

## UNDP IN TURKEY

Turkey has experienced significant social, political and economic transformations along with important reform efforts in view of European Union accession. Although it is an upper-middle-income country that has experienced rapid growth in recent years, it shares with other countries in that income category issues of inequalities and regional disparities. Willing to exchange experiences and support with other countries, it is both an emerging

donor and a recipient of continued assistance.

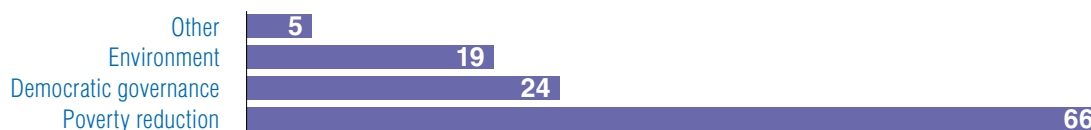
UNDP programmes provided support on issues related to democratic governance, poverty reduction, and the environment and sustainable development, with a series of horizontal and cross-cutting issues. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2004 to 2009.

### TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2009: \$94 MILLION

#### FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2009



#### PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY THEMATIC AREA, 2004-2009 (\$ MILLIONS)



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP has been highly responsive to emerging needs in Turkey, including through a pragmatic approach to adapting project activities to needs identified during implementation. Development results have mainly been achieved by assisting Turkish partners in establishing a more conducive environment for attaining national development targets and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Particularly important results were accomplished in raising awareness of development needs and enhancing capacities for policy formulation.

UNDP made a strong contribution to local government reform by assisting the Turkish Government in adopting a more participatory approach to local decision-making. It backed the development of pro-poor policy by providing support for enhanced social assistance coordination and policy. Regional development initiatives made a direct impact on poverty by targeting the country's least developed regions, with successful experimentation on the ground helping to shape government policy on issues such as regional development policy and competitiveness. Work with the private sector was instrumental in establishing a foundation for corporate social responsibility.

The organization provided assistance that was instrumental as Turkey shaped its climate change policy and integrated sustainable development principles into sec-

toral policies. Through a series of pilot projects, UNDP helped significantly increase awareness on biodiversity, climate change and water issues.

A strong contribution to social equity came from directly focusing on vulnerable groups and raising awareness on sectoral policy implications for poverty. Youth issues are now more visible on the national agenda. The promotion of gender mainstreaming accompanied specific projects focusing on women that contributed to increasing their participation in politics and decision-making.

Despite consistent achievements, a lack of thematic concentration was evident at times, particularly in the democratic governance and environment and sustainable development programmes, which had ambitious lists of priorities. Further, as in other middle-income countries, UNDP support was to some degree characterized by small- to medium-scale interventions with modest project budgets and short implementation periods. This was explained by the intention to first test pilot initiatives before intervening on a larger scale as well as by a focus on capacity development, but the approach risked putting a burden on limited partner resources. It also, however, tested the Government's commitment and could encourage greater national ownership in the longer term. Between 2006 and 2008, the number of

small-scale projects decreased.

UNDP outcomes in general had a high degree of sustainability, with exceptions. Sustainability was emphasized at an early stage of project implementation. It was supported by establishing concrete instruments that project partners could use beyond the completion of assistance, or by ensuring that human resources development was delivered with a view to direct application in the market. Strong advocacy raised the visibility required to motivate political support and contributed to country-wide dissemination of new concepts.

Cases of more limited sustainability stemmed from efficiency issues, such as delayed project activities due to lengthy and complex corporate procurement procedures, and lack of critical mass, which limited the scope of project activities and strong national engagement.

UNDP successfully took on the issue of limited core resources by brokering effective development partnerships with the Turkish Government, multilateral and bilateral partners, and the private sector. These four groups accounted for over 90 percent of the programme budget. Increasing government and private-sector contributions demonstrated the successful inclusion of all relevant actors in contributing to development results.

Information sharing and coordination efforts bolstered UNDP's contributions, both at the sectoral level, such as through thematic working group on gender issues,

youth, etc., and with regard to specific groups of partners, such as briefing meetings with bilateral partners. There remains further scope for supporting nationally led sectoral coordination should national partners call for this.

In terms of cooperation for development, there is potential for assistance to the least developed countries in particular, as well as for exchanges with other upper-middle-income economies facing similar challenges related to the environment, poverty reduction and gender.

Overall UNDP monitoring and evaluation practice remained weak, hindering the organization from doing justice to its generally effective contribution to development results. The many success stories could not be substantiated with evidence, which threatened to constrain UNDP's partnerships. While the office developed best practices for monitoring and evaluation, corporate monitoring and evaluation practices generally were less comprehensive than those of other multilateral organizations. This was largely explained by the lack of adequate funding. The country office, for example, did not have a specialized monitoring and evaluation specialist.

The UNDP programme in Turkey was well aligned with the organization's wider approach to assistance for middle-income economies, in terms of responsiveness, partnerships and coordination. Moving forward, however, UNDP's contribution to development results would benefit from greater focus within each programme area.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure a strong programmatic thematic focus. A strong thematic focus does not prevent UNDP from developing innovative partnerships in line with its policy on middle-income countries.
- UNDP should ensure a balance between policy advice at the central level and project implementation work on the ground, guarantee stronger integration of social equity considerations at both programmatic and project levels, and pay greater attention to existing capacities regarding individual interventions.
- Tangible outcomes, especially in politically sensitive areas, require resource-intensive and long-term interventions vis-à-vis budgets and time lines. Therefore, UNDP, corporately, should consider financial and human-resource investments in these fields.
- UNDP should continue strengthening consultation and coordination mechanisms with both national and international partners.
- UNDP should continue its efforts in poverty reduction with a more widespread partnership with the private sector.
- UNDP should continue combining its simultaneous efforts for gender mainstreaming and gender-specific project support, along with strengthening cooperation among UN agencies and investing in South-South cooperation.
- UNDP should systematically develop sustainability and exit strategies.
- Ensure systematic monitoring and consider a more systematic follow-up on agreed evaluation recommendations.

## 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)