

UNDP IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE

Despite successfully adopting a liberal democracy and competitive political institutions, São Tomé and Príncipe has experienced political instability characterized by frequent changes of government. Its economy, the smallest in Africa, still mainly depends on cocoa. New potential income from oil offers opportunities for socioeconomic development, while generating risks demanding transparent management and effective use of public resources.

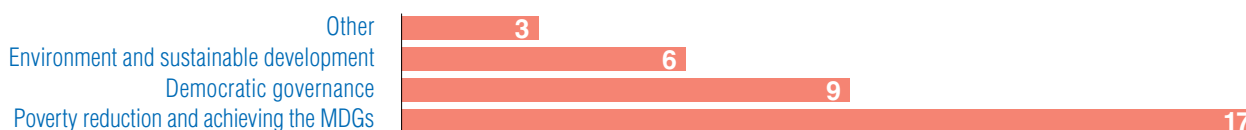
UNDP has provided support on democratic governance; poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), including through basic health services; and the environment and sustainable development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2016.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2014: \$33.3 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2014



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2014 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP's programme in São Tomé and Príncipe produced tangible results, but with scope for further progress. In the area of democratic governance, capacity-building responded to the needs of public institutions. UNDP helped the National Electoral Commission improve the transparency and credibility of election results, the Parliament to build a new public information mechanism, and the Directorate General for International Cooperation to establish a tool for aid management and coordination. One key achievement was UNDP's policy dialogue with the National Electoral Commission, which culminated in the first-ever triple ballot for parliamentary, municipal and regional elections.

Other assistance helped the Criminal Investigation Police improve the quality of its work, but the text of the Criminal Investigation Police Framework Law had not yet been examined by the Government, making it difficult to draw a definitive conclusion on making justice accessible to the most vulnerable.

Advocacy with the Government in tandem with other country partners led to the creation of the National Institute for the Promotion of Equality and Gender Equity in 2007 and the adoption by the National Assembly of a 30 percent quota for women in Parliament. But UNDP faced continued challenges in taking gender equality and women's empowerment into account not only at the

project and programme design stage, but also during implementation. No clear strategy spelled out how gender equality can contribute to accelerated development.

A direct contribution to the reduction of income poverty was not established. Interventions did progressively strengthen the capacity to make substantial progress in the achievement of the MDGs, including by ensuring that basic social needs were taken into account in the National Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Work in the fight against endemic diseases was very effective, leading to reductions in malaria cases and the HIV prevalence rate. Testing for tuberculosis has become more widespread, and morbidity and mortality from the disease have fallen as a result of better treatment availability. These results cannot be exclusively attributed to UNDP, yet it made a significant contribution.

In the area of environment and sustainable development, UNDP helped integrate sustainable environmental management, climate change and disaster risk management into national development strategies and plans. The National Contingency Plan and the National Strategy for Preparedness and Response to Natural Disasters were adopted, and the National Council for Preparedness and Response to Disasters created. Better procedures for interinstitutional coordination for disaster risk management were defined, but without an approach to establish

links between the macro-, meso- and microlevels. Some issues arose from a structural dependency on a single source of funding. Results at the district level were poor due to inadequate investment.

The programme was generally efficient. A multisectoral team was formed to support national implementing partners with procedures and practices for national implementation. Some weaknesses were due to poor synergies among interventions. Work financed by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria experienced certain problems relating to internal control and administrative and risk management processes, which were improved within acceptable timeframes. Recurring problems arose, however, with the late release of resources by the Global Fund.

Sustainability varied, for reasons including political instability, which complicated capacity building for national ownership and lasting results. Democratic governance projects had an element of sustainability since they were integrated into national structures and aligned with national policies. But the Government was not yet able to finance elections, and the renewal of the composition of the National Electoral Commission after each election resulted in a loss of capacity and reduced the impact of UNDP's support. Varied and effective

partnerships with civil society organizations, including national groups, were nonetheless limited to contractual relationships for implementation.

For programme design and management, teams of specialists operated by thematic area with insufficient coordination or integration across thematic areas. There was no process for interdisciplinary planning and execution of development initiatives. The definition of results for programmes was not based on a theory of change; a risk management approach was not used; and a monitoring and evaluation system was not in place.

One key observation was that UNDP management played an important role in public policy dialogue with government partners. As a result, situations requiring the political commitment of partners were resolved, and the logic of change inherent in the programme was strengthened. Overall, the UNDP country programme was strategic, relevant and resilient in a context of political instability. It was able to adapt to take into account emerging development issues, and suitably emphasized strengthened central administration capacities and the rule of law, and greater accountability for public services. Programme contributions would have further improved if the Government had a longer-term vision, such as a development plan for the next 15 to 20 years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Measures should be taken allowing specialist teams in the three thematic areas to work together in synergy as a strong team to advance innovative proposals for the planning and implementation of development interventions, and introduce cross-cutting working methods and interventions in order to promote intersectorality.
- UNDP should refocus its Country Programme and its areas of intervention in order to reduce dispersion and the segmentation of programmes and projects, and to allow it to embark on innovative poverty reduction processes.
- The policy dialogue should be continued with government partners with the aim of consolidating achievements and continuing to work together to strengthen democratic governance by placing the emphasis on judicial reform and support for the decentralization process; poverty reduction by focusing on the role of local authorities in partnership with non-governmental organizations in the promotion of income-generating activities; and environmental management that also contributes to poverty reduction.
- UNDP should make gender equality an integral aspect of its country programme in São Tomé and Príncipe from the design stage, during implementation, and in monitoring and evaluation.
- Greater attention should be paid to sustainability in the future programme. This will require the definition of suitable exit strategies and adequate capacity building of partner institutions.
- Partnerships should be strengthened with national non-governmental organizations, and the quality of these partnerships should be improved through a long-term plan, where possible, as well as through project exit strategies that take into account the continuity of their role.
- UNDP should design and implement a monitoring and evaluation system for its Country Programme in São Tomé and Príncipe to strengthen its results-based management.

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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