

# Evaluation Brief: ICPE Guatemala

Guatemala has made improvements in its legal and institutional frameworks since 1996, following signing of Peace Accords that ended 36 years of internal armed conflict between guerrilla forces and the military. However, in recent years, its economic growth rate has been unstable and insufficient to cover the needs of the country’s growing population for food, education, health and other basic needs. Despite being a middle-income country and the biggest economy in Central America, the country still suffers from poverty and inequality.

In its 2015–2019 country programme, UNDP committed to supporting Guatemala in the areas of inclusive sustainable development, rule of law, peace and equal access to justice, and active and inclusive citizenship. Major funding partners included the Municipality of Guatemala City, Sweden, the United States, the Global Environment Facility and the European Commission. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an independent country programme evaluation that covered UNDP work in Guatemala from 2015 to mid-2018.

## Findings and conclusions

UNDP’s programme, in alignment with Government priorities, has successfully responded to the country’s emerging needs and demands. UNDP’s long-standing

role as an impartial and trusted partner, coupled with its recognized technical capacities, has allowed it to promote dialogue across sectors and with multiple actors. Although efforts are still needed to ensure more integrated programming with other United Nations (UN) agencies, UNDP has worked to build synergies across outcomes and with other development partners.

UNDP has been successful in mobilizing more resources than originally planned. However, it risks becoming highly dependent on a few donors for specific programme areas.

In the areas of poverty reduction and natural resource management, UNDP contributed to strengthening sectoral and municipal governments, enhancing Guatemala’s environmental policy framework and promoting intersectoral coordination. UNDP has been a key player in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into local development plans through the land use planning approach. Moderate results were achieved in the work with rural development institutions and communities. Progress was less evident in terms of disaster risk reduction and the promotion of economic sustainability through local value chain development. Contextual and factors, such as structural weaknesses in the public service, affected the continuity and sustainability of results.

Total programme expenditure, 2015–2018: \$124 million

Funding sources, 2015–2018



Programme expenditure by thematic area



Despite the complex and volatile political and social context, UNDP has been successful in promoting progressive institutional change in key justice and rule of law institutions. Its contributions were key in enhancing the normative framework of the Public Prosecutor's Office and its criminal investigation work. In transitional justice, sustainability remains limited in financial, institutional and social terms.

UNDP has not sufficiently leveraged its strategic position to move the peace agenda forward. The effectiveness of its pilot projects in conflict resolution and social peace has been moderate, and the sustainability of these results remains a challenge. Considering the increasing conflicts and erosion of dialogue mechanisms in the country, a more sustained and concerted approach would have been required for long-term results.

In terms of gender mainstreaming, UNDP has improved the integration of gender equality into its programme and made relevant contributions to enhancing institutional frameworks for attention to victims of violence and sexual abuse, and to promoting greater participation by women and indigenous peoples in local development processes. Yet, there is still space for improvement in incorporating indigenous people's culture and knowledge in project design and implementation across all interventions and outcome areas.

The country office was also proactive in capitalizing on lessons and knowledge for improved programme design and implementation. However, some challenges remain in setting up an adequate corporate monitoring system to regularly measure UNDP's specific contributions.

## Recommendations

- In coordination with other development partners, UNDP should work towards a more comprehensive strengthening of the justice sector. The substantive work with the Public Prosecutor's Office, and to a lesser extent with the Ministry of Interior, while relevant, has led to an increased workload in the judicial system. Work with the National Civilian Police and the judicial branch should be strengthened to enhance their effectiveness.
- UNDP should play a more active role in promoting solutions that support the Government's efforts to advance structural changes with a view to achieving its national development priorities and accelerating implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. In close coordination with relevant actors, UNDP should explore partnerships and strategies for the approval of the Civil Service Law and the professionalization of the civil service career; and with the National Human Development Report, foster dialogue at all levels on the existing and alternative economic models for more inclusive development.
- UNDP should increase its programmatic work on social dialogue and peace, transforming small, pilot, ad hoc initiatives into more strategic interventions. The current focus on reducing crime and preventing violence should be better integrated, with a more strategic and inclusive approach for the construction of social peace and reconciliation.
- UNDP should strengthen its programmatic focus on indigenous peoples' rights, gender equality and the empowerment of women and youth, with the aim of achieving greater social inclusion and more transformative results. Specific measures should be adopted by the programme to ensure interventions are culturally relevant and adequate and achieve more transformative results.
- To enhance the sustainability of results, UNDP should adopt measures to improve programmatic synergies, knowledge management and monitoring for results, and should implement communication strategies for greater social engagement. Programmatic synergies between the different outcomes should be pursued in terms of approach, geographical location and beneficiaries.
- UNDP should reinforce its partnerships at all levels to enhance synergies and catalyse investments for greater contributions to development results.