

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Madagascar

The Independent Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation in Madagascar in 2018, covering the period from 2015 to mid-2018, namely three and a half years of the current 2015-2019 cycle. The programme has two main components: (i) democratic governance and peacebuilding; and (ii) sustainable and inclusive development; with gender and resilience as cross-cutting issues. Following the drought in southern Madagascar in 2015-2016, UNDP decided to focus on Androy, the poorest and most vulnerable region with the lowest socio-economic indicators in the country.

Findings and Conclusions

The UNDP country programme is aligned with national development priorities and responsive to the country's needs. However, the country programme action plan (CPAP) did not present an explicit theory of change (ToC) with pathways from outputs to outcomes and impacts and assumptions about the responsibilities of government partners in order to achieve them. The programme design also lacks an explicit recognition of risks, notably around the uncertainty as to capacities of decentralized authorities to manage projects and to integrate UNDP activities into local development plans.

UNDP interventions have achieved significant results. These include the support provided to the electoral process, fight against corruption, security sector reform, access to justice, and planning and integration of the Sustainable Development Goals. UNDP support has also strengthened the national protected areas system and launched job creation and livelihoods initiatives for the poor and vulnerable. Amid the existing challenges, however, much remain to be done. The results of the work of the Independent Anti-Corruption Office's territorial branches have not been scaled up beyond

UNDP-supported regions; nor have the experiences of the legal clinics. On protected areas, additional support is needed to consolidate the conditions for the sustainability, particularly financial, of the results obtained. Most jobs have been generated by UNDP-funded labour-intensive activities which are temporary and therefore not sustainable. Income-generating activities in Androy have just started and need to be consolidated.

UNDP support to strengthening the capacity of decentralized authorities should be recognized. However, progress varies across municipalities and the scope of support is such that it has not promoted transformational changes. Most municipalities face enormous challenges including insufficient capacity and resources to implement the developed plans.

UNDP's capacity-building strategy, comprising simultaneous interventions at macro and micro levels, is sound, as it addresses the problem of weak local-level governance. However, the lack of support at the meso level – the intermediate level that ensures the coherence and logic of intervention between the conception of the policy and strategy of sustainable and inclusive development, and the operationalization at the community level – requires additional monitoring and coordination. This has an impact on the programme's sustainability.

The decision to refocus interventions in Androy is appropriate, implying a search for more efficiency in accelerating and amplifying the effects of interventions aimed at reducing chronic acute vulnerability in this region. With this refocusing, UNDP was able to lay the groundwork for resilience and recovery for the region's poor and vulnerable populations. The start-up results are encouraging but remain below what can be achieved with good coordination of UNDP interventions at the regional level, a partnership with the respective decentralized authorities to co-manage project approaches, and a partnership with other development actors. UNDP has had strong and diverse partnerships

with government institutions but less so with decentralized authorities, civil society and the private sector at the regional and local levels. Partnerships with other development actors are still weak, and the programme has not sufficiently synergized its interventions in the Androy region with those of donors and other development actors.

UNDP has substantially integrated gender dimensions into its programming. The country office has a gender strategy and makes obvious efforts to mobilize women's participation in UNDP project activities. However, there is a lack of explicit interventions to support national dynamics for the empowerment of women and

girls and their participation in public, political, economic, social and cultural life. The programme also lacks interventions that specifically aim to strengthen the entrepreneurial and managerial skills and capacities of women engaged in different value chains.

The current UNDP monitoring and evaluation system is limited to monitoring the implementation of interventions and does not include in its tools the capitalization of project experiences to communicate with partners and to allow institutional learning. There is a risk of losing valuable information, of not being able to share it with potential users or of not using it when designing a new project or programme.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should continue to prioritize a logical continuation of the sustainable development efforts initiated in the Great South – particularly in the Androy region – to stimulate transformational changes. This prioritization must be conceptualized on the basis of an explicit sub-ToC, which must shed light on the strategic development objectives as well as the transformational changes to be targeted.

Recommendation 2. In preparing the next country programme document, UNDP must develop an explicit ToC, allowing for better visibility and understanding of UNDP support for transformational change, explicitly identifying the intended changes in terms of outcomes and impacts, as well as including the corresponding assumptions about partner responsibilities and other necessary conditions to be put in place. Based on the ToC, UNDP should develop a set of outcome indicators in addition to the usual output indicators, which will make

it possible to measure transformational changes through an analysis of UNDP's contribution.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should advocate with its government partners – with the support and active participation of all technical and financial partners of Madagascar – for the implementation of the Government's political commitments and for scaling up of good practices and know-how acquired through its programme, for example, with the experiences in anti-corruption measures and legal clinics.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should continue support for improving environmental governance and reconciling natural resource management with development challenges at regional and community levels.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should continue its support for capacity-building of decentralized authorities, with a focus on improving their competences in coordination and delivery of development projects.

Recommendation 6. It is important to identify and integrate strategic and operational interventions and approaches leading to structural and transformational change, in order to create a socio-economic and cultural environment that provides the opportunity for women and girls to participate effectively in public, political, social, economic and cultural life at all levels. This should be done in collaboration with UN agencies and national partners and aim at strengthening the skills and entrepreneurial and managerial capacities of women in different value chains.

Recommendation 7. UNDP must strengthen its programme monitoring and evaluation system so that it can go beyond the regular collection of data on the progress of activities, outputs and results against targets for the main indicators defined in the CPAP and provide timely information on changes at the outcome and impact level to which UNDP is contributing. UNDP should integrate a knowledge management component into this system.