

UNDP IN URUGUAY

Uruguay, a high-income country, has an advanced social protection system and a solid tradition of civic and political engagement. It enjoys the lowest rates of poverty and inequality in its region, but pockets of poverty remain, including among young people and in households with children under six.

UNDP has provided support on inclusive growth,

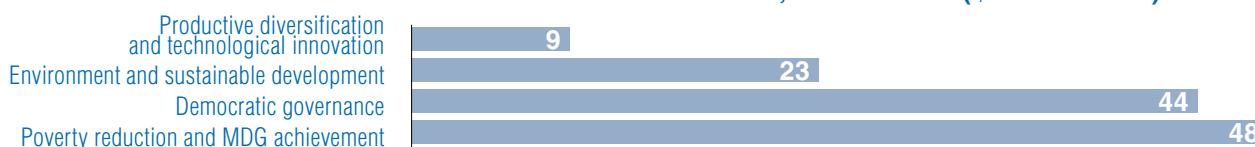
diversification and innovation; environment and risk reduction; fighting poverty and inequality; and strengthening local and national democratic governance. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2014.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2014: \$142.7 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2013



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2013 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP's country programme was considered an efficient mechanism to support national development goals, despite some gaps, notably limited capacity in work on inclusive growth and diversification. It showed flexibility and adaptability through an ongoing process of institutional and programmatic reform, and applied appropriate work strategies focused on technical assistance, democratic dialogue, advocacy and knowledge. Effectiveness and performance were strong, in some cases exceeding expectations. The human development framework, the main UNDP asset, added value to public debate on the performance of social and environmental policies.

With UNDP support, Uruguay has mainstreamed environmental issues with considerable results. Consensus has been reached around legal frameworks and policy agreements to support effective environmental management, the sustainability of protected areas, and the link between biodiversity conservation and local development. Ten protected areas were added to the national system and three management plans adopted. Reform of the energy matrix was achieved earlier than expected.

Within the UNDP programme on inclusive growth and diversification, priority was given to the former, particularly through microfinance and local development programmes. The latter is a critical area of work, however, since volatility and unsustainable economic growth have been recurrent features in Uruguay's development.

The Cooperation of Territorial Networks for Sustainable Human Development or ART programme successfully coordinated local, subnational and national stakeholders to prepare economic development strategies in line with the national development strategy. It also helped bring forward highly relevant issues for social policy, like multidimensional poverty analysis.

UNDP coordinated diverse agencies on Millennium Development Goal issues. It assisted the 2011 national dialogue on health care, which influenced the design of the National Health-Care System. Support to the Youth Employment Act and an employment roundtable helped reduce the share of private sector employees without social security coverage from over 41 percent in 2006 to 27 percent in 2013.

Other assistance aided in mainstreaming a human rights approach into public policy, and helped promote the demands of vulnerable groups, such as through multistakeholder dialogues on human rights, national defence, mega-mining and water access. National partners committed to a new programme for prisoner education and reintegration into employment, and the reform of the prison system has deepened. Systematic contributions to gender equality included the mainstreaming of equal opportunities and joint responsibility policies within public and private companies. Technical assistance enabled InMujeres, part of the Ministry of Social

Development, to train a mainstreaming team that now supports strategic national gender planning.

Sustainability of programmes overall was high, due to an early and relevant mainstreaming and legislative process, capacity-building and ownership of results, without creating financial dependence. With UNDP support, significant laws have been passed, such as the Political Decentralization and Citizen Participation Law. National resources have been leveraged, and a large number of technical experts brought into different projects have since been incorporated into public service. The visibility of UNDP outcomes was sometimes limited, however, particularly in inland Uruguay.

UNDP helped to mobilize resources from the Government and other actors in the multilateral aid system. It was acknowledged as a sound project manager, and its role as fund manager—such as for funds from loan agreements with international financial institutions—has been praised. There was ongoing internal and external debate about the relevance of the fund management role in the future, however, given the country's higher income status and sound national institutions.

UNDP has coordinated different stakeholders to develop joint initiatives. Specific South-South cooperation initiatives took place but were only partially integrated into programmes. UNDP and other United Nations agencies still need to provide theoretical and

practical definitions of South-South cooperation appropriate to a middle- to high-income country.

Additional efforts should be made to develop and strengthen knowledge management capacity, including to ensure that it is appropriately mainstreamed and sustained over the next programmatic cycle. A more effective monitoring and evaluation system would provide more evidence-based, timely information on results.

Given the Uruguayan context, UNDP could play an active role as a think tank to inform national debate on productive development and its links with human development, while at the same time drawing from Uruguay's experience to inform international debate. In coordination with other stakeholders and agencies, UNDP could also lead development-related research and promote debate on strategies to address challenges in different areas of development and the environment. These might include diversification of the primary base, the role of the state and the private sector, science and technology, fiscal and production policy, and productive and inclusive development.

Given its broad mandate, UNDP is probably the most active agency working on integrated development issues, which positions it well as a convenor and coordinator for a broad variety of topics. With a proven capacity to move issues onto the agenda, UNDP should continue to promote a holistic development vision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Strengthen capacity for risk management and responding to change, identifying opportunities in the new administration and programme cycle. In the current context, UNDP needs to be prepared for changes that could have an impact on priorities: diversifying funding sources; promoting joint resource mobilization; and renewing and diversifying strategic partnerships.
- Build on some of the outstanding achievements of UNDP in areas such as energy, human rights and gender, introducing a localized and/or decentralized approach for priority issues, ensuring innovative approaches for sensitive national issues such as diversification of production.
- Improve the quality of pilot experiences, creating models of effective implementation of policies identified by the Government in its South-South cooperation strategy. This could become a cross-cutting area in the new programme cycle, and should include more opportunities for civil society engagement. Specific South-South cooperation tools should be developed in the areas considered most successful.
- Strengthen opportunities to develop gender equity strategies and gender programming and monitoring mechanisms, to ensure a more substantial contribution to these strategic goals. Opportunities should be created to address this issue through sectoral and crosscutting initiatives, for a more holistic and integrated United Nations strategy.
- Consolidate UNDP leadership in bringing key issues to the agenda and coordinating dialogue on critical and sensitive issues, to continue promoting a holistic development vision with a broad range of private and civil society stakeholders.

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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