation of productive capacities which generate employment and a living for those in conditions of poverty and exclusion; (b) meeting citizens' expectations in terms of the rule of law, participation, development and responsibility with robust democratic governance systems; (c) quicker achievement of progress in relation to reducing gender inequality and promoting women's empowerment; and (d) the capacity of countries to reduce the likelihood of conflict and to reduce the risk of natural disasters, including those originating in climate change (see Table 3).

**Table 3. List of UNDP programme outcomes and the strategic frameworks of UNDP, the United Nations System and the Mexican Government**

<b>UNDP's Strategic Plan 2014-2017 Outcomes</b>	<b>United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2014-2019</b>	<b>UNDP Country Programme (CPD) 2014-2018</b>	<b>National Development Plan 2013-2018 Goals</b>
1. Inclusive, sustainable growth and development.	1. Comprehensive social development.	35. Comprehensive human development, especially amongst vulnerable groups.	II. An Inclusive Mexico. III. Mexico with High-Quality Education.
1. Inclusive, sustainable growth and development.	5. Sustained economic growth and competitiveness.	36. Economic growth, competitiveness and decent work.	IV. Prosperous Mexico.
5. Risk management and climate change. 6. Resilience and environmental sustainability.	6. Environmental sustainability.	37. Improved capacities for sustainability and resilience.	IV. Prosperous Mexico.
2. Democratic governance: participation, rule of law and responsibility.	7. Public and citizen safety.	38. Citizen safety and social cohesion.	I. Mexico at Peace.
2. Democratic governance: participation, rule of law and responsibility.	11. Transparency, access to information and accountability.	39. Transparency and accountability.	I. Mexico at Peace.
2. Democratic governance: participation, rule of law and responsibility.	12. Participatory citizens.	40. Citizen participation and human rights.	I. Mexico at Peace.
7. Promotion of development.	13. Cooperation for development.	41. Leadership for international development and cooperation.	V. Mexico, an Actor with Global Responsibility.

## 4.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

On 13 September 2011, UNDP signed a Collaboration Framework Agreement with the Mexican Government, the general aim of which was to strengthen national cooperation and to foster partnerships for regional and global development between the parties, in order to intensify cooperation and accelerate compliance with the Millennium Development Goals. In that context, UNDP's 2014-2018 cooperation programme, in addition to the guidelines linked to its implementation by 2015, especially expressed UNDP's commitment to working on measuring the MDGs for their monitoring and evaluation. The organization supported the federal and state governments in designing strategies, measuring the MDGs and producing Human Development Reports. That allowed sustainable human development to be positioned on the programme platform of the 2007-2012 NDP as a main concept. UNDP also provided assistance for the MDGs to become part of public policy planning in Chiapas and Puebla.

UNDP's current cooperation programme was produced based on Mexico's performance in relation to the MDGs and the country's participation in preparing the Post-2015 Agenda, produced in an unprecedented international consultation process coordinated by the United Nations. Now, the challenge continues to be alignment of the current programme of UNDP (2014-2018), the 2014-2019 UNDAF and the 2013-2018 CPD with the commitments made by the country for compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the MDGs.

UNDP, at the request of the Mexican Government, currently supports national development plans and policies reflecting the commitments

made by the country to the 2030 Agenda, based on the organization's experience in sustainable development, governance and mobilization of the necessary financial resources to meet the proposed goals. In that context, the Management of UNDP's Area of Poverty Reduction and Productive Competitiveness has been incorporated into the Specialized Technical Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals (STC SDG).<sup>103</sup> Occasionally, UNDP supported AMEXCID in developing a national strategy to implement the SDGs and collaborated with the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit in designing methodologies for strategically analysing coincidence between budgetary programmes and the SDGs. This analysis should allow agencies to discover, through alignment with the 2013-2018 CPD, their degree of coincidence with the SDGs, in addition to the correspondence between the different indicators reported at the national level and the Agenda goals. As confirmation of the leadership accepted by UNDP in relation to the 2030 Agenda, the Senate's Commission of Foreign Affairs-International Bodies requested collaboration with the organization in order to use diagnostic tools designed by the Inter-Parliamentary Union to evaluate the capacities of the legislative branch to implement the 2030 Agenda.

## 4.3 ADDRESSING OF DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

UNDP is perceived to be a reputable agent, with technical independence and political neutrality, which has participated in political and administrative reform processes through promoting dialogue, skills training and technical assistance. Government and civil society partners recognize in UNDP a response capacity to address the priorities established in national development plans. They also highlight its flexibility in terms

103 The STC SDG, in which UNDP did not participate, was created based on the Modification of the Agreement approved by the Board of Directors of the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) with the mandate of supervising compliance with the MDGs. The STC SDG is responsible for coordinating the conceptual, methodological, technical and operational work which, in the framework of the National System of Statistical and Geographical Information, allows for information to be periodically generated and updated in order to design and evaluate public policies intended for compliance with the SDGs, to which Mexico has committed in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

of addressing emerging topics from the development agenda, such as the SDG platform, and its timely response capacity in the face of emergency situations, such as support for fiscal equity when food taxation was planned in the tax reform, flooding in the State of Mexico in 2014 and as an international development cooperator in the transfer of knowledge for the development of a temporary employment programme in response to disasters after the earthquake in Haiti in January 2010.

UNDP has contributed to maintaining in the national agenda topics which correspond to the international agenda and which are not prioritized in the national development plans. UNDP's involvement was crucial for the holding of the COP 16 in Cancún and the creation of a positive atmosphere surrounding this topic on a national level. There is recognition of efforts made by the UNDP Office in Mexico to provide continuity to projects on environmental topics, especially in the area of climate change where the Government's interest has decreased amid the implementation of the current NDP (2013-2018). Partners generally agree that Mexican public policy on the environment and climate change is greatly influenced by the topics proposed by UNDP and they also highly value the organization's support of the Government in achieving goals relating to Mexico's international commitments in the field. Compliance with the Montreal Protocol is mentioned as a success story in UNDP's work in Mexico, due to compliance with the country's commitment to eliminate hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs). With regard to compliance with Mexico's commitments originating from the Stockholm Convention, UNDP's support is valued because, based on the project designed for PCB destruction, the main agents involved were made aware, and its implementation compensated for Mexico's long delay in complying with the Stockholm Convention commitments. UNDP has also facilitated Mexico's negotiations and commitments on REDD+ topics, which allowed it to support the creation of a Virtual Centre for Excellence for Forestry Monitoring,

which constitutes a SSC strategy, and to help to prepare REDD+ requirements for other countries. This Centre has successfully produced a forestry emissions baseline, presented at the twentieth session of the Conference of the UNFCCC Parties (COP 20) in Lima, and has created the National Forestry Monitoring System.

Partners perceive that other topics on the national agenda and in UNDP's programme framework, such as tackling corruption, public safety and citizen safety, are not receiving due attention from this organization at the level of public policies, especially in light of the relapses which, in terms of safety, restriction of liberties, centralization of public policies and institutional weakening on a subnational level, are being evidenced in Mexico. However, evidence exists that, in the face of the increase in citizen insecurity at a local level, UNDP has successfully coordinated with Governments to guarantee compliance with the aims of its project portfolio. UNDP has adapted its interventions on the ground in the most dangerous areas of the country, taking extra precautions and improving communication with Government security staff.

#### **4.4 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT**

Considered in the gender analysis were integration of gender perspective into the programme, projects and the UNDP office environment in Mexico. There is relative parity among office staff (51 percent are men and 49 percent are women). Managerial posts in the office and the distribution of service contracts are also more or less equally shared across genders.

A sensitive subject relating to UNDP's area of operations, and at the same time sensitive in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment, is that consultants contracted by UNDP do not have a handling procedure in cases of alleged bullying or sexual harassment. Although UNDP's contracting scheme is controlled by the organization's policy for the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse, which refers to the UN

Secretary-General's Bulletin<sup>104</sup>, it is very difficult to carry out the established procedures when the alleged perpetrator is not a civil servant or a UNDP employee. The staff contracted by the Government have their own procedure, but this is not established for the consultants contracted by other agencies, as is the case of UNDP consultants. While the procedure established in UNDP at a corporate level is effective for the staff who work in its office, the supervisors of whom are organization staff, there is currently a significant void in terms of policies against alleged sexual harassment for staff contracted by UNDP who work in other Mexican Government bodies.

Those consulted highlighted that UNDP has lost national leadership among its partners where gender is concerned and they mentioned as relevant the fact that the latest gender strategy<sup>105</sup> for the country office was produced for the period between 2010 and 2012<sup>106</sup>. Also mentioned, although not mandatory for UNDP country offices, was that UNDP in Mexico has not made efforts to apply, on a corporate level, the Gender Equality Seal, implemented by the organization's Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean.

The gender indicator indicates that approximately 30 percent of project spending had some kind of gender focus, while the remaining 70 percent did not consider gender. Specialized funds for gender programmes have been systematically reduced from 10 percent in the period 2009-2012 to 2 percent in 2014-2015. The highest proportion of gender indicators 2 and 3 are in the area of poverty (38.6 percent), governance (29.58 percent), and the environment (23.9 percent).

In the area of governance, UNDP created institutional capacity on a local level, in order to integrate gender perspective into public poli-

cies, including cooperation in Zacatecas (skills training on gender perspective and analysis of the system of violence against women), Yucatán and Quintana Roo (women's empowerment in the poorest areas), and Guanajuato (advocating public policies to help to cope with the crisis of extreme violence against women).

In the area of poverty, based on the experience of the Gender Equality Seal, UNDP worked on employment standards alongside the Secretariat of Labour and in collaboration with UN Women for the inclusion of women and the disabled.

In the area of the environment, UNDP was crucial for incorporating gender perspective into the topic of climate change. After a social participation process which promoted analysis and reflection on women and men in different national contexts on climate change and its effects, a Declaratory Document on Gender and Climate Change was produced and presented at the COP 16, and it was included in the Cancún Agreements on Climate Change. Similarly, UNDP has sought the integration of gender strategies through its forestry work, with registers available on female participation in the companies created through its projects. These report a 400 percent increase in the number of women working in community-based forest enterprises and the creation of Organization Manuals for Forest Enterprises with a Gender Focus. Furthermore, as a result of the project for compliance with the Montreal Protocol between UNDP and SEMARNAT, one of the country's largest home appliances manufacturers, MABE, keeps gender parity when hiring. In the area of the environment, some evidence points to a lack of practical action in the implementation of gender perspective. Some consulted partners agreed that, while UNDP is insistent with gender topics, it does not provide approaches, methodologies or experts for

104 Secretary-General's Bulletin: Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, ST/SGB/2003/13.

105 Gender strategies had been produced previously, for the periods 2005-2007 and 2008-2011.

106 The 2010-2012 Gender Strategy established four types of activities for incorporating gender perspective: development of capacities, knowledge management, communication plans and advocacy and influence.



their implementation. Moreover, beneficiaries belonging to the Tzotzil ethnic group explained that progress in the topic of gender is slow in their communities, since female participation goes against their traditions.

In a more exhaustive analysis, the evaluation included projects considered to be *gender-transformative*, *gender-responsive*, *gender-targeted* and *gender-blind*, since UNDP sometimes considered gender perspective and women's empowerment to be part of projects and, at other times, it was their central topic.

Some of the projects analysed as *gender-transformative* at their design and implementation stages had the aim of directly contributing to changing standards or power structures to encourage gender equality and prevent discrimination through changes to national legislation, awareness-raising among public civil servants on gender differences, education for teenagers to develop their socio-emotional skills and the removal of barriers to women joining the employment market or continuing their studies. The launch of the National Institute for Women (INMUJERES), with UNDP's support, facilitated the development of gender policy in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs. Furthermore, it was requested that the Puebla Panama Plan, and later the Mesoamerica Project, incorporate gender perspective. The national and regional strategies which exist as gender guidelines in AMEXCID are a result of the Mesoamerica Project. However, in the implementation of this agency's institutional strengthening project, gender perspective was not a topic clearly linked to the project. Although the International Development Cooperation Law stipulates that gender perspective must be a cross-cutting issue, no specific strategy has been developed for incorporating a gender focus into international development cooperation policies, for example, in terms of training multi-disciplinary staff on the topic of gender.

The results of the *gender-responsive* projects addressed the different needs of men and women and the barriers to female participation through

support mechanisms, such as designing, implementing and evaluating programmes and budgets with gender perspectives, and skills training for local civil servants to incorporate a gender vision into public programmes and encourage participatory planning for women. *Gender-targeted* projects were those related to the HDI which included analysis of information broken down by gender, allowing for information to be used diagnostically. Although these projects did not directly address the barriers between men and women in Mexico, they did collaborate towards the opening up of dialogue on human development topics, including gender perspective when designing public policies, meaning that they could even be considered to be indirectly gender-responsive. There were also *gender-blind projects*, in which, due to their nature, gender perspective was not openly included; such is the case of the project for the Protection of Vulnerable Migrants in Transit, a review of the PROSPERA register or projects for entrepreneurs and MSMEs.

#### **4.5 SOCIAL INCLUSION AND THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY**

Several UNDP projects included diagnoses of the situation in which the most vulnerable groups live. These diagnoses involved surveys – such as in the case of ConstruyeT, Childcare, evaluations with the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI) and the ONE observatory – or interviews and focus groups with vulnerable groups – such as in the case of the Institutional Social Inclusion Strategy with Petróleos Mexicanos (PEMEX). Other projects featured desk research or recommendations, for example those related to the HDI, the review of the Social Inclusion Programme (PROSPERA) register, the Childcare to Support Working Mothers programme and the Supplier Development Programme (PDP).

UNDP supported the implementation of projects aimed at reducing inequalities and exclusion which, according to the beneficiaries, has led to a positive change where their well-being is concerned. For example, the ConstruyeT pro-



gramme supported the empowerment of both male and female teenagers and fostered respect and a life free from drugs and violence. Furthermore, the project for inclusion of disabled children in SEDESOL childcare supported mothers to join the employment market and the PEMEX Social Inclusion Strategy contributed to awareness-raising of the differences of LGBTTTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Transvestite and Intersex) groups. Additionally, other state projects relating to gender worked towards skills training on these topics for government employees, planning to include women or changes to laws to reduce gender violence. Migrant exclusion was also reduced by establishing dialogue with those living near support centres and indigenous groups were empowered through support projects in Chiapas. For its part, SEMARNAT has a project with UNDP especially dedicated to broadening citizen participation for sustainable management, which includes a range of women, young people and indigenous peoples. In turn, SEMARNAT programmes award a higher score to their potential beneficiaries based on gender, ethnicity and age.

In terms of poverty eradication, the vulnerabilities of the poorest were tackled through interventions supported by UNDP, such as access to safe housing as part of risk-reduction projects in Chiapas and access to education and cash transfers due to broadening of the PROSPERA register. With regard to projects which have reports on the HDI, spending on children or indicator design as their deliverables, their impact on poverty lies in access to high-quality information which raises awareness among civil servants, facilitates decision-making and supports the design of effective policies. Similarly, projects for entrepreneurs and MSMEs are directed towards generating income and high-quality employment.

Among UNDP's project portfolio, there are some which prioritize disabled individuals as their beneficiaries, for example PEMEX's Social Inclusion Strategy and the SEDESOL project for Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Childcare. In the PEMEX project, the most signifi-

cant results were awareness-raising among staff in relation to disabled individuals and changes to the corporation's infrastructure to facilitate disabled access. Although UNDP's accessibility diagnosis has now ended, PEMEX's social inclusion department continues to work towards adapting its premises and plans to expand this project to all of the corporation's offices across the country. SEDESOL's Childcare project is under way. Production of workshop content and the pilot test for training nursery staff to care for disabled children have come to an end and it is hoped that expanding the project to many more childcare facilities will be possible in 2017. A good number of women, older adults and young people – among other beneficiaries – participate in projects for generating synergies between UNDP and CONANP. In the project for pollutant disposal in order to comply with the Montreal Protocol commitments, vulnerable groups in conditions of poverty benefited. Regarding UNDP projects with CONAFOR, attention was focused on forestry producers in marginalized areas and it was very difficult to implement a gender perspective, due to the very nature of forestry production, which predominantly requires hard physical work.

#### 4.6 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

UNDP's comparative advantages are linked to its credibility, provided by its technical capacity, and to the nuance of neutrality which it provides to the processes in which it participates. Furthermore, UNDP contributes good international practices, has convening power and is able to bring together different national agents.

UNDP is also valued by partners from civil society and academia because of the opportunities that it offers to create and manage knowledge, mainly through methodologies advocated for producing HDRs on a national and state level. These partners also recognize the leadership shown by the country office in terms of monitoring and evaluating the aims established in the MDGs. Also recognized is the added value contributed by the UNDP's Human Development

Reports Office (HDRO), which was responsible for positioning the human development paradigm, trained human capital on measuring the paradigm and produced five reports. The HDRO met its aims and was closed in 2015. This was, on the one hand, because UNDP's main strategic partner, the Mexican Government, changed the focus of its research needs to short-term results and, on the other hand, because certain academic centres and think tanks which have existed in Mexico for years have been used to promote the new sustainable human development paradigm.

One comparative advantage of UNDP is the high level of thematic knowledge demanded of its project staff, which allows them to understand agents, discover how to participate and learn how to ensure that others participate. Another advantage mentioned is the strict nature of the organization's delivery and evaluation processes, with their very clear methodologies for measuring and quantifying results. It is acknowledged that UNDP successfully brings Government representatives together with their counterparts from civil society, academia and the indigenous movement. Furthermore, it allows the opening up of spaces for dialogue between agents who, due to the nature of the institutions that they represent, may be reluctant to mutually collaborate.

UNDP shows leadership on a political level and performs the important task of maintaining the Mexican Government's trust, in order to promote critical projects with the public administration. UNDP earned this respect through relevant initiatives – such as producing HDRs, electoral observation and México Estatal – in which it was fundamental to find a balance between the trust placed in UNDP by the Government and the need to maintain the neutrality and independence which constitute the added value of these initiatives' results.

Some partners indicated that UNDP's leadership has decreased because it has a lower level of financial independence and fewer national human resources, and because many projects are funded with Government resources. The

balance between the need to collaborate with the Government while also preserving independence and credibility has proved to be a significant challenge for the organization's managers in Mexico. This balance was forged by establishing very strong partnerships with agents from civil society, academia, local Governments and political parties, and by strengthening bodies under State control.

UNDP is perceived to be a leader in relevant topics from the national and international agenda, due to its thematic universe and level of commitment to complying with development goals. In terms of political dialogue, the organization is very close to the Mexican Government because of its flexibility in addressing emerging topics, which does not necessarily occur with other UNS agencies or with other development cooperators. Although UNDP is effective and quickly builds relationships, over the past years questions have been raised regarding its capacity for sustaining long-lasting links, given the turnover of its managerial and technical staff. The respectful dialogue that it maintains with the authorities and with communities is also recognized.

UNDP is present in places and at events where other cooperation agencies have limited participation. For example, the UNDP Country Office, in collaboration with the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs and the UNDP's global network, committed to contributing to consolidating Mexico's positioning as a cooperation provider in a range of spheres, including: electoral management, social and gender statistics, programmes to tackle poverty, corporate social responsibility, sustainable productive projects, strategies for adapting to climate change, comprehensive disaster management, production chains and supplier development, social competitiveness index and establishing basic reference data for formulating territorial strategies. In this context, in 2011, the Government signed a Collaboration Framework Agreement with UNDP, with the aim of maximizing Mexico's potential as an international development partner. It includes initiatives on topics relating to compliance with

the MDGs, electoral processes and productive competitiveness. Some results from these initiatives, in addition to the launch of AMEXCID, are the creation of the International Centre for Electoral Training and Research, 140 electoral missions, the organization of 30 electoral justice exchanges (with benefits for 17 countries across four continents), alongside transfer of risk management systems and measuring of the MDGs in Central America. Furthermore, the Supplier Development methodology was transferred to Honduras and El Salvador. These initiatives showed that UNDP has the capacity to be a good partner for systematizing, promoting and disseminating good practices and to take better advantage of SSC.

With regard to conservation, renewable energy and forestry development, UNDP is considered to be a significant development cooperator. However, where climate change is concerned, some evidence shows that UNDP is not making sufficient effort to drive the international development agenda; it limits itself to the Mexican Government's demands and, therefore, has remained on the sidelines of the most strategic debates and processes which determine the national climate change agenda. It is considered that the organization should review its agenda, in order to define the efforts to be continued, removed and included to impact on the implementation of Mexico's climate change priorities.

UNDP represents institutional leadership and the possibility of access to rigorous reference knowledge for a public administration which wishes to support and endorse its decisions. The organization's work is very pertinent in specific sectors and has the potential to be very pertinent with certain agents, especially in the local context and particularly due to the capacities present in the federal Government in comparison to states in the local context, to which UNDP greatly contributes. Furthermore, it has a vast scope of possibility to make an impact

on a municipal level. Some Mexican municipalities have very basic capacities, while others have more sophisticated capacities. This is where added value lies and where UNDP has a window of opportunity for providing technical assistance and strengthening national capacities. In this same context, the Mexican Government recognizes that working with UNDP opens doors to communities and CSOs, which improves the Government's credibility.

UNDP's network of experts is very highly valued in relation to renewable energy, as is its permanent presence in Mexico and its opinion leadership regarding development topics. The organization is considered to have a great potential for replicating success stories from across the world. However, it was observed that it does not use its full expert potential and that case studies would help to internationally advocate development of Mexico's public policies.

UNDP also presents comparative advantages as compared to other international development cooperators. One noteworthy advantage is its non-financial approach to dialogue, opting instead for a partnership-based approach with those who fund activities and initiatives, unlike other international cooperation bodies which contribute their own ideas and modalities, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the World Bank (WB), which have a close relationship with the Mexican Government. However, UNDP depends economically on the Government as the main financial backer of its projects. The fact that the organization is not a development bank implies that its proposed projects are not biased towards links with credits, as is the case of the WB and the IDB. On the other hand, UNDP's administrative costs are considered high in comparison to those of other international agencies.<sup>107</sup>

Over the course of this evaluation, good collaboration was observed between UNDP and bilat-

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107 The direct cost of UNDP projects is, on average, 8 percent.

eral cooperation agencies, such as the GIZ and the Norwegian Government. Compared with some bilateral development cooperators, such as French cooperation, which wish to replicate their own models, the work undertaken by UNDP with the Mexican Government stands out for its sensitivity towards social, economic and environmental circumstances and for its capacity to adapt in order to develop national models. The same occurs with other UNS agencies, such as the United Nations Environment Programme and FAO, and the level of commitment to complying with the Government's institutional aims shown by the consultants contracted by UNDP. Also considered advantageous is the fact that UNDP has (or has had) regional offices in Mexico, such as in Chiapas and Yucatán, which facilitates direct interaction. In terms of the environment and climate change, UNDP is considered to be the main international player. The GIZ and the Global Environment Fund are present, but do not cover the same thematic universe as UNDP. The Mexican Government considers this organization to be proactive and particularly values the way in which it has fostered work groups and national-level discussions, which have influenced the achievement of required progress.

As compared with the other UNS agencies, UNDP is an agency which dares to be innovative, takes on risks and participates in complex topics from the national agenda, such as elections, transparency, conflicts, safety and social policy in periods of economic crisis. Furthermore, it has been innovative in terms of environmental topics, such as electronic waste management, resilience in protected natural areas and gender in the forestry sector, among others. UNDP presents many advantages over other agencies, since it has individuals living permanently in communities, which is completely different to what the UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) do, for example. This presence represents a certain advantage for ensuring that activities in communities have a greater impact and are much more quickly implemented.

## 4.7 RELATIONSHIPS WITH IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

UNDP is widely perceived to have significant capacity for gathering the Government, civil society and academia around the negotiating table and emphasis is placed on its key participation in achieving communication and agreements. There is evidence of this work in projects such as ConstruyeT and the ONE observatory, in which civil society acted as the Federal Government and UNDP's operating arm, and in the Migrants project, in which the organization fostered dialogue between groups of local residents and migrant centres. In other projects, it also demonstrated its capacity to convene and be heard by agents of the highest relevance.

On the one hand, implementing partners recognize that they had a close relationship with UNDP, that coordination of work between them increasingly improved, and that they successfully built very effective collaboration between the organization and the Mexican Government. On the other hand, they highlighted the important challenge of having a strong figure at the head of UNDP in Mexico, who commands respect at the highest level and shows leadership among the political and business elite, which is where the most important agreements are achieved.

Government staff acknowledge that UNDP has brought them closer to many agents who they, of their own accord, would not have contacted. Based on a baseline analysis of local needs, UNDP has incorporated project topics in a cross-cutting way into other federal Government agencies, with authorities from state, municipal and communal land governments.

The organization has demonstrated its capacity to establish effective collaborations with the federal and state governments. The key to the success of these alliances was a combination of internal UNDP factors and external Government factors. The effectiveness of the established partnerships directly depends on the affinity of UNDP's internal goals with the federal Govern-



ment's development plans. Therefore, the aims of the 2008-2012 UNDP cooperation programme, extended to 2013, were more in line with the 2007-2012 NDP because the federal Government at the time selected human development as its central paradigm. However, this was not the case for the 2014-2018 cooperation programme since, although it is aligned with the 2013-2018 NDP, the federal Government's agenda does not prioritize the development topics which constitute the conceptual basis of UNDP's work. However, after approving the 2030 Agenda, the Government opened a significant window of collaboration opportunity for the organization.

In state governments, efficient cooperation has been established in a range of contexts, such as gender violence, migrants in transit or risk prevention. For these topics, UNDP has received requests for support or has approached in order to drive the MDG agenda. UNDP can learn important lessons from the results of these partnerships with state governments. For example, in the case of UNDP collaboration in the state of Chiapas during the last term, the organization opened an office and worked alongside the state government. The organization's presence reached such an extent – participating in numerous publicity campaigns and joint support programmes – that it lost the credibility to establish dialogue with certain communities, which viewed UNDP as very close to the Government. Consequently, when governmental transition occurred, the new Government cut many ties with UNDP, due to the organization's links with the previous Government. Nevertheless, UNDP advised the new administration when producing its State Development Plan. In other communities in the rebellious south-eastern areas, where the presence of UNDP efforts is strong, there was evidence that both beneficiaries and land users did not identify with the organization and did not associate it with the Government, due to CONANP identification worn by employees, which facilitates work.

Although CSO agents underlined their respect for UNDP and their willingness to continue

working in collaboration, they are able to be critical and provide recommendations for improved collaboration. However, they recognized that interaction in the current cooperation programme is reduced, due to the current Government's resistance to negotiating with CSOs.

Cooperation between UNDP and the private sector was positive in the context of the supplier development programme in which, thanks to the Secretariat of Economy's intervention and UNDP's work, trailblazing companies such as AHMSA, LAPEL, Nestlé and Bombardier successfully worked alongside beneficiary MSMEs, chambers of industry and the Trust for the Americas.

With regard to the environment, UNDP's work with CEMEX was also recognized. On the other hand, the organization has successfully incorporated project topics in a cross-cutting way, beyond these projects' aims, in order to favourably influence private productive projects relating to agriculture, livestock, aquaculture and forestry, and in indigenous communities, the academic sector and with NGOs. UNDP has promoted a range of alliances between its projects and private companies, which have been facilitated by its presence, which generates trust, and its participation has been requested as a condition for establishing such agreements.

The fact that UNDP representatives participate in a range of government agency boards is considered to be positive, and particularly noteworthy was the organization's multidimensional approach, which has facilitated rapprochement between different agencies which, otherwise, would not have come together to collaborate as productively.

UNDP was significant and decisive for the México Estatal project. The country office identified the overall initiative and, alongside the CIDE, bid to secure funds from the Oslo Governance Centre, which funded the initiative. UNDP and the CIDE were also implementation partners, to which the former contributed administrative



capacity and the possibility of opening doors to ensure receptiveness and interest from politicians and public offices.

#### 4.8 UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

A lack of coordination between UNS agencies is widely perceived. It is considered that there could be more synergies between agencies; however, they often do not adequately communicate with one another and competition among them is even perceived. This was attributed to constant changes in management of UNS agencies, funds and programmes, especially Resident Coordination, and to changes in the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs after the creation of AMEXCID, which is now the Government's focal point for the system. Both reasons were highlighted as challenges for inter-agency relationships.

Evidence shows that joint responses from the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) had a positive impact on government partners' perception because both the Government and agencies feel that they are attended to. The Government now requests meetings with the UNCT to address occasional issues through the platform of the Congressional Committee on International Affairs.

The 2014-2019 UNDAF was extended for an extra year in order to maintain alignment with the 2014-2018 NDP and to prevent a void in programme content during the year-long transition between federal Government administrations. Work is being undertaken on a statistical database which will act as a basis for an UNDAF monitoring and evaluation system, and to have an online consultation mechanism which allows agencies to identify joint work niches. The UNDAF had been aligned with the MDGs and work is being undertaken to realign the country-level context and adapt it to the 2030 Agenda platform and the SDGs. Also being produced is an inventory of the initiatives of the UNS agencies in Mexico, in order that they act as a basis for the UNDAF's mid-term review, planned for 2017, and in which the SDGs are intended to be

used to establish a commitment to extending the UNDAF's programme content to 2030.

In some projects, such as ConstruyeT and Child-care, there is evidence of joint work between UNDP, UNICEF and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in the case of the former, and between UNDP, UNICEF and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), in the case of the latter. UNDP has also successfully coordinated its work with that of other UNS agencies which participate in environmental projects, such as the GEF and the World Bank, where dialogue is permanent and agile, which has proved very beneficial for achieving the goals of several projects.

Identified as inter-agency projects within the evaluated sample were the vulnerable migrants in transit project, in which UNHCR, the IOM, UNDP and UNICEF collaborated; the project for inclusion of children with disabilities, which is in progress and is a collaboration between the PAHO, the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDP and UNICEF; and the joint programme for a culture of peace, implemented by UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. In the migrants project, UNDP took on leadership and there were significant challenges when implementing the project because human security was not understood in Mexico as a concept in the area of public policy. On a technical and operational level, results were positive. In the inclusion project, current up to 2017, UNDP is responsible for operational follow-up and evaluation. The joint programme for a culture of peace ended in 2013 and highlighted as an important UNDP contribution in its final report were initiatives for developing citizens' capacities – especially those of young people, women and local leaders – in terms of generating participatory processes, transparency, accountability and understanding of international instruments on the rights of indigenous peoples. These initiatives produced results relating to self-building, community infrastructure, productive projects and democratic dialogue.

## 4.9 SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

SSC has led to knowledge and good practices from projects undertaken in Mexico to be shared, mainly with Central and South America but also with the international community.

There is collaboration in the area of SSC and TrC based on spheres of knowledge regarding what has and has not been successful, facilitating harmonization of public policy and funding and technical cooperation from different sources.<sup>108</sup> In 2010, the book *Gender and Competitiveness* was presented at a regional event in Panama and the Mexican experience was shared with Honduras, Ecuador, other UNDP country offices, civil society and Governments. In 2011, UNDP in Mexico began to interact with Central American countries, in order to exchange experiences on systems for monitoring the MDGs. In 2013, the Human Development Report Office shared knowledge and experience regarding measuring multidimensional poverty and the Multidimensional Poverty Index in a workshop on processes and methodologies for monitoring the MDGs. The workshop was targeted towards Government officials from El Salvador and the Dominican Republic, as part of the Puebla-Panama Plan. UNDP was also involved in the Joint Programme on Human Security, with the participation of Guatemala, which began in 2013 in Chiapas, Tabasco and Oaxaca, and as part of which the impact of migration on communities was analysed.

In 2014, the monitoring and methodology system for measuring MDG progress was successfully transferred to the area of Mesoamerica: to El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic. The largest-scale SSC project undertaken by UNDP's Mexico Office in the area of competitiveness involved transferring knowledge from the Supplier Development Programme (PDP). In 2009, the project began to transfer its know-how to UNDP's El Salvador office and proposals were presented for following

suit in Honduras and the Dominican Republic. 2010 saw the start of the knowledge transfer process with Honduras and the PDP was selected by the Private Sector Division in New York as the best practice to be replicated on a global scale. The cooperation process for sharing knowledge from the PDP continued over the following years, during which cooperation schemes with Peru, Guatemala and China were discussed.

Evidence of other SSC initiatives was found in the exchange of best practices when developing value chains with El Salvador, Peru and Paraguay in 2008. One year later, collaboration took place with UNDP's South-South Unit in Bangkok, in order to study human capital and industrial development experiences in East Asia and, in 2011, information on the National Entrepreneur Observatory project was shared with UNDP's regions.

In the area of the environment, there was evidence of SSC, with the support of UNDP in Cuba for CONABIO, in order to analyse invasive species. CONAFOR tightened ties with Brazil, Colombia and Panama and participated in Connecting Business: a global initiative by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and UNDP, into which the private sector is being incorporated. CONANP visited an event on resilience in Peru and the Mesoamerican Virtual Centre for Excellence is included in the Mesoamerican Strategy for Environmental Sustainability, which involves 10 countries. There was also exchange of knowledge with UNDP's Haiti Office, so as to share best practices regarding Solar Water Heating. World ranger congresses also received input from UNDP in Mexico on protected natural areas, particularly on topics of forestry monitoring, and online seminars were held between the national safeguard system and other countries involved in the REDD+ scheme.

In the area of governance, there was evidence of contributions from Brazil towards producing

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108 UNDP, '2014-2017 Strategic Plan'.

safety protocols and information was exchanged with UNDP's El Salvador and Honduras offices, which have worked on the topic of citizen safety, in order to discover the type of programmes that they were developing on employability and professionalization for young gang ex-members. The AMEXCID project was visited by an official from the New York Office for South-South Cooperation, who led meetings and talks on how to use this experience.

It is generally considered that the potential for SSC is being under-used. UNDP is perceived to have obtained very good results in different parts of the world and the lessons learned in other countries could be useful for many projects in Mexico. UNDP had a special adviser on SSC policy and an Inter-Agency Group on South-South Cooperation, so as to identify the work of agencies in this area with other donors and Government agents, academia and CSOs. Although this was mentioned as positive, when the adviser left, the group was no longer successful.

#### **4.10 MOBILIZATION OF RESOURCES**

UNDP's tracking and management of resources is considered very good, securing synergies with the government, academic, business, social sectors, etc. It is considered especially excellent at managing GEF and Montreal Protocol funds for financing environmental projects in Mexico. UNDP, alongside the World Bank, is managing resources for sustaining and improving the results of projects with CONAFOR. Over the course of this evaluation, good collaboration was also observed with cooperation agencies (GIZ; with Mexican companies, such as PEMEX and CEMEX; and the Norwegian Government).

On the other hand, some counterparts, at various levels, consider UNDP to depend too much on the Government's financial contribution and per-

ceive a real risk to the independence of the organization's development agenda and credibility. In this context, it was also mentioned that UNDP is limiting its work to implementing projects with State resources and, therefore, reducing its presence in the main agenda.<sup>109</sup>

Over the past two years, Mexico's public finances have been affected by the fall in international oil prices and the depreciation of the Mexican peso against the US dollar. Reduced public revenue has translated into Government partners' budgetary allocations not being able to fund the full sums agreed upon for certain projects. In this sense, those consulted agreed that UNDP had noteworthy flexibility and a positive attitude for driving agreements, especially at the heart of project committees, so as to articulate practical schemes amongst its partners. However, there is currently no sustainability strategy for contracting government agency staff, such as in AMEXCID and CONANP, and creating staff contracting is restricted on a national level. Staff contracted by UNDP account for a third of AMEXCID and CONANP staff (91 and 265, respectively).

#### **4.11 ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNTRY OFFICE**

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, UNDP in Mexico has faced significant challenges as a graduated country office because its financial dependence on federal, state and municipal Governments place it at a disadvantage as compared to Governments themselves and other international donors, which negotiate with the Mexican Government with direct resources. This has reduced the possibility of greater influence at public policy level, and is a weakness because it may create a conflict of interests with clients which it must sometimes rate.

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109 The UNDP Office in Mexico works in a graduated country and, therefore, does not have access to regular resources; this places it in a category which cannot be compared with most offices in countries where UNDP normally operates. In the absence of traditional donors, the office depends on resources being mobilized by the federal and subnational Governments and other local agents such as sister agencies, multilateral bodies in the country and the private sector.

UNDP ceased to receive funds from the headquarters and its projects began to depend on the mobilization of funds from the Government and other national and international bodies. In order to maintain the flow of resources between 2009 and 2012 – when a high of 73 percent Government funding was reached – there was a widening of the base of projects in collaboration with Mexican states and not only with the federal Government, in detriment to UNDP’s administrative organization, leading international observations to grow in line with this dispersion. In 2012, this practice was stopped. UNDP closed its state offices (for example, in Chiapas) and halted production of HDRs with these entities, instead depending on the SRE, SEDESOL and the SEP. By doing so, UNDP was left in a financially vulnerable situation, because projects were cut back without considering budgetary cuts and the country office progressively deteriorated. From 2012 onwards, the administrative organization required by UNDP’s headquarters was restored; however, capacity for generating projects was gradually lost.

The country office has maintained a healthy level of financial management over the past five years, with systems which, according to the Atlas Financial Management Dashboard, have considerably improved. Although its level of

extra-budgetary resources is good, its proportion of cost-sharing has decreased.

Among offices across the world, the Mexico office has one of the highest volumes of service contracts (as recorded in the Atlas system), significantly concentrated in two CONANP and AMEXCID projects (72 percent of total service contracts). Seventy-nine percent of its staff are financed by Government funds; the question of whether there is an exit strategy for guaranteeing the country office’s sustainability must be asked.

Government partners gave UNDP a low rating in terms of cost-effectiveness. The 2015 Partnership Survey for UNDP in Mexico shows that the country office’s average score for value for money was 28 percent, below the regional and corporate averages (35 and 44 percent, respectively). This result contrasts with partners’ level of satisfaction with UNDP: 88 percent, higher than the regional and corporate averages. This reflects a breach where efficiency is concerned.

Results-Based Management was rated highly in the quality evaluations carried out for ROARs, which is consistent with the increased number of staff who support follow-up and evaluation work full time.





## Chapter 5

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

In Mexico, UNDP has contributed to improving the impact of public policies that support poverty reduction, the environment, sustainable development and democratic governance by creating knowledge, fostering dialogue, providing skills training and implementing projects. It has also contributed towards the three branches of government, the private sector, academia and civil society, strengthening their capabilities to achieve social inclusion, quality of life, economic growth and competitiveness through the production and dissemination of Human Development Reports and studies on social inclusion and food security, and through active participation in inclusion projects related to gender, the disabled and children. UNDP has supported the Government in undertaking projects for the development of entrepreneurs and MSMEs, with the aim of increasing economic growth and boosting competitiveness. Furthermore, it has contributed to reversing environmental degradation and to maximizing natural resource use in a sustainable and equitable way by making environmental sustainability, low-emission development and the green economy a cross-cutting matter in legislative processes. Moreover, UNDP has contributed to strengthening the electoral system, to the formulation and evaluation of public safety strategies focused on citizens and to the creation of public policies for the prevention of crime and in favour of social cohesion, with a rights-based approach and a gender perspective. UNDP was also the Government's main partner in the positioning of Mexico as a development cooperator on a regional level and, as a result, the Mexican State has progressed in consolidating a pertinent international cooperation platform.

Nevertheless, UNDP's contribution to the design and implementation of national development policies has faced several challenges, including

electoral cycles. The sexennial National Development Plans do not necessarily coincide, in terms of time, with UNDP's programme cycles and they limit the organization's capability to link the commitments made by the country on an international level with the national agenda. Over the past four years, UNDP's collaboration with the Government has decreased. This is due, on the one hand, to the latter showing reduced interest in involvement with the international body and, on the other hand, to UNDP not being proactive in promoting topics that could be incorporated into the public agenda. High-level dialogue has been weakened by staff turnover in projects and in UNDP's management and administration, and by the instability of staff in government agencies, which affects discussions with strategic agents and the implementation of interventions. In this context, the 2030 Agenda has opened a window of opportunity, which UNDP has begun to use to re-establish high-level dialogue and contribute to the Government's identification of its national aims to meet the SDGs.

In terms of its programme, UNDP has moved from macro policies to creating micro-level policies with state governments. The organization has focused on thematic projects that characterize Mexicans' everyday coexistence (violence, deterioration of social fabric, patronage, poor state capacities), leaving aside fundamental topics from the national agenda, in which it had previously made important contributions to the development of public policies – such as gender equality and women's empowerment, human rights and topics of safety, transparency, corruption and impunity – which are part of the commitments made in UNDP's 2014–2018 Strategic Plan and in accordance with the SDGs. UNDP has also left lagging behind the comprehensive view of development based on the multidimensional nature of

poverty, which constitutes the added value of its work on an international level.

## 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

**Conclusion 1. Added Value in Mexico.** UNDP is respected and has a good reputation; it provides a seal of legitimacy and credibility, is well-accepted and is considered by the Mexican Government, local governments and CSOs to be a valuable and trustworthy ally. UNDP is respected by the national agencies and organizations, which recognize the added value contributed by its image of transparency in handling public resources, its competency stemming from its capability to access a network of experts, its impartiality when linking the participation of national partners and its approach to topics such as sustainable human development. UNDP's support is valuable for intervening in communal land and communities where the Mexican Government is not fully accepted. Furthermore, the organization contributes legitimacy, as an expert voice which prioritizes human well-being.

**Conclusion 2. Comparative Advantages.** The Government has made use of UNDP's comparative advantages and has partnered with the organization to promote the national agenda and implement projects which required elements of international validation, specialized experience and an independent partner. It is acknowledged that UNDP offers opportunities to create and manage knowledge through the methodologies promoted for the production of Human Development Reports and for the monitoring and evaluation, up to 2015, of the aims established in the MDGs and now in the SDGs.

**Conclusion 3. Pertinence.** UNDP's projects and activities are pertinent to and consistent with the national development priorities, laws and programmes. However, it is not clear whether the set of projects that can be attributed to each outcome are inter-linked to achieve it, because there is no evidence to allow for evaluation of project results in relation to outcomes. The wording of the outcomes, which originate from the UNDAF and are

used as a reference point for UNDP's contributions established in the CPD, is very ambitious in relation to the specificity of the projects promoted.

**Conclusion 4. Effectiveness.** The vast majority of project results are positive. The most successful results were those which generate evidence organized in databases, optimize the use of resources by forging strategic alliances with local and national agents and promote their sustainability by involving academic institutions and social organizations, and those in which the responsible parties (including UNDP staff) are prepared to participate in the community in order to better understand local leadership, generate trust with agents and further maximize the available resources. However, the turnover of government and UNDP staff and the organization's excessive bureaucracy affected the projects. There was also little coordination between the different UNDP areas of cooperation, for example between the environment and poverty: key contexts for sustainable human development.

**Conclusion 5. Programmatic and Managerial Efficiency.** There is a perception of programmatic efficiency in management and an appropriate use of resources to develop projects, and that administrative procedures are rigid and costly. Nevertheless, UNDP's accountability mechanisms and programme audits force CSOs to undertake additional administrative procedures, which require time and resources disproportionate to UNDP's capabilities for cooperation. Furthermore, they generate distrust because UNDP's administrative procedures are sometimes viewed as direct interference in the administrative functioning of the implementing partners.

**Conclusion 6. Administrative and Financial Efficiency.** UNDP's Mexico Office has healthy financial management and its administrative systems have significantly improved. Its financial sustainability is valued as being between moderate and strong, based upon its level of extra-budgetary funds; however, the Government's participation in funding – the critical source of financial resources – has decreased.

Budgetary restrictions and an adverse environment surrounding national public finances place UNDP in a vulnerable situation, given its financial dependence on the Mexican Government. The organization has (as recorded in the Atlas system) a very high number of service contracts, which impacts on the country office's administrative capacity. These contracts, concentrated in two institutions, do not contribute a great deal of added value and there is no short- or medium-term exit strategy.

**Conclusion 7. Sustainability and Ownership.**

Achieving a high level of project sustainability is made difficult by sexennial changes in the federal and state governments and the turnover and instability of the UNDP office staff in Mexico, which obstructs the continuity of relevant projects and affects institutional memory. In case where results did not reach a desirable level of sustainability, some weaknesses in UNDP were found, alongside a lack of internal structure in the country office to ensure project continuity. Project sustainability is also affected by dependence on consultants with temporary contracts to implement permanent work. Appropriation of project results is often limited and the likelihood of replicating experiences is minimal. Increasing budgetary restrictions from public finances are leading to cuts to several national counterparts responsible for ensuring the continuity of project results, many of which will also not be able to be replicated on a larger or wider scale.

**Conclusion 8. International Cooperation.**

In the current cooperation programme, there is evidence of South-South and Triangular Cooperation and added value contributed by UNDP, which, in its partners' opinion, should be boosted. The publication of the report 'Towards a Global Partnership for Development: the UN and Mexico's South-South Cooperation' in 2014, the product of a joint collaboration process by the United Nations System in Mexico, maps the UN's experiences to SSC components led by the Mexican institutions. This report allowed the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) to gain visibility and posi-

tioned the United Nations as a facilitator of SSC and TrC in Mexico. The potential of SSC is being under-used; UNDP has obtained very good results in different parts of the world and the lessons learned in other countries could be useful for many projects in Mexico and vice versa: the lessons learned in Mexico could be useful in the region and beyond its borders.

**Conclusion 9. Gender.**

UNDP has lost national leadership among its partners where gender is concerned and the incorporation of gender perspective in the country office has ceased to be a priority. There has been no gender strategy since 2012 and the body has made no effort to implement the Gender Equality Seal on a corporate level. The area of poverty reduction showed the largest proportion of programme content focused on gender. When implementing projects in the areas of governance and the environment, UNDP did not contribute approaches, methodology or experts to improve gender equality. With regard to the country office, staff distribution is satisfactory and equal in terms of sex, and the gender gap is smaller than the global average for the organization.

**Conclusion 10. Strengthening of Capabilities.**

Significant effort was made towards improving capabilities within the institutions involved in UNDP projects. The organization facilitates the development of capabilities because of its trained technical staff, the competency of the country office to manage projects and its access to national and international experts, good documented practices, access to support networks and ability to summon relevant agents. UNDP's participation has allowed for the creation, in some cases, and the strengthening, in other cases, of experts qualified in sustainable human development. However, there is a high risk that these capabilities will be lost and, alongside them, sustainability of results. The capabilities developed within the academic sector are a stable asset for long-term appropriation and continuity, but there is not always evidence of the mechanisms through which their potential can be used once projects are concluded.

## 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 1. Role and Added Value.**

Mexico needs an autonomous, firm, original and agile UNDP in order to make an impact on development, one with more audacity when proposing alternative paths and positioning sustainable human development and the 2030 Agenda at a high level. UNDP faces the following challenges: strengthening its capacity for high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government; maintaining before the Government its capacity for linking partners and the strategic credibility for which it is known; improving its high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government, with the aim of achieving greater impact on the formulation and implementation of public policies and acting as a bridge in periods of political change; defining priorities in substantial topics relating to sustainable human development, in order to continue to be recognized as an active partner in promoting the implementation of the national development agenda and prioritizing research and knowledge creation; and taking on a proactive leadership role in terms of high-level influence and in the design and implementation of public policies in the national development areas which are lagging behind. Furthermore, UNDP must include topics from the national public agenda, private business projects, CSOs and academia in the formulation of the thematic areas for the next programme cycle. By doing so, it will have more effective and innovative impact upon those public policies which affect substantial topics and which are far-reaching for sustainable human development, instead of isolated consultancy projects based on deliverables.

**Recommendation 2. The 2030 Agenda and Comparative Advantages.** The commitments made by Mexico with regard to compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are a window of opportunity for UNDP to develop significant leadership through its positioning as the United Nations agency specializing in the strengthening of national capacities to implement and monitor the aforementioned agenda and to examine the

progress made by the country towards meeting the established goals. The 2030 Agenda is a key instrument for strengthening intellectual capabilities in emerging topics. It is also essential for drawing upon the progress in conceptualizing and implementing sustainable human development as detailed in UNDP's Strategic Plan, with the aim of defining priorities in substantial topics which contribute towards overcoming the main sustainable human development challenges in a comprehensive, inclusive way. Given the absence of programme commitments beyond 2018 in Mexico, the 2030 Agenda may be a long-term programme platform which guarantees continuity in time for UNDP projects.

### **Recommendation 3. Strategic Positioning and the 2019-2023 Cooperation Programme.**

We recommend that a more proactive role be taken to identify the country's development challenges to be prioritized by UNDP in its next cooperation programme; that more innovative initiatives be proposed which underline its added value and contribution; and that aims which impact on a national- and state-policy level, and on specific topics, be established. UNDP is recommended to take on calculated risks, to open doors, to once again explore complex national agenda topics – such as elections, transparency, conflicts, safety and corruption, which have proved to have added value – and to develop strategies to allow projects to cover the thematic spectrum of the UNDAF's outcomes and the outputs of the next CPD, in order that substantial accountability may be carried out in relation to the UNDP contribution to achieving the outcomes. It is also recommended that the organization concentrate its efforts on projects with long-term impact and wide national or state scope, better integrating environmental topics with those of poverty, so as to address the challenge of sustainable human development. Similarly, it is recommended that tools be created to promote knowledge management and alliances with consolidated CSOs and academia, and also to diffuse project results, with the aim of ensuring the furthest possible reach as criteria for identifying UNDP projects.



**Recommendation 4. Mobilization of Resources.**

It is necessary to diversify funding sources in order to obtain greater management autonomy when defining the next cooperation programme and improved relative strategic positioning in relation to the Mexican Government and UNDP's other strategic partners. It is a challenge to implement a strategy for funding the country office which includes mobilizing resources with other donors, including from the private sector, and continuing to promote costs shared with the Government, particularly now that there are budget restrictions on a national level.

**Recommendation 5.** On an **operational** level, UNDP's Office in Mexico is able to meet the challenges which arise in a graduated country and overcome the low classification awarded to it by its governmental partners where cost-effectiveness is concerned. This can be achieved by: reflecting on its technical and administrative staff's capacity for response to project needs and strengthening overloaded areas of work; reducing the number of service contracts handled by the office and which do not guarantee permanence of the staff in question in their corresponding government institutions; adopting talent attraction strategies for consultants, to guarantee continuity of expert human capital in the office and in projects; strengthening induction courses intended for project staff on administrative and managerial topics and relating to South-South and North-South Cooperation and to making gender perspective a cross-cutting issue; reviewing the employment terms of the staff recruited by UNDP who work in government institutions to guarantee increased support should they face alleged bullying or sexual harassment; developing conflict management strategies to reduce the possible impact on projects caused by differences in personality and attitude between UNDP staff, consultants and counterparts; and establishing expanded consultancy termination procedures which are more effective and guarantee that the contracted outputs will be delivered in a timely manner.

**Recommendation 6. Monitoring and Evaluation.** It is recommended that the functions of

programme and project monitoring and evaluation be reinforced, in order to qualitatively evaluate UNDP's thematic areas and foster, alongside the Mexican Government and CSOs, the diffusion of the results of UNDP projects in Mexico. This would provide continuity for UNDP's well-recognized efforts on a global scale in relation to the use of corporate tools and its progress in terms of Results-Based Management, taking into consideration national indicators, such as the country's rate of economic growth and poverty reduction, to demonstrate the pertinence of initiatives fostered by the organization. It is also recommended that projects maintain a focal point of monitoring and evaluation, in order to continue to develop a culture of accountability in projects.

**Recommendation 7. The Area of the Environment.** It is suggested that UNDP be firmer when promoting an environmental agenda integrated with social and economic inclusion, taking advantage of the added value of its unique experience and work and of the availability of a significant budget for environmental topics, risk and disaster management and climate change. UNDP's contribution could be bolstered in central planning (and not only in sample areas), in order to move towards a green economy in all economic sectors; in the implementation of adaptation strategies for society and the Government in general to climate change; and in the promotion on a national level of the link between the environment and multidimensional poverty, among others. In the environmental area, UNDP could become a key agent for providing environmental policy with continuity beyond changes in administration and economic scenarios, and could be a pillar of State policy, supporting long-term institutional memory in Mexico in certain areas; it could drive professionalization of the public and private sectors in the topics of the environment, climate change and disaster risk management; and it could support the design of a scheme of position profiles in these areas, to ensure more permanent and continuous mechanisms which allow for new generations of experts to be trained.



**Recommendation 8. South-South and Triangular Cooperation.** The topic of South-South and Triangular Cooperation has accounted for significant contributions on UNDP's part and continues to be a relevant area of work for the Mexican Government. Therefore, it is important to continue to be a significant ally in systematizing, promoting and diffusing good public policy practices through these types of cooperation, taking advantage of UNDP's capacity in this area on an international level, in order to continue to contribute to Mexico's positioning as an international cooperator and to better connect the country to the rest of the world.

**Recommendation 9. Gender.** It is important to approach the question of gender equality by strategically taking into account the design and implementation of specific projects, in addition to making it a cross-cutting issue, in such a way that the fundamental importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women is reflected. It is recommended that gender strategy be updated and adjusted to the new, current Gender Seal Policy in UNDP and that a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women in its own office and between project counterparts be implemented; that the topic of gender be maintained in the Resident Representative's discourse, so that the Government may see its added value and place it on the national agenda, thus contributing to UNDP's positioning

in this area; and that a gender strategy be produced based on a diagnosis to prepare transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, which presents an important window of opportunity for UNDP.

**Recommendation 10. International Context.** Attention should be paid to changes to the international agenda resulting from socio-political changes in the region which may, in turn, lead to changes in international cooperation policy in crucial issues included in UNDP's agenda (climate change, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women) and may have an impact on topics of unemployment and crime. Similarly, variations due to protectionist market policies may affect commercial exchange, which would influence economic activity in Mexico, tax collection and public income, presenting a risk for funding of UNDP projects. There is also a risk for cooperation in economic areas, due to the renegotiation of free-trade agreements with North America and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also important to supervise the implementation of the Collaboration Agreement with USAID, in order to implement a programme with the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) and with the Secretariat of Public Administration (SFP), in order to support compliance with the SDGs in Mexico through practices of open government, citizen participation and strengthening of transparency.

## 5.3 MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

### Recommendation 1.

**Role and Added Value.** Mexico needs an autonomous, firm, original and agile UNDP in order to make an impact on development, one with more audacity when proposing alternative paths and positioning sustainable human development and the 2030 Agenda at a high level. UNDP faces the following challenges: strengthening its capacity for high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government; maintaining before the Government its capacity for linking partners and the strategic credibility for which it is known; improving its high-level dialogue with the Mexican Government, with the aim of achieving greater impact on the formulation and implementation of public policies and acting as a bridge in periods of political change; defining priorities in substantial topics relating to sustainable human development, in order to continue to be recognized as an active partner in promoting the implementation of the national development agenda and prioritizing research and knowledge creation; and taking on a proactive leadership role in terms of high-level influence and in the design and implementation of public policies in the national development areas which are lagging behind. Furthermore, UNDP must include topics from the national public agenda, private business projects, CSOs and academia in the formulation of the thematic areas for the next programme cycle. By doing so, it will have more effective and innovative impact upon those public policies which affect substantial topics and which are far-reaching for sustainable human development, instead of isolated consultancy projects based on deliverables.

### Management Response

UNDP in Mexico is autonomous, firm, original and agile in promoting development solutions, which has allowed it to achieve sustainable human development results which are objectively measurable, verifiable and strategically communicated. UNDP has successfully inserted relevant topics and has positioned the concept of sustainable human development at the heart of the national agenda and in federal and local public policies.

Thanks to the design of its current Country Programme Document (2014-2018 CPD), UNDP generates opportunities for collaboration with the Mexican Government for the consolidation of its enabling frameworks for the development and implementation of the 2030 Agenda in federal and subnational contexts. Through this collaboration, alliances are extended to other thematic sectors and to new partners (private sector, chambers of commerce, Congressional committees, civil society and academia), which demonstrates the indisputable relevance and independence of UNDP in Mexico.

UNDP will continue to work towards progressively achieving results.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
1.1. <b>Strengthening institutional positioning</b> in supporting institutional agents to implement the 2030 Agenda.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
1.2. <b>Strengthening and aligning the programme to the SDGs selected and prioritized by the Government for UNDP support</b> , which include strategies for social and economic inclusion, mitigation of and adaptation to climate change and efficient use of natural resources, human rights, citizen participation and transparency.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
1.3. <b>Improving capacity for cost-effective implementation of initiatives</b> , so as to adapt them in a timely, effective and efficient manner to the management needs of counterparts and the office and to the country context.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
1.4. Preparing the new <b>Human Development Report</b> with broad participation from the Government, civil society and academia.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

## Recommendation 2.

**The 2030 Agenda and Comparative Advantages.** The commitments made by Mexico with regard to compliance with the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs are a window of opportunity for UNDP to develop significant leadership through its positioning as the United Nations agency specializing in the strengthening of national capacities to implement and monitor the aforementioned agenda and to examine the progress made by the country towards meeting the established goals. The 2030 Agenda is a key instrument for strengthening intellectual capabilities in emerging topics. It is also essential for drawing upon the progress in conceptualizing and implementing sustainable human development as detailed in UNDP's Strategic Plan, with the aim of defining priorities in substantial topics which contribute towards overcoming the main sustainable human development challenges in a comprehensive, inclusive way. Given the absence of programme commitments beyond 2018 in Mexico, the 2030 Agenda may be a long-term programme platform which guarantees continuity in time for UNDP projects.

## Management Response

UNDP in Mexico is considered by the Government to be the leading UNS agency for accompanying institutional agents in analysing, diffusing and monitoring the start of holistic implementation of the 2030 Agenda in the country. Recently, the Presidency of the Republic established the National Council for the 2030 Agenda, which boasts the participation of State Secretaries, local Governments, representatives of other State powers, civil society, academia, the private sector and international bodies, alongside the UNDP Resident Coordinator and Representative. UNDP-Mexico has programme commitments beyond 2018, including specific trans-sexennial projects, which will transcend the 2012-2018 NDP and will allow for continued aligned results which will specifically undertake the 2030 Agenda aims.

UNDP in Mexico works successfully to implement the 2030 Agenda with the executive branch at the level of different State Secretariats, including the Secretariat of Foreign Affairs, the Secretariat of Finance and Public Credit, the Secretariat of Social Development and the Presidential Office, as well as with the legislative branch, academia and civil society.

UNDP-Mexico will continue to lead the country's compliance with the 2030 Agenda through the courses of action described below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
2.1. <b>Supporting the adoption of SDGs 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16 and 17</b> , in order to address the specific needs identified for Mexico where sustainable development options, inclusive and effective democratic governance and resilience are concerned.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
2.2. Driving <b>acceleration methodology for the SDGs</b> among local Governments.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

### Recommendation 3.

**Strategic Positioning and the 2019–2023 Cooperation Programme.** We recommend that a more proactive role be taken to identify the country's development challenges to be prioritized by UNDP in its next cooperation programme; that more innovative initiatives be proposed which underline its added value and contribution; and that aims which impact on a national- and state-policy level, and on specific topics, be established. UNDP is recommended to take on calculated risks, to open doors, to once again explore complex national agenda topics – such as elections, transparency, conflicts, safety and corruption, which have proved to have added value – and to develop strategies to allow projects to cover the thematic spectrum of the UNDAF's outcomes and the outputs of the next CPD, in order that substantial accountability may be carried out in relation to the UNDP contribution to achieving the outcomes. It is also recommended that the organization concentrate its efforts on projects with long-term impact and wide national or state scope, better integrating environmental topics with those of poverty, so as to address the challenge of sustainable human development. Similarly, it is recommended that tools be created to promote knowledge management and alliances with consolidated CSOs and academia, and also to diffuse project results, with the aim of ensuring the furthest possible reach as criteria for identifying UNDP projects.

### Management Response

UNDP in Mexico will have a new country programme aligned with the priorities of the Mexican Government from 2020 onwards, once the UNDAF has been produced in conjunction with the UNS and the new federal Government, which will begin to govern in 2019. In relation to the new programme cycle beginning in 2020, UNDP will take the courses of action listed below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
3.1. <b>Extending the current CPD</b> to 2019, with the aim of aligning its priorities with the National Development Plan which will come into effect from that year onwards.	End of 2017-2018/2020	CO
3.2. Actively participating in the process for <b>producing the new UNDAF</b> , particularly in the preparation of the theory of change.	End of 2017-2018/2020	CO
3.2. Preparing the <b>new CPD aligned with the new UNDAF</b> and with Government priorities, with results prioritized in line with the UNDP's added value and based on the lessons learned and best practices from the previous cycle. The CPD will be analysed using corporate quality assurance mechanisms at UNDP's headquarters in New York.	End of 2017-2018/2020	CO
3.3. Producing a UNDP proposal for <b>supporting the electoral process</b> with clear added-value inputs, at the request of the Government.	End of 2017-2018/2020	CO
3.4. Developing a UNDP strategy for supporting the <b>central Government and state Governments</b> to incorporate, coordinate and implement the 2030 Agenda.	End of 2017-2018/2020	CO

#### Recommendation 4.

**Mobilization of Resources.** It is necessary to diversify funding sources in order to obtain greater management autonomy when defining the next cooperation programme and improved relative strategic positioning in relation to the Mexican Government and UNDP's other strategic partners. It is a challenge to implement a strategy for funding the country office which includes mobilizing resources with other donors, including from the private sector, and continuing to promote costs shared with the Government, particularly now that there are budget restrictions on a national level.

#### Management Response

UNDP's management in Mexico is autonomous and independent. At the same time, its operations are mainly supported by mobilization of resources with the federal Government. Mexico is an upper middle-income country, a member of the OECD, with a situation which has allowed the country to graduate. UNDP's business model in Mexico is aligned with the Executive Board's rulings relating to programming and funding arrangements for UNDP's physical presence in upper middle-income countries. It also respects the international agreements which stipulate that countries should contribute to their own development (including the Paris Declaration, the Doha Conference and the Addis Ababa Conference). Furthermore, UNDP implements its development programmes based on regular resources and those from third-party sources, including government resources, which are approved within the frameworks of results and resources (in CPDs) by the Executive Board. UNDP in Mexico works creatively to consolidate collaboration opportunities, with a specific added value and on relevant topics, without compromising its independence and credibility before a range of agents.

The Mexico office's Resource Mobilization Plan will consider widening its range of donors and will contemplate the possibility of work with the private sector and with third countries. UNDP-Mexico will continue with the courses of action mentioned below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
4.1. <b>Implementing the resource mobilization strategy</b> produced by the CO in 2016.	2016-2019/ In progress	CO
4.2. Periodically holding <b>discussions with the RBLAC regarding donor intelligence services</b> to boost diversification in this area.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO



#### Recommendation 5.

On an operational level, UNDP's Office in Mexico is able to meet the challenges which arise in a graduated country and overcome the low classification awarded to it by its governmental partners where cost-effectiveness is concerned. This can be achieved by: reflecting on its technical and administrative staff's capacity for response to project needs and strengthening overloaded areas of work; reducing the number of service contracts handled by the office and which do not guarantee permanence of the staff in question in their corresponding government institutions; adopting talent attraction strategies for consultants, to guarantee continuity of expert human capital in the office and in projects; strengthening induction courses intended for project staff on administrative and managerial topics and relating to South-South and North-South Cooperation and to making gender perspective a cross-cutting issue; reviewing the employment terms of the staff recruited by UNDP who work in government institutions to guarantee increased support should they face alleged bullying or sexual harassment; developing conflict management strategies to reduce the possible impact on projects caused by differences in personality and attitude between UNDP staff, consultants and counterparts; and establishing expanded consultancy termination procedures which are more effective and guarantee that the contracted outputs will be delivered in a timely manner.

#### Management Response

Since 2015, UNDP in Mexico has implemented a work plan which is operationally focused upon: 1) improving the capacity of the office and its projects for cost-effective implementation of initiatives and 2) timely, effective and efficient adaptation of the management needs of counterparts, the office and the country context. UNDP-Mexico will continue to implement the courses of action detailed below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
5.1. <b>Reducing bottlenecks</b> in key administrative procedures, promoting optimal use of technological tools, in order to maximize efficiency and reduce direct and indirect operating costs. Expanding use of the FOMS system to reduce project contracting times.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.2. Continuing to <b>effectively design projects</b> through pre-PACs and PACs (Project Appraisal Committees).	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.3. Implementing an induction programme for new civil servants and project staff which favours a shared institutional culture and basic knowledge of regulations and processes.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.4. Reinforcing <b>consultant selection processes</b> and generating lists of high-level, multidisciplinary experts.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.5. Promoting <b>integration of the CO's work teams</b> so as to improve the working environment.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.6. <b>Communicating changes in regulations to counterparts in a timely manner</b> and, where necessary, ensuring that specialized teams support negotiation processes in line with their level of involvement.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
5.7. Continuing to <b>communicate corporate policy</b> for addressing cases of workplace bullying and sexual harassment.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

#### Recommendation 6.

**Monitoring and Evaluation.** It is recommended that the functions of programme and project monitoring and evaluation be reinforced, in order to qualitatively evaluate UNDP's thematic areas and foster, alongside the Mexican Government and CSOs, the diffusion of the results of UNDP projects in Mexico. This would provide continuity for UNDP's well-recognized efforts on a global scale in relation to the use of corporate tools and its progress in terms of Results-Based Management, taking into consideration national indicators, such as the country's rate of economic growth and poverty reduction, to demonstrate the pertinence of initiatives fostered by the organization. It is also recommended that the projects maintain a focal point of monitoring and evaluation, in order to continue to develop a culture of accountability in projects.

#### Management Response

In 2017, UNDP in Mexico was recognized by the Office of Audit and Investigation as an example of best practice in project monitoring, based on timely tracking of and reporting on the results and indicators identified in project documents. The work undertaken by the UNDP office in this country in terms of monitoring, reporting and evaluation has been widely acknowledged on a corporate level, and the organization has been invited to participate in pilot projects for corporate tools for monitoring and evaluation (Corporate System, PQA, IRRF, IWP, etc.) and has influenced the design and implementation of these. Since 2012, UNDP in Mexico has been ranked, for the fifth year running, as one of the top five offices on a global level in terms of results reporting, and specifically the ROAR. In 2016, this report was ranked first in Latin America and the Caribbean and third on a global level. The way in which the UNDP Office in Mexico presents information in terms of annually achieved results has influenced the ROAR structure and the type of information requested on a corporate level.

UNDP-Mexico analyses intermediate results and seeks out strategies to systematically improve them. Results are diffused through reports on work since 2012, updates to the UNDP-Mexico website and a solid presence in the press and social networks.

The four evaluative dimensions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability are included in the intermediate and final project evaluations. With regard to the formats for which modification is suggested, it should be mentioned that these are corporate formats and that UNDP-Mexico complies faithfully with the specific guidelines for their use. Inclusion of the four suggested dimensions would need to be raised on a corporate level and is beyond the country office's responsibility.

UNDP-Mexico also manages and accompanies the external evaluations committed to in the evaluation plan, complying faithfully, at the present time (2017), with the planned evaluations. We currently have 12 focal points for monitoring and evaluation, which are each responsible for a different project. An internal monitoring and evaluation network has also been created, composed of the above-mentioned focal points, which exchange information.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
6.1. <b>Results</b> -Based Management.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
6.2. <b>Best practice recognized by the OAI in terms of results monitoring</b> and continued indicator tracking.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
6.3. <b>Excellence in results-oriented reporting</b> , maintaining UNDP-Mexico's rating amongst the highest in the world for the ROAR.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
6.4. Concluding evaluations corresponding to the current CPD's programme cycle.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

#### Recommendation 7.

**The Area of the Environment.** It is suggested that UNDP be firmer when promoting an environmental agenda integrated with social and economic inclusion, taking advantage of the added value of its unique experience and work and of the availability of a significant budget for environmental topics, risk and disaster management and climate change. UNDP's contribution could be bolstered in central planning (and not only in sample areas), in order to move towards a green economy in all economic sectors; in the implementation of adaptation strategies for society and the Government in general to climate change; and in the promotion on a national level of the link between the environment and multidimensional poverty, among others. In the environmental area, UNDP could become a key agent for providing environmental policy with continuity beyond changes in administration and economic scenarios, and could be a pillar of State policy, supporting long-term institutional memory in Mexico in certain areas; it could drive professionalization of the public and private sectors in the topics of the environment, climate change and disaster risk management; and it could support the design of a scheme of position profiles in these areas, to ensure more permanent and continuous mechanisms to allow for new generations of experts to be trained.

#### Management Response

The Mexican Government has played an important leading role in driving specific topics from the environmental agenda, to which the UNDP country office has contributed specialized knowledge and specific substantial support, with excellent results. The change towards building resilience, sustainable resource management and reversing environmental degradation in Mexico has progressed through collaboration with the local and federal Governments and, especially, through effective collaboration with counterparts such as SEMARNAT, CONAFOR, CONANP, CONABIO, INECC and the Secretariats involved in the CICC, international bodies (FAO, WB, IDB and GIZ), industrial sectors and CSOs. With the federal Government, cooperation schemes have been produced in the framework of their programmes, with the aim of generating enabling mechanisms for sustainable economic development and of incorporating standards, criteria, methodologies and green-planning indicators. UNDP-Mexico will continue to effectively implement the courses of action described below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
7.1. Improving the implementation of <b>administrative processes</b> for environmental projects.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
7.2. Integrating <b>environmental perspective</b> multidimensionally and within the new CPD's theory of change.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
7.3. Strengthening the <b>capacities of the most vulnerable states</b> through support for incorporation of the SDGs into their development plans.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
7.4. <b>Effectively implementing environmental and social corporate standards</b> in pre-PAC evaluations.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

**Recommendation 8.**

**South-South and Triangular Cooperation.** The topic of South-South and Triangular Cooperation has accounted for significant contributions on UNDP's part and continues to be a relevant area of work for the Mexican Government. Therefore, it is important to continue to be a significant ally in systematizing, promoting and diffusing good public policy practices through these types of cooperation, taking advantage of UNDP's capacity in this area on an international level, in order to continue to contribute to Mexico's positioning as an international development cooperator and to better connect the country to the rest of the world.

**Management Response**

Recommendation 8 has been duly noted. UNDP-Mexico will effectively implement the courses of action described below.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
8.1. Developing <b>staff capacities and strategies</b> for identifying, systematizing and disseminating the set of knowledge products from the programme portfolio which reflect UNDP-Mexico's successful experiences and can act as a basis for promoting the country's cooperation.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
8.2. Developing specific proposals regarding <b>best practices or knowledge products</b> which could arouse interest in the Government to advocate them through SSC (such as the Programme to Democratize Productivity which the Government has currently shared with Ecuador).	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
8.3. Incorporating <b>SSC as a strategy</b> for making results effective within the new CPD.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

**Recommendation 9.**

**Gender.** It is important to approach the question of gender equality by strategically taking into account the design and implementation of specific projects, in addition to making it a cross-cutting issue, in such a way that the fundamental importance of gender equality and the empowerment of women is reflected. It is recommended that gender strategy be updated and adjusted to the new, current Gender Seal Policy in UNDP and that a policy on gender equality and the empowerment of women in its own office and between project counterparts be implemented; that the topic of gender be maintained in the Resident Representative's discourse, so that the Government may see its added value and place it on the national agenda, thus contributing to UNDP's positioning in this area; and that a gender strategy be produced based on a diagnosis to prepare transition from the MDGs to the SDGs, which presents a window of opportunity for UNDP.

**Management Response**

Strategic attention to the topic of gender equality implies making gender a cross-cutting issue in the programme portfolio, seeking out collaboration opportunities with relevant agents and making topics such as female political participation and economic empowerment visible. We will explore new gender components for future collaborations.

The Mexico office has a gender strategy which is currently being implemented.

Key Actions	Delivery Date/ Status	Responsible Party/Parties
9.1. Implementing the <b>internal gender strategy</b> to improve the cross-cutting nature of the topic.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO
9.2. Making gender a cross-cutting topic, in a comprehensive way, when <b>promoting the SDGs</b> at central and state Government level.	2017-2018/ In progress	CO

**Recommendation 10.**

**International Context.** Attention should be paid to changes to the international agenda resulting from socio-political changes in the region which may, in turn, lead to changes in international cooperation policy in crucial issues included in UNDP's agenda (climate change, human rights, gender equality, the empowerment of women) and may have an impact on topics of unemployment and crime. Similarly, variations due to protectionist market policies may affect commercial exchange, which would influence economic activity in Mexico, tax collection and public income, presenting a risk for funding of UNDP projects. There is also a risk for cooperation in economic areas, due to the renegotiation of free-trade agreements with North America and Latin America and the Caribbean. It is also important to supervise the implementation of the Collaboration Agreement with USAID, in order to implement a programme with the National Institute of Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI) and with the Secretariat for Public Administration (SFP), in order to support compliance with the SDGs in Mexico through practices of open government, citizen participation and strengthening of transparency.

**Management Response**

The USAID and INAI project is already in operation and seeks to improve practices of citizen governance and strengthening of transparency.

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Delivery Date/ Status</b>	<b>Responsible Party/Parties</b>
10.1. Implementing the open government project	2017-2019/ In progress	CO





# ANNEXES

Available online at <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/8469>.

Annex 1. Country Overview

Annex 2. Table of Results for the Country Programme and Indicator Status

Annex 3. Documents Consulted







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