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UNDP IN TAJIKISTAN

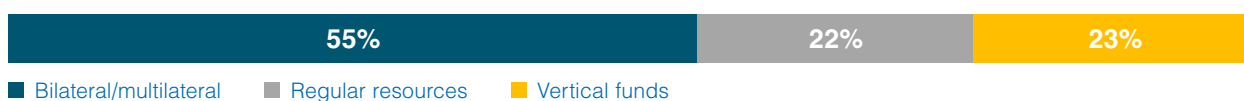
Following independence and civil war, Tajikistan faced formidable challenges in political restructuring, reorganizing the economy, and responding to the socioeconomic needs of its people. The Government has been pursuing institutional reforms for the past decade, and there have been measures towards macroeconomic stabilization, restructuring financial systems, privatization and controlling inflation. But recurrent humanitarian

crises have slowed development and diverted the focus from long-term development issues.

UNDP has provided programmes related to poverty reduction, democratic governance, reducing vulnerability to infectious diseases and disaster management. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 2001 to 2008.

TOTAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE, 2004-2007: \$58.2 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 2004-2008



PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE BY PRACTICE AREA, 2004-2007 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

UNDP made a significant contribution to post-war reconstruction and transition in Tajikistan. Because the impacts of war were severe in rural areas, the organization made a considered decision to work at the district and sub-district levels, providing support to reconstruct local public infrastructure. At the sub-district level, *Jamoat Resource Centres* became community-level forums for local governments and non-governmental organizations, furthering community participation in infrastructure projects, and supporting execution of most projects implemented by UNDP and other development agencies in rural Tajikistan.

UNDP successfully backed incorporation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) into the national development strategy, and supported poverty reduction strategy papers. Not enough attention was given, however, to related reforms for better management of public funds. Assistance in developing a socioeconomic profile at the district level and monitoring the MDGs was effective, although sustainability was a concern.

Microfinance initiatives provided credit for livelihood and enterprise development at the community and household level, but without sufficient evidence of contributions to alleviating poverty or enhancing gender

equality. In general, poverty and MDG initiatives could have been better used to address the issues of migration of a large working population to countries such as Russia.

Through UNDP, the Government accessed funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, comprising 25 percent of official development assistance in the health sector. The funding was crucial for controlling malaria and TB. It provided means and opportunity for UNDP to enhance sector-wide approaches and donor coordination in the health sector, but the organization did not pursue these.

Efforts were occasionally made to address women's issues, yet gender equality was not integrated into the programme process. Women were included as beneficiaries in the microfinance and Global Fund programmes, but UNDP missed opportunities to analyse and address gender inequality at the household and community levels. It did not use the extensive programme at the local level to address gender issues in a structured way.

Towards improved disaster management, UNDP supported the Information Management and Analytical Centre, part of the Committee of Emergency Situations, in developing an information system and updating data on disasters regularly. It helped the Rapid Emergency

Assessment and Coordination Team in coordinating international humanitarian assistance. More sustained efforts were required to ensure adoption and implementation of disaster management policy. Better links could be forged between disaster management and development; a long-term strategy would be important to avoid repeated flash appeals and temporary solutions.

UNDP established effective cooperation with national institutions such as the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, the State Statistics Committee, the Strategic Research Centre under the Office of the President, and the Institute for Civil Servant Training. Further efforts were required to enhance ties between local programmes and national processes. Until recently, there were limited efforts to demonstrate new products under the microfinance project, for example, including to inform national policy on microfinance.

Sustainability has been a concern. Microfinance activities were stable with a high percentage of repayments. Yet infrastructure development was seen more as a humanitarian response, and institutional sustainability was not adequately emphasized. Lack of a clear legal framework and financial and human resources at the district level for maintaining infrastructure con-

tributed to poor maintenance. Water user associations helped increase communities' understanding of how to use water resources efficiently, but their role needed to be strengthened within the legal framework of the local government.

One of the issues in sustaining interventions was the lack of capacities in government agencies. UNDP capacity development initiatives were largely in the form of training, introducing new practices and, to a lesser extent, policy support. While there were initiatives for strengthening institutional systems and practices, they lacked strategic emphasis. Despite a small component in the Global Fund support for training government staff and implementing agencies, for instance, efforts to facilitate this were not adequate. One major issue is that UNDP interventions have been almost entirely implemented by the country office, with little indication of progress in shifting to a national implementation modality.

Tajikistan has a long way to go in carrying out reforms and strengthening institutions. UNDP could play a major supporting role, particularly in governance, disaster management and health. But it will need to take a more strategic approach, even in areas such as local governance where it was relatively well positioned.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- UNDP should emphasize policy support and strengthening government systems. Interventions in the area of governance should be further strengthened. UNDP should be more responsive to governance needs in the country and coordinate with other agencies working in the area.
- There should be more substantial support to the government in the area of MDGs. UNDP should strengthen its role in advocating for implementation of pro-poor policies and strategies.
- Use programme partnerships to strengthen donor coordination for achieving development results. Strengthen UNDP positioning in donor coordination.
- Implement programmes through government agencies to improve national ownership and enhance local capacities. UNDP should, in a phased manner, move from direct implementation of the programme to national execution modality.
- Develop a programme strategy for consistency in interventions and for raising funds. UNDP should shift from the present approach of responding to project priorities of donor agencies to a more coherent approach of long-term and sustained interventions.
- UNDP should make an assessment of the role it can play in energy, environment and climate change concerns in Tajikistan, and integrate environment and climate change issues into poverty and disaster management interventions.
- UNDP should pay immediate attention to mainstreaming gender in programme interventions. It should diversify activities to include interventions critical for gender equality and women's rights, such as support to capacity building for women to participate in development, measures for confidence building and legal services.
- The monitoring and evaluation systems should be strengthened for the entire programme. Baseline information data should be prepared for all outputs and outcomes. Results-based management needs to be strengthened.

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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