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## UNDP IN LIBYA

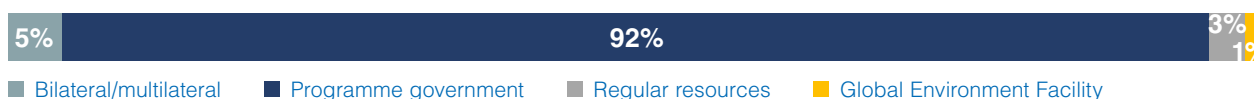
Libya has a high human development rank, but still needs to address disparities among different geographic regions. Equally important is the need to balance ongoing national economic restructuring with social policies that safeguard the living standards of the vulnerable. To sustain development and growth, the Libyan economy has undergone transition from an almost total dependence on energy resources to a relatively liberal economy

with diversified sources of revenue. Progress has been steady but slow.

UNDP has offered support in the areas of economic diversification, governance, capacity building, and the development of education and a knowledge society. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2003 to 2009.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2008: \$15.9 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008



#### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY STRATEGIC PLAN AREA, 2004-2008 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In a demand-driven environment, UNDP worked directly with partner institutions or, when required, invited specialized UN institutions to assist in project implementation, while retaining responsibility for all related implementation, monitoring and follow-up activities. This level of relevance motivated Libyan authorities to provide necessary funding for project implementation.

The UNDP corporate strength of providing upstream policy advice was not visible and, therefore, cannot be confirmed. Country-office management and staff provided guidance on specific project-related situations during design and implementation. When financed by a particular agency, UNDP interventions were clearly relevant to that agency's needs, yet relevance was more difficult to assess in the context of broader national strategic priorities.

UNDP has not been able to respond to changes in national priorities—even when these were made quite explicit by national policy statements or actions. When the country decided to develop strategies and mechanisms to accelerate the diversification of its economy and widen the role of the private sector to become the engine of development and source of foreign investments, for example, UNDP did not use its corporate and comparative advantage to play an active role in helping to develop needed strategies.

This may be due to the country office's positioning as an agency responding to the requests of national institutions that provide all funds for project implementation. Such positioning has deprived UNDP from attaining an upstream policy advisory role—despite highlighting its importance in the 2006-2009 Country Programme Document. In the absence of a UNDP advisory resource, national authorities may have looked to other international organizations to meet growing demand for such services.

Due to the past UNDP role as a facilitator of UN executed projects, a large part of evaluated programme cycles was devoted to projects that may not have had a direct human development impact. As UNDP moved away from UN agency execution towards nationally executed projects, a greater focus on human development was evident.

While being primarily a partner of Libyan national authorities, UNDP has also developed strong relationships with a number of Libya's emerging non-governmental organizations. Twinning arrangements with specific entities produced positive results, such as the success of the project to jointly engage the Libyan National Meteorological Centre and the French national meteorological service Météo-France, with assistance from the World Meteorological Organization.

Little progress was made on economic diversification, a UNDP priority. But recent agreements with The World Bank demonstrated opportunities for multilateral development organizations to engage with Libyan authorities on this issue. Only very initial steps towards mainstreaming the Millennium Development Goals occurred.

One success story was the rehabilitation of the City of Ghadames, which was widely shared at international conferences and covered by global media. A mobile caravan travelled around the country to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS, had access to prisons, and enlisted the cooperation of the Religious Affairs Authority to encourage male and female religious leaders to participate.

Under the governance programme, work with the General People's Committee for Justice was limited to introducing e-governance in only two pilot courts. As part of support to information and communications technologies for development, the quality of experts varied, but overall training and the transfer of knowledge and skills created a valuable asset. Education reform projects included curriculum review and development, and provided training activities that developed human resources.

Environmental sustainability and development projects offered little value. The Environment General Authority reported that UNDP advisory services were almost non-existent, and working mechanisms were unclear and cumbersome.

Implementation delays were costly, raising questions

among Libyan authorities. Some national authorities knew of balances remaining in their projects, but no action was taken by UNDP to implement activities that could consume such balances or return them to national authorities.

Limited effectiveness stemmed in part from the poor design of the results framework; outcomes were set very high, so UNDP contributions were difficult to identify. This may be due to an ad hoc—rather than strategic—approach to programming, which has often led to an incoherent set of activities aimed at contributing to the stated programmatic outcomes.

An on-the-ground review of projects and the comparison between these and the planned strategic outcomes in each area illuminated a sometimes significant gap between the two. While Country Programme Documents adhered to UNDP corporate priorities, the imperative to respond to the priorities of national authorities implied the diversification of intervention areas.

Although improving, UNDP capacity as an organization to respond to Libya's needs was limited. Basic programming and project management skills need to be strengthened and greater effort devoted to learning from the past. At the same time, it was clear that certain UNDP corporate programming, management and reporting methods do not always work well in an environment where programming responds to ad hoc government requests.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Prepare the Country Programme Document in close alignment with the national development plan.
- Focus development work (as opposed to facilitation) on a small number of areas where UNDP can make a difference and add value for human development.
- Establish a more effective reporting system that meets the needs of national counterparts and undertake annual programme reviews with national stakeholders.
- Following the approval of the new Country Programme Document by the UNDP Executive Board, prepare a Country Programme Action Plan involving national counterparts and develop a mechanism for holding annual reviews.
- Develop a strategy for resource mobilization.
- Prioritize further capacity development both at the UNDP country office and its counterpart national agencies, and intensify ongoing efforts in this respect.
- Close projects that have been open for a long time with little or no activity.
- Ensure, to the extent possible, the recruitment of Arabic speakers as experts for local projects to facilitate communication and reach the desired level of agreements.
- Clearly define and reach mutual acceptance of UNDP management fees.

## 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.

See the full reports at the Evaluation Resource Centre, [erc.undp.org](http://erc.undp.org)