

UNDP IN TURKEY

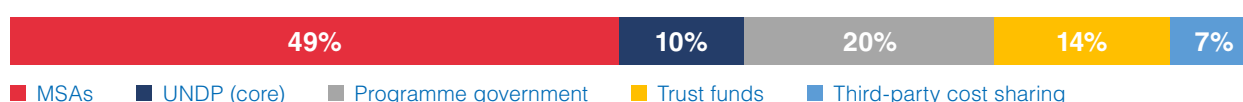
Straddling the borders of Europe, Asia and the Middle East, Turkey is a pivotal country in a geographical, political, historical as well as cultural sense. It has made great strides as a regional, political and economic power, and now stands on the threshold of starting its membership negotiations with the European Union (EU). But Turkey also has a history of political and economic tensions and

a legacy of regional and social disparities that represent major human development challenges.

UNDP's programmatic focus has been on governance, poverty, environment, gender and disaster and crisis response. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work from 1998 to 2003.

TOTAL PROGRAMME ALLOCATIONS, 1998-2003: \$60.5 MILLION

FUNDING SOURCES, 1998-2005



PROGRAMME BUDGET BY SUPPORT AREA, 1998-2003 (\$ MILLIONS)



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

In Turkey's volatile political and economic environment, UNDP's overall strategy, while not always consistently stated, was broadly responsive to the Government's priorities, and focused on key human development and capacity-building areas. The organization backed major flagship programmes, especially on important issues of regional disparity and subnational governance, and called attention to Turkey's urgent environmental and human development challenges. It contributed new ideas and agendas, built institutional capacity, and achieved significant and lasting human development results by applying limited resources flexibly, responsively and generally on a sustained basis.

Given Turkey's centralized government structure and limited local participation, UNDP helped catalyse greater participation and empowerment of local governments and communities through its Local Agenda 21 programme. One key initiative—participatory city councils—is now expected to be incorporated in a new legal framework for local governance.

UNDP was also instrumental in turning a major regional development initiative in Turkey's southeastern region from one focused on infrastructure development to a programme geared towards human development. A number of lessons from the programme were applied

to a companion project in Eastern Anatolia. National Human Development Reports succeeded in transmitting the international human development debate to a national audience, focusing on regional disparities and gender inequities. The creation of the Human Development Centre in Istanbul with UNDP's support provides institutional capacity for lasting analytical, advocacy and advisory services.

In the past, environmental concerns were not integrated in national policy debate, nor did they figure prominently in public investment and regulatory reform. UNDP contributed to getting these issues more attention, and building environmental policy and management capacity. It intensively engaged in Turkey's preparatory work for the 2002 Johannesburg Sustainable Development Summit, and provided instrumental support backing Turkey's ratification of the climate change convention.

Key ingredients of successful engagement overall have included forming effective coalitions with national, regional and local authorities as well as civil society and the international community. UNDP has found reliable international funding partners, and stayed engaged over long periods. It created local institutional capacity to support advocacy and operational activities. A quick

response to crisis situations drew on the full deployment of institutional resources, albeit at the risk of neglecting some ongoing development initiatives.

Some initiatives were less successful, and even some of the more successful ones faced difficulties. Cooperation frameworks suffered from an excessive scope and fragmentation. This was reinforced by ad hoc responses to various stakeholder requests, including from UNDP headquarters, and by the need to retrofit country priorities into a globally defined set of goals through results-based management tools. Over the last year, UNDP began to narrow the focus of its strategic agenda, although some tough choices remain.

For some UNDP projects, a lack of government commitment and the unwillingness of the implementing agency to disburse government funding as agreed led to early project cancellations or lack of sustained progress. Turnover in government counterparts was frequent, and complicated and weakened UNDP programme impact.

One major line of activity during the 1990s was for UNDP to serve as an implementing agency for World Bank-funded projects under Management Service Agreements (MSAs), an approach being phased out

in part due to a layering in project implementation. A similar layering problem, however, has been observed in other programmes where systemic UNDP restrictions against direct implementation (mandated by the Executive Board) require it to channel funds through other implementing agencies, even when UNDP itself is a recipient of funds for programme implementation. This has raised costs and introduced unnecessarily complicated structures. Relatively large volumes of project funds implemented outside core thematic areas have limited UNDP's capacity to pursue activities where it has a substantive comparative advantage.

The new heavy emphasis on EU accession and the accompanying resource flows present special challenges for UNDP. There clearly continues to be a significant role for the organization, but it must focus on its comparative advantages, and develop a clearly defined strategy in response to multiple stakeholder demands. It should continue with efforts to take a new, action-oriented approach towards Turkey's EU accession and MDG agenda, finding ways to make its programme clearly supportive of the accession process, but at the same time retaining its own thematic vision and identity..

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build systematically on UNDP's new mission statement: "UNDP works in Turkey for democratic governance and growth without poverty, in support of EU accession and for the achievement of the MDGs."
- Focus on the five established core business lines of UNDP in Turkey: governance, poverty, environment, gender, and disaster and crisis response. Use this focus as a selectivity screen when assessing all new initiatives.
- Leverage UNDP's experience in participatory and transparent capacity-building for local governments and communities and in dealing with regional disparities. Combine UNDP's international standing, capacity and experience with the strong national capacity and networks that it has built over the years in Turkey.
- Systematically pursue the sustainability and scaling-up potential of UNDP programmes and projects. A very important part of this effort will be systematic monitoring and evaluation.
- Ensure the establishment and maintenance of major and sustained partnerships, especially with the Government, the EU and the UN country team. Continue reviving the collaborative efforts of the UN country team, focusing on a clearly defined set of common goals.
- The authorities should stand ready to meet with UNDP at a high level and at regular intervals to ensure that new UNDP programme priorities are in line with national priorities, that commitment to agreed priorities is sustained and that systemic issues impeding effective implementation on both sides are addressed.
- The Government needs to commit its own resources in support of the partnership with UNDP in a predictable and effective manner, and also ensure disbursement of committed resources in a timely manner.
- UNDP headquarters must ensure that its priorities are formulated so as to minimize frequent changes in the structure and content of UNDP's agenda. Any directives for specific initiatives in Turkey should be consonant with UNDP's comparative advantage and real partner needs.
- UNDP headquarters should support a move towards more direct execution of UNDP's programmes and thus help increase its efficiency by avoiding the need for institutional layering of assistance.

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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