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UNDP IN MOLDOVA

One of the least developed countries in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Moldova has undergone a complex transition, politically, economically and socially. In 2011, it was in the midst of many reforms of public institutions, laws and policy agendas. European Union (EU) integration is a fundamental priority, spurring a series of reforms to streamline and enhance the efficiency of the civil service.

Priority UNDP programmes have focused on institutional development; the environment and climate change; poverty reduction; local governance, regional development, civil society and confidence building; and justice and human rights. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2007 to 2011.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2007-2011: \$81.7 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2007-2011



PROGRAMME BUDGET BY THEMATIC AREA, 2007-2011 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Reforms supported by UNDP in Moldova have helped bolster experience and confidence in negotiations by the Government to make rapid advancement towards EU integration. In particular, UNDP was among the key development partners and the main UN agency supporting public administration reform. Capacity development assisted nearly all ministries and specialized bureaux. The move from conceptual design to practical implementation was slow, however, especially in tough or politically sensitive reform areas.

UNDP has done a considerable job in building the knowledge and capacity of local public authorities. Over one-third have developed better skills and processes in local economic development planning, programme implementation, and engagement with civil society and the private sector. A firm foundation has been established for the revitalization of local governance once the draft decentralization strategy is approved.

Confidence-building measures in the Transnistria region were relevant and brought direct results to the population. In spite of complex political sensitivities, UNDP has much-needed access to and confidence of both Moldova and the breakaway region. It provided efficient assistance in a wide range of areas, such as technical support, infrastructure development and the

starting of a business school. Although the Government of Moldova has declared reintegration a priority, the frozen conflict is still in place. To this end, any UNDP programme should remain politically sensitive given the divide between the two sides.

UNDP programmes were fully relevant to the needs of the country, consistent with national targets and aligned with international human rights commitments. There were important contributions to the development and improvement of legal and institutional frameworks, policies, strategies and plans for progress on human rights, and to the strengthening of the national capacity to report on the fulfilment of international commitments. Training, technical assistance, advocacy, political dialogue, resource and donor mobilization, and top-quality analytical work were all used to advance the human rights agenda. But improved approaches and frameworks for applying a systematic human rights-based approach to programming and implementing UNDP interventions were needed.

UNDP was quick to adapt its programmes to ongoing political, economic and social transition in Moldova. Several key elements helped place its programmes in a strategic position. These included the capability to move rapidly and provide leadership for time-sensitive,

critical reforms, such as assistance to the Government in electoral reform. The four elections since 2009 have not witnessed civil disturbance.

UNDP also had the ability to design long-term programmes that were not adversely affected by changes in government. The organization selected interventions useful to any government, whatever its ideology—such as credible statistics for national planning and policy-making, and modernization of public administration.

Taking strategic risks included raising human rights issues in a manner that led to new protections. Responding swiftly to emergencies such as natural disasters increased visibility and engagement in a major crisis prevention and response programme. Successful pilot projects included introducing performance-based budgeting at the local level, with an agreement to extend this across the country based on the results of the pilot.

In some instances, the strategic use of limited core resources, such as catalytic support to the Ministry of Environment, resulted in the enlargement of the environment portfolio and vital results in nature conservation. Flexible modalities for projects included assistance through EU high-level advisers.

UNDP has expanded its resources significantly in Moldova and maintained high programme implementation rates. This contributed to the organization's overall credibility and programme results. It gained a voice and

legitimacy in policy dialogue, leadership in donor coordination, and access to the top levels of the Government across all sectors. Dedicated in-house expertise related to strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation has not increased with programme expansion, however.

The rationale and logic of the Government in requesting United Nations agencies to progress towards One UN were legitimate and reasonable. The role and position of UNDP, as the largest agency, is crucial in achieving this objective. Apart from progress towards EU integration, the reasons for this request include limited government absorption capacity to deal with multiple UN agencies and their procedures, and a desire to reduce transaction costs and ensure better programming.

Joint United Nations programming was particularly efficient in addressing complex human rights issues and areas requiring a multisectoral approach. It helped bring gender issues to the top of the national agenda, although there was a need to strengthen and deepen systems for more comprehensive gender mainstreaming to achieve measurable results.

In a time of transition, UNDP moved strategically to become one of the key actors supporting the Government in its aspiration for EU integration. With a well-balanced mix of interventions, overall, UNDP has had a major role to play in Moldova's advancement towards becoming a modern European nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should focus on the completion of difficult reforms, consolidation of efforts, and prioritization in the public sector reform, poverty and environmental programmes. In programmes nearing completion, the focus should be on supporting the Government to move from policy and legislative formulation to practical implementation.
- The UNDP country programme should continue to focus on and increase its programme coverage for support at the local and regional levels and play a lead role in supporting the Government's efforts to implement its decentralization strategy.
- UNDP should maintain active engagement in the Transnistria region and encourage other UN agencies to initiate programmes (preferably joint) there.
- The human rights-based approach should continue to be a priority in programming and implementation.
- UNDP should play a key facilitative role to ensure the development of a UN country team gender mainstreaming strategy. The strategy should foster a collective vision of gender mainstreaming towards coordinated action to achieve results in priority areas.
- UNDP Moldova should continue to strengthen the results-based management system by increasing its capacity for planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- Given the interest expressed by the Government in coherent UN efforts as well as the success of the joint programmes, UNDP should advocate and provide support for the UN country team to rapidly progress towards One UN through an agreed plan of action.

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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