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UNDP IN THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

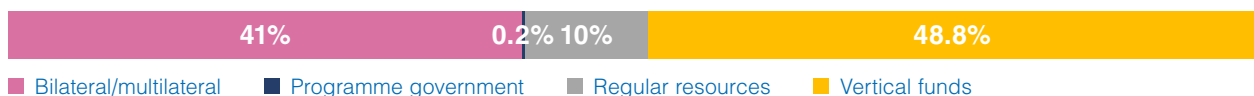
A series of complex social, political and institutional changes in the Kyrgyz Republic included two uprisings in 2005 and 2010 that overthrew authoritarian regimes. As a result of a 2010 referendum, a new Constitution was adopted, establishing the Kyrgyz Republic as a parliamentary democracy. Since then the Government has pursued an ambitious reform agenda and adopted an overarching five-year National Sustainable Development Strategy.

UNDP has provided assistance in the areas of democratic governance, including the rule of law and civic

engagement; a national infrastructure for peace; poverty reduction and socioeconomic development; the sustainable management of energy, the environment and natural resources; a disaster risk management framework in compliance with international standards; and improved social protection for groups vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation of UNDP's work from 2012 to mid-2016.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2012-2015: \$97 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2012-2016



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2012-2015 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP was effective in supporting the continued development of many of the pillars of a peaceful, democratic state. Important advancements in policy frameworks, laws, public services, institutions and socioeconomic conditions took place, at the national and subnational levels. Partly as a result of UNDP contributions, the Kyrgyz Republic conducted elections widely recognized as free and fair by local and international observers. It made progress in building an 'infrastructure for peace', in bringing climate change adaptation issues into development planning and in fighting disease. An integrated disaster prevention and early warning system accelerated emergency response and improved preparedness.

Interventions were largely aligned with national priorities, strategies and policies; the country's development needs; and UNDP's own mandate and strategy. A high level of national ownership contributed to sustainability, although national capacities will require further strengthening. Despite the significant improvement of the legal framework, for instance, implementation of new laws remains largely constrained by insufficient institutional capabilities.

Programme frameworks were, in general, adequate for delivering results. UNDP's area-based development approach made important contributions to communities, which could be further enhanced through a well-elaborated, uniform model of regional and local development. Among community-based initiatives, the greatest impact came from activities that solved local infrastructure problems, while those that assisted business and income generation had more isolated effects. UNDP could focus on funding business projects that have potential to induce transformational change in communities through demonstration effects, but are not able to receive funding from banks.

UNDP sufficiently mainstreamed gender in the programme, and reached vulnerable groups such as women, youth and people in rural areas. A next step would be to shift the focus from a gender-targeted, gender-responsive approach to one that is gender transformative.

Some programme approaches were debatable, such as tackling all types of services in supporting better public service delivery. Concentrating on a few areas to demonstrate quicker results might have established

credibility earlier and won stronger support from the public and the Government. A general lack of clear exit strategies or sustainability plans hampered pilot projects. An e-governance system for pasture management committees proved its advantages and benefits, for example, yet many committees and local governments could not afford to establish it due to the high initial cost. One of the few examples of replication was the one-stop shop approach to municipal services; it was adopted by some non-pilot municipalities using their own funds.

Following a 2012 organizational restructuring and the introduction of the area-based development approach, significant improvements were made to UNDP's management systems. A three-pillar structure—built on area-based development offices for subnational implementation, the Programme Management Unit for overall management, and the Policy Advisory Unit for research, analysis and policy recommendations—resulted in a better division of labour, reduced operational costs and strengthened oversight. This brought the management efficiency ratio of the UNDP country office in the Kyrgyz Republic significantly below global and regional averages. Area-based development offices, among other advantages, made faster decisions and assisted in mobilizing resources by sharing their knowledge of local contexts. Challenges at the subnational level included gaps

in synergies among different programmes and partners, and in the harmonization of data gathering and monitoring practices.

Most programme activities were delivered on time, albeit with some delays in grant disbursements from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and in the energy and environment area. Reasons for delay ranged from lengthy procurement procedures to changes in national institutions, including the abolishment of the Ministry of Energy.

UNDP overall has positioned itself to contribute meaningfully to the Kyrgyz Republic's development progress. The programme has responded well to emerging priorities, building on UNDP strengths such as close partnerships with government authorities and communities, and the provision of impartial, high-quality expertise. Through its global network, UNDP has opened opportunities for South-South exchanges and triangular cooperation with countries in Asia, Central Asia and Europe, on issues from improved border management to reforms in public administration. Diverse partnerships with donors, civil society and the private sector enhanced the impact of UNDP's interventions. In a 2015 partnership survey, 95 percent of 69 respondents considered UNDP a valued partner.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should further focus its support on strengthening the capacity of national institutions, especially at the subnational level, to implement existing policies and legislation.
- Capitalizing on its rich experience with local development, UNDP should support the Government in strengthening its regional development model and, within that framework, further rationalize, refine and harmonize its own model of support to local development and community mobilization.
- UNDP should further strengthen its results-based management system, and risk management practices and capacities.
- UNDP should pay greater attention to the sustainability of structures and initiatives it creates. Sustainability concerns should be integrated more effectively into the Country Office's planning and monitoring processes.
- There is scope for UNDP to further strengthen the gender-sensitive approach and the gender-related impact of its programme.

ABOUT THE ICPEs

Independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) are the backbone of the work of the Independent Evaluation Office. They capture evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results and the effectiveness of strategies supporting national development. They enable continued improvement in UNDP programmes, contribute to strengthened national ownership and evaluation capacity, and underpin accountability to national stakeholders and UNDP's Executive Board. To date, over 100 ICPEs have been conducted worldwide.

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