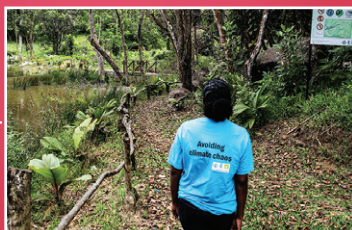




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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: SEYCHELLES

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of the work of UNDP in Seychelles over the period 2017 to 2020.

The vulnerability of small island states such as Seychelles is well understood. In combination, factors such as small population, geographic isolation and limited landmass and resources make island states particularly exposed to external shocks, and they will bear the brunt of the impacts of climate change.

In the face of these challenges, Seychelles has made impressive progress, recently joining the 81 countries with World Bank high-income classification, and graduating from the OECD list of countries eligible to receive Official Development Assistance.

This evaluation highlights the important role UNDP has played in supporting and facilitating Seychelles to access finance for climate change adaptation and environmental management. This work is of critical

importance for Seychelles, given its high economic reliance on its marine and terrestrial biodiversity.

The downside of its economic success is that access to concessional finance is likely to continue to reduce. If the strength of the UNDP partnership with Seychelles is to be maintained, it will need to evolve and adapt to the new financing landscape.

I would like to thank the Government of Seychelles, national stakeholders and colleagues at the UNDP Seychelles country office and Regional Bureau for their support throughout the evaluation. I hope that the findings, conclusions and recommendations will strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director, Independent Evaluation Office

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIOFIN	Biodiversity Finance
CMPA	Coastal and Marine Protected Areas
CPD	Country Programme Document
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GCCA	Global Climate Change Alliance
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross National Income
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
ICS	Island Conservation Society
IDC	Island Development Company
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
INDC	Intended nationally determined contribution
MEECC	Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change
MPA	Marine Parks Authority
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAS	Protected Area System
PCU	Programme Coordination Unit
SeyCCAT	Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund
SIDS	Small island developing states
SNPA	Seychelles National Parks Authority
TRAC	Core funding
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNDRR	The United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Seychelles

Country context and UNDP programme

Over the past decade, Seychelles has registered sustained improvements in per capita income and achieved a relatively high level of human development. In 2015, Seychelles joined a group of 81 countries in the World Bank's high-income classification, and in 2018 was removed from the OECD list of countries eligible to receive Official Development Assistance (ODA). In 2018, Seychelles ranked 62 in the world and number one in Africa on the Human Development Index. Seychelles has achieved all but one of the Millennium Development Goals (combating HIV/AIDS). Absolute poverty is minimal.

Seychelles high-income status has limited the scope of UNDP support. Since 2017, Seychelles has received just \$50,000 of core resources annually, which means that the UNDP programme is almost entirely dependent on non-core contributions. The rapid fall in ODA to Seychelles, from close to \$50m in 2010 to around \$5m in 2017, means that resource mobilisation opportunities are very limited. Currently, funding through global environment institutions accounts for over 86 per cent of UNDP programme delivery. The graduation of Seychelles to high-income status is likely to further constrain its access to climate-related concessional funding.

Findings and conclusions

Notwithstanding strong progress on economic and social indicators, Seychelles faces some significant challenges. As a small island state with limited land mass and resources, Seychelles will face high costs in adapting to the consequences of climate change, especially from expected sea level rises. Meeting these challenges effectively will depend heavily on the ability of Seychelles to protect and preserve valuable marine and terrestrial biodiversity, which accounts for about 70 per cent of its gross domestic product.

Government partners consulted for the evaluation valued the role of UNDP in facilitating access to funding to face these challenges through global environmental and climate change organisations. Resources mobilised by UNDP through these mechanisms have been important to extend the reach of government programmes, trial new approaches and develop the evidence base to underpin reforms. Some good results have been achieved with this support, including: the reform of the governing framework for the Seychelles National Parks Authority; analysis to underpin improved financing and management of protected areas; and the introduction of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches, which have significant potential to influence government thinking on water-resource management issues.

The contribution of UNDP to targeted outcomes has been undermined by implementation challenges affecting four of the five major projects considered by this evaluation. The contribution of UNDP to improved resource efficiency has been modest. UNDP work in water-resource management has significant but mostly unrealised potential. Despite some challenges, progress towards the outcomes, outputs and indicators set out in the Country Programme Document (CPD) in the area of protected area management has been adequate, especially following adjustments made after mid-term reviews of the two projects. However, due to delays in passing the draft Nature Conservancy Act (something not in the direct control of UNDP), targets to expand marine and terrestrial protected areas have not yet been achieved. As yet, there is little evidence of actual improvement in the management of the protected area estate of the Seychelles.

The uneven performance of the programme reflects four main factors:

First, it reflects the recognised challenges of working effectively in small island states. In particular, the small size of Seychelles bureaucracy means that

the capacity of key institutions and decision-makers is often stretched, with broad mandates and heavy travel schedules which can slow things down.

Second, it reflects challenges in developing designs that provide solid frameworks for implementation. In project designs for physical works, some sub-projects have not been subjected to sufficient feasibility testing and needed to be substantially modified or dropped in light of more detailed information. The unnecessary complexity of some project designs increased the project management risks, given external challenges.

Third, it reflects inconsistencies in the quality of technical backstopping and support from UNDP regional technical advisors in Addis Ababa. While most of the programme received good technical backstopping and support, and the current level of engagement is good, there was a period when engagement in two of the five projects was weaker, reducing the quality of oversight. Consistent engagement from technical experts, including at the design stage, is especially important given the small size of the Seychelles country office.

Finally, it reflects weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation, documentation of lessons learned, communications and use of results-based management practices in the country office. At the programme level, existing reporting frameworks have limited utility for either learning or accountability and should be revised. Because of weaknesses in project formulation, many of the current projects have weak results frameworks, which do not provide a sound basis for monitoring and reporting results or encourage adaptive management. Across the projects, more emphasis needs to be given to monitoring and evaluation, documentation of lessons learned and communications to maximize their influence and retain lessons. Currently, there is limited capacity to develop a common narrative across the programme on the challenges it is helping the Government to address, or to adapt support to its changing needs outside of the constraints of individual projects.

Given the high-income status, but small size of Seychelles, UNDP can play a significant role in contributing knowledge and advisory services in areas where it has a direct role and global expertise. There is room for improvement in this area.

Recommendations

In developing the new CPD, care should be taken to reflect the particular needs and issues of Seychelles as a small island state that has attained high-income status, and the capacity of UNDP to provide support. UNDP should focus its limited resources on strengthening the focus of the programme on environmental management and climate change, and synergies between its different components.

The country office should ensure that future project designs avoid the unnecessary pro-

liferation of components and counterparts and include only well-reasoned, straightforward monitoring and evaluation frameworks and targets. Where designs include plans for complex physical works that have not been subject to detailed feasibility studies, sufficient time should be allocated to complete these, and flexibility should be provided to accommodate and respond appropriately to the findings.

The country office should improve results-based management by ensuring that pro-

gramme level reporting frameworks only include objectives, targets and related indicators when there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them. It should strengthen monitoring, evaluation and research capacity by building it into individual project designs, or by establishing a shared resource to provide analytical support across the Programme Coordination Unit. Finally, it should develop a shared narrative across the programme about the challenges it is helping the Seychelles Government to address.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted line that starts vertically on the left, then turns horizontally to the right. Along this line are five colored circles: a yellow one near the top, a dark blue one below it, a light green one further right, a yellow one further right, a dark blue one further right, and a light green one at the far right end.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts to achieve development results. The ICPE addresses four key evaluation questions:

- What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
- To what extent has the programme achieved (or likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
- What factors contributed to or hindered the performance of UNDP and the sustainability of results?
- What can UNDP learn from the evaluation about how to best position itself to support small island states which are graduating or have graduated from ODA eligibility?

The current UNDP country programme in Seychelles runs from 2017 to 2020. This ICPE was conducted in 2018–19 to feed into the development of the programme beyond the current cycle. Intended audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Executive Board, UNDP country office, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and the Government of Seychelles. The results of the ICPE will also feed into a thematic evaluation by the IEO of UNDP assistance to vulnerable developing countries for disaster risk reduction and climate change resilience.

1.2 Country context

Seychelles is a small island state in the Indian Ocean with many of the vulnerabilities typically faced by countries in this grouping. With a population of 95,000, it has the 30th smallest population of any country in the world. This creates labour market and capacity constraints, and a limited tax base from which to cover government costs.

Seychelles is geographically isolated, over 1,000 km away from its nearest neighbour. This imposes high costs on trade, with costly imports and less competitive exports. Service delivery costs to remote island populations are prohibitively expensive.

Seychelles has limited landmass and resources. The country consists of 155 islands with a landmass of 455 km², creating intense competing pressures on land resources for tourism, agriculture, housing, water and other needs.

Despite limited land resources, Seychelles has the second largest marine area in Africa (after South Africa). Alongside an Exclusive Economic Zone of approximately 1.4 million km², it co-manages an economic zone of 400,000 km² with Mauritius. This is around 3,000 times the size of its land territory and 2.5 times the size of France.

As a coastal nation, Seychelles is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It will have to bear the costs of sea level rises, including likely increases in coastal erosion, damage to coastal infrastructure and the salination of soil and aquifers. As a small country it is particularly vulnerable to external shocks, including from natural disasters which are occurring with increasing frequency and severity.¹

Seychelles has estimated that implementation of the adaptation component of its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC) under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

¹ The recurrence of severe storms and associated flooding and landslides in Seychelles has increased from once every four years to annually, and economic losses from storm events have increased substantially. With around 80 per cent of settlements and infrastructure in low lying coastal areas, the country is highly vulnerable to tsunamis. The Indian Ocean tsunami caused direct losses amounting to 3.5 per cent of GDP. UNISDR (2015), Review of Seychelles: UNISDR Working Papers on Public Investment Planning and Financing Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction. www.preventionweb.net/english/hyogo/gar/2015/en/gar-pdf/UNISDR_Working_Papers_on_Public_Investment_Planning_and_Financing_Strategy_for_Disaster_Risk_Reduction_Review_of_Seychelles.pdf.

(UNFCCC) is likely to cost in excess of \$295 million.² The INDC includes vulnerability assessments of critical infrastructure, tourism, coastal management, food security, biodiversity, water security, health and the 'blue economy'. Of the priority adaptation investments in the INDC adaptation budget, protection of the water sector is the largest at around \$85 million, or 29 per cent of the total budget. This reflects the fact that climate change projections for Seychelles show rainfall increasing in overall terms, and becoming more irregular. A review by the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) in 2015 recommended that planning focus on floods and landslides, the natural hazards which incurred greatest economic losses. A risk profile of Seychelles developed by UNDP in 2008 suggested that storms and rainfall are occurring with increasing intensity, reflected in marked increases in the extent of damage and losses.³

A significant feature of Seychelles development policies is the preservation of environmental and marine assets. Central to its sustainable development strategy is the concept of the 'blue economy', set out in a specific strategic policy framework and roadmap.⁴ This reflects the importance of the country's marine resources and reputation as a world biodiversity hotspot to its economy, including fisheries and tourism. The Government is keen to preserve this reputation, given that tourism accounts for about a quarter of gross domestic product (GDP) and employment in Seychelles, and is a key source of foreign exchange. 70 per cent of its GDP and over 90 per cent of its exports depend on natural, pristine, diverse and productive terrestrial and marine ecosystems for tourism and fisheries.⁵ The empha-

sis on environmental sustainability also reflects the vulnerability of Seychelles to climate change.

Given that Seychelles contributes less than 0.01 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, efforts to develop renewables and improve energy efficiency are driven less by mitigation objectives than by a desire to reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels, which are a source of economic vulnerability. Seychelles electricity prices are high, even in comparison to other island states in the region.⁶

The strong economic performance of Seychelles demonstrates that the challenges it faces as a small island state are not insurmountable. Seychelles achieved high-income status in 2012, exceeding the World Bank threshold of a gross national income (GNI) per capita of \$12,056 or more. GNI per capita in Seychelles was \$14,170 in 2017.⁷ The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) agreed for Seychelles to graduate to its high-income list in 2018.⁸

Reflecting its high-income status, in 2018 Seychelles ranked 62 in the world and number one in Africa on the Human Development Index. It achieved all but one of the Millennium Development Goals (combating HIV/AIDS) and absolute poverty is minimal.

Seychelles has done well on many indicators related to gender equality, including achieving – or exceeding – gender parity in school enrolment (girls' performance in general education overshadows that of boys),⁹ life expectancy (78.7 years for women compared to 70.1 for men) and literacy (92.3 per cent for

² Republic of Seychelles (2015), Intended Nationally Determined Contribution under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Seychelles%20First/INDC%20of%20Seychelles.pdf

³ UNDRR (2015), Review of Seychelles: UNISDR Working Papers on Public Investment Planning and Financing Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction.

⁴ <https://seymsp.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/CommonwealthSecretariat-12pp-RoadMap-Brochure.pdf>.

⁵ UNDP (2016), Country programme document for Seychelles, (2017–2020), www.undp.org/content/dam/rba/docs/Programme%20Documents/Seychelles%20CPD%202017-2020.pdf.

⁶ World Bank Group (2017), The Republic of Seychelles: Systematic Country Diagnostic.

⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/country/seychelles>.

⁸ The list of countries eligible for ODA is determined by the OECD DAC, and revised every three years. Countries that have exceeded the high-income threshold for three consecutive years at the time of the review are removed.

⁹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2014), Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Kishore Singh, Mission to Seychelles, Human Rights Council Twenty-sixth Session Agenda item 3 Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development.

women compared to 91.8 per cent for men).¹⁰ 66.9 per cent of women are active in the labour force, compared to 73.9 per cent of men, and 46.8 per cent of management positions are occupied by women.¹¹ Gender gaps continue to be evident in terms of income levels (women earn 79 cents for every dollar that men earn),¹² and political representation (women hold 21.2 per cent of seats in the National Assembly, a marked decrease from the high of 43.8 per cent from 2011 to 2015).¹³

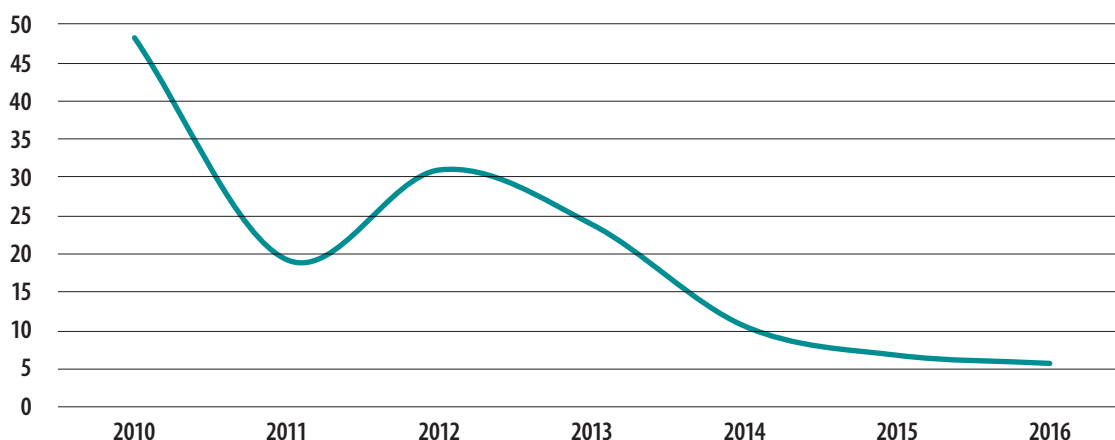
1.3 UNDP programme strategy in Seychelles

The UNDP portfolio in Seychelles is comprised mostly of energy, environment and climate projects, reflecting the importance of managing the impacts of climate change, and the availability of funds. Core (TRAC) funding is very limited (since 2017 Seychelles has received only \$50,000 annu-

ally). This means there is no scope for significant programming in other areas such as social protection, gender equality or human rights, though these were included in the Seychelles country programme document (CPD).

There is also limited scope for UNDP to mobilize resources from other donors, who have responded to the strong economic performance of Seychelles by reducing or phasing out their ODA. The transition of Seychelles to high-income status corresponded with a rapid fall in ODA, from close to \$50m in 2010 to around \$5 million in recent years (Figure 1). In 2016 and 2017, UNDP delivered close to half of the Seychelles development cooperation receipts through a small portfolio of three Global Environment Facility (GEF)¹⁴ and Adaptation Fund projects. The only contribution outside of these mechanisms was a small grant provided by the European Union (EU) under its Global Climate Change Alliance Initiative, in response to floods in 2014.

Figure 1. ODA to Seychelles 2010–2016, constant (2016) prices, million (US \$)



¹⁰ Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, "Sixth periodic report submitted by Seychelles," Advance Unedited Version, 22 June 2018; 2. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/SYC/CEDAW_C_SYC_6_7164_E.pdf.

¹¹ ILOStat accessed 5 Oct 2017. Based on 2017 Labour Force Survey. LFPR for population 15+.

¹² <http://interactive.unwomen.org/multimedia/infographic/economicempowermentindianocean/en/seychelles.html>

¹³ UNDP Human Development Report 2018 Statistical Update, data from IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union). 2018. Women in national parliaments. www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm. Accessed 24 April 2018. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/indicators/31706>.

¹⁴ Management of Outer Island Protected Areas in Seychelles; Resource Efficiency Project in Seychelles; Seychelles Protected Area Finance Project.

Though a significant partner in Seychelles, the financial contribution of UNDP to the country's development resources is small relative to the size of its economy. In recent years it has represented less than 1 per cent of general government expenditure. However, in the context of the environment sector, where the UNDP programme is focused, the external finance it has mobilized represents a much larger share of available resources.

It can be argued that factors beyond population and GDP per capita should be considered in determining a country's access to development finance, including UNDP core resources. Small Island Developing States (SIDS) such as Seychelles are vulnerable to external shocks and the impact of climate change. The economic costs of adapting to climate change will be much greater for Seychelles than for larger countries. Reflecting this, Seychelles continues to advocate for a SIDS-specific vulnerability and resilience index, which accounts for the unique vulnerabilities and specificities of Small Island Developing States.¹⁵ It is outside the scope of this evaluation to recommend changes to UNDP funding allocations, as this is something that requires global consideration. Consideration of the particular needs of small island states is already factored into the allocation policies of the major environmental funding mechanisms from which Seychelles currently benefits.

Seychelles has been active in seeking to access development and climate change adaptation and mitigation funding from the international community. However, the country's opportunities to access climate-related concessional funding are likely to become increasingly constrained. Under current GEF rules, Seychelles will be eligible to receive ODA funding of up to \$6.6m over the current (7th) GEF replenishment period (2018–2022). It is unlikely that this situation will continue for future replenishment rounds, and Seychelles gradua-

tion to high-income status is also likely to reduce its access to funding through climate funds such as the Green Climate Fund and Adaptation Fund. Under the European Union's current methodology for country allocations, just 0.1 per cent of European Development Fund and Development Cooperation Instrument funds are expected to be allocated to high-income countries.¹⁶

The UNDP Seychelles programme currently consists of five major environmental projects, focused on managing the risk of coastal and inland flooding (Adaptation Fund), protected area management (two GEF grants)¹⁷, energy and water resource efficiency (GEF), and coastal zone management (the European Commission). In addition, UNDP Seychelles is implementing two smaller projects as part of a global project (BIOFIN and Access and Benefit Sharing) and one small project on climate-smart agriculture funded by the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

A centralized Programme Coordination Unit (PCU) has been established by UNDP and the Government of Seychelles to support, administer and coordinate the implementation of all UNDP-GEF environmental projects in Seychelles.

Four United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are represented in Seychelles: the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the World Health Organization, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and UNDP. Given the limited number of resident agencies present, combined with the limited existence and scope of existing programming frameworks, Seychelles is classified as a "Category C/ non-harmonized cycle" country for which a Common Country Analysis/ UN Development Assistance Framework is not mandatory. In lieu of these frameworks, UNDP has developed a strategic partnership framework to formalise its work in the country.

¹⁵ Statement by H.E. R. Danny Faure President of the Republic of Seychelles at the general debate during the 73rd Session Of The United Nations General Assembly 25 September 2018 United Nations Headquarters New York, https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/73/sc_en.pdf.

¹⁶ European Commission, (2016), Methodology for country allocations: European Development Fund and Development Cooperation. Instrument 2014-2020, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/methodology_for_country_allocations_2014-2020.pdf.

¹⁷ Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project, and Expansion and Strengthening of the Protected Area Subsystem of the Outer Islands of Seychelles and its Integration into the Broader Land and Seascape.

TABLE 1. Seychelles Country Programme outcomes and indicative resources (2017-2020)

Country Programme Outcome		Indicative resources (US\$ million)	Expenditures to date (US\$ million)
Outcome 1	A sustainable Seychelles with enhanced economic growth, income opportunities and social inclusion, supported and promoted by responsive strategies towards poverty reduction and gender equality. Building economic and environmental resilience through the design, implementation and integration of sustainable solutions into development planning processes at national and subnational levels to support the blue economy concept, while ensuring climate change adaptation and mitigation concerns are fully addressed.	Regular: 0.4 Other: 35.9	5.77
Total		36.3	5.77

Source: UNDP Seychelles Country Programme Document 2-17-2020 (DP/DCP/SYC/3). 2017-2019 programme expenditures to date as of 22 February 2019 on PowerBI/Atlas

1.4 Methodology

The evaluation was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct. The evaluation was conducted by a lead evaluator with support from a national consultant. The approach involved a one-week fieldwork mission, interviews with representatives of 12 partner organizations, and a review of relevant documentation.

The limited time available for fieldwork meant that systematic collection and analysis of beneficiary views on project implementation and outcomes, and extensive outcome mapping to examine unintended consequences of projects on non-target beneficiaries, were not possible. Primary data collection was limited to stakeholder interviews and field observations.

Given these constraints, the rigour of the outcome assessments depends on the quality of the available documentation of the objectives and outcomes of work of UNDP. To offset this limita-

tion, the evaluation accessed a diversity of data sources, including government data and documentation, project documentation and reporting, media reporting and independent reviews and evaluations.

The projects selected for examination are identified in Annex 2. Overall, the projects assessed accounted for 82 per cent of programme expenditure from 2016 to 2018. Selection was based on the following three criteria:

- The project is (or was) active in the current CPD period, or was a precursor to currently active projects;
- The project is evaluable in the sense that it is mature enough to be able to say something meaningful about its progress and outcomes; and
- The project was large enough in terms of scope, breadth of audience and investment to warrant specific attention.

¹⁸ Executive snapshot report. Figure covers 2017 expenditure, and 2018 expenditure to July 2018.

To the extent allowed by existing data, actual or likely gender equality outcomes were assessed for each project.

The extent to which the evaluation was able to assess the outcomes of different aspects of UNDP work depended on the stage of completion of the work. For projects in their early stages, the evaluation sought evidence that the design reflected learning or built on outcomes achieved by previous projects.

The evaluation methodology aimed to assess the significance of UNDP-reported results against objective and outcome statements in the country programme document.

The draft ICPE report was quality assured by two IEO internal reviewers, as well as an external expert (member of IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel), fact-checked by the UNDP country office and regional bureau and shared with the Government and other national partners for comments.



CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness
COORDINATION HUMAN effectiveness COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP sustainability
COORDINATION relevance sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness
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COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP relevance MANAGING FOR RESULTS
COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness NATIONAL OWNERSHIP sustainability PARTNERSHIP

This chapter outlines the findings of the evaluation regarding the effectiveness of UNDP in achieving the objectives set out in the country programme document, for each programme outcome and cross-cutting area. It also describes the **main factors that influenced UNDP performance and contributions to results**. The qualitative assessment was based on analysis of the correlation between reported project achievements, their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and the overall outcome objectives.

2.1 Poverty reduction



RELATED CPD OUTPUTS

Output 1: Capacities of public institutions are enabled to develop, monitor and evaluate policies, programmes and legislation relevant to poverty reduction.

Output 2: Options enabled and facilitated for inclusive and sustainable social protection.

Finding 1. Consistent UNDP engagement with, or influence over, Seychelles policies, legislation or institutional capacities for poverty reduction has been highly constrained by a lack of adequate human and financial resources.

The CPD states that the “main pillar and thrust of the programme is the poverty-environment nexus,” and commits UNDP to focus on developing Seychelles poverty reduction policies, legislation and programmes (see outputs one and two above). While UNDP work in the environment portfolio has addressed critical long-term economic and existential issues for Seychelles, it is a stretch to suggest a strong causal relationship between this work and poverty in Seychelles.

For output one, according to the 2018 Results Oriented Annual Report, UNDP was unable to sup-

port capacity building initiatives due to funding limitations. Some technical assistance was provided to the Department of Economic Planning for the development of the long-term National Vision 2033 and National Development Strategy 2019-2023. For output two, on social protection, no support was provided.

The lack of a substantive focus on poverty reduction does not reflect a failure of the country office, rather a lack of resources, with just \$50,000 per year of core funding, and staff time, which is absorbed by the management of projects in the environment portfolio.

2.2 Water resources management



RELATED CPD OUTPUTS

Output 4: Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks are in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national level.

Output 5: Climate change adaptation and mitigation actions are scaled up across sectors.

Output 6: Measures are in place and implemented across sectors to increase women’s access to alternative livelihood opportunities in flood-prone communities.

Finding 2. The work of UNDP in water resource management has a significant, but as yet mostly unrealised, potential with impacts constrained by basic project management challenges. The impact and potential scalability of innovations trialled by UNDP have yet to be thoroughly assessed, though there are positive signs that some of these have reasonable prospects for replication and sustainability.

UNDP is currently implementing two projects that address the increasing vulnerability of Seychelles to flooding, both executed by the Ministry of Environment and Energy. The \$6.5m UNDP/ Adaptation Fund 'Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Seychelles' project addresses two inter-related challenges that are being amplified by climate change—water scarcity and flooding. The Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA+) Seychelles Programme, funded by the European Community through a €1.5m grant, aimed to increase flood protection in vulnerable coastal areas of La Digue Island.¹⁹

Both projects have had challenges. Progress with the 'Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change' has been slow, with only two of its seven major components completed a year before the planned completion date. Progress was affected by a range of problems, notably weak engagement by the steering committee and poor project management and planning. The complexity of the project design made it difficult for the project to adapt and respond to implementation challenges, and substantially reduced the potential for sustainability of results. This has been amplified by a lack of attention to the documentation and communication of the project work and good results, which are critical for sustainability and to promote uptake of the models being tested.²⁰

This is unfortunate, as the focus and objectives of the project are highly relevant to the needs of the Government of Seychelles, and it has signifi-

cant potential. For example, the evaluation team observed an innovative gabion wall barrage constructed through the project at Baie Lazare wetland, which created a water storage capacity equal to the second largest reservoir in Seychelles. Another two were under construction. There is no data to establish the precise impact of the development, but it is expected to reduce the incidence of water shortages and flooding in the catchment area. The country office reported strong buy-in and ownership of the project by the community, reflecting the importance of agriculture in the watershed, with farmers making up 95 per cent of the members of the watershed committee.²¹

Moving forward, improved evaluation, documentation and communication of results will be critical to meet the objective of the Government of Seychelles adopting the ecosystem-based adaptation approaches tested in the project. On this basis, the 2018 mid-term review rated the overall project performance as moderately unsatisfactory, but with potential to be satisfactory by project completion. UNDP and the project team reported that the mid-term review had helped it to identify required remedial actions. This evaluation notes on-going efforts, including a planned cost-benefit analysis of completed sub-projects, as evidence that at least some of the impacts and lessons from the project will be considered in future policy and practice.

The GCCA+ project has suffered from a series of delays. The project was developed in response to tropical cyclone Felleng in 2013, which caused severe flooding and landslides in several districts and islands in the Seychelles. However at the time of this evaluation the planned physical works had not yet commenced. After preparation of the original project document, extended negotiation between UNDP and the EU over the delegation agreement caused delays to the planned start date. At this point, some of the major activities were found to

¹⁹ The European Union Global Climate Change Alliance aims to strengthen dialogue and cooperation with developing countries and has an emphasis on least developed countries and small island developing states.

²⁰ Mid-Term Evaluation of Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Seychelles (Pims 4775): Mid-Term Evaluation Report, April 25, 2018.

²¹ Advice from the country office.

be unrealistic given the available resources, or had already been addressed by the Seychelles Government, meaning that the project had to undergo extensive redesign.

2.3 Protected area management



RELATED CPD OUTPUTS

Output 4: Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks are in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national level.

Output 5: Climate change adaptation and mitigation actions are scaled up across sectors.

Finding 3. Despite some challenges, progress towards the outcomes, outputs and indicators set out in the CPD in the area of protected area management has been adequate. UNDP has provided valuable support for the revitalisation of the Seychelles National Parks Authority (SNPA). This has contributed to a major reform of its mandate, which will potentially increase its effectiveness as a conservation organisation rather than a revenue collection agency. Feedback received from stakeholders during the field mission indicates that UNDP has fulfilled its role in facilitating and supporting implementation of GEF grants.

The Seychelles Protected Area System (PAS) consists of 25 sites (terrestrial, marine and combined) totalling 55,769 ha. With 50 per cent of terrestrial and 10 per cent of marine areas under protection, the Seychelles protected area system is larger than required for signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity²². The proclamation of eight new protected area sites in the outer islands and three in the inner islands will expand the PAS to 149,045 ha, almost tripling the area currently gazetted.

The mooted expansion of the PAS aims to improve protection of Seychelles terrestrial and marine biodiversity. However, the financial implications of the expansion, and the need for sustainable management of the existing and expanded systems, have not always been properly considered. The Government's Financing Plan for Protected Areas, developed with the support of UNDP and GEF, states that the current institutional expenditure (\$6.4 million) falls far short of that required for effective conservation management of protected areas.²³ The report maintains that it would require \$8.7 million annually to cover basic management of the system, maintaining the status quo and avoiding biodiversity loss. For optimal management, where biodiversity is strengthened, \$11.8 million would be required annually.²⁴ Management of Seychelles protected areas is split between several different entities and sites are managed independently of one another.²⁵

The 'Seychelles Protected Area Finance Project' aims to improve the financial sustainability and strategic cohesion of the Seychelles protected area system, and deal with emerging threats and risks to biodiversity. Since its launch in 2015, the project has had a number of important achieve-

²² The convention on Biological Diversity established targets of 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas under conservation.

²³ National Level Sustainable Financing Plan for Protected Areas in Seychelles, Andrew Rylance and Hervé Barois, Government of Seychelles – UNDP – GEF.

²⁴ It is also estimated (BIOFIN Policy Paper to Cabinet of Ministers) that SCR 320 million (approximately \$24 million) is needed to implement the Global Biodiversity Finance Initiative in Seychelles. One of the authors of the National Level Sustainable Financing Plan for Protected Areas in Seychelles observes that the main issue to compare BIOFIN and protected area finance is that BIOFIN is using the National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP) as a reference document, which is not comprehensive and does not include most recurrent and on-going biodiversity activities within and outside protected areas. The NBSAP was conceived to mobilise additional resources on top of business as usual biodiversity activities.

²⁵ Ibid.

ments, contributing to the approval of financial autonomy for the SNPA and the development of the SNPA Strategic Plan (2017-2021).

The most significant of these achievements was the reform to the status of the SNPA, which took place in January 2019, and is potentially an important step towards its revitalization. Previously, the SNPA was dependent on the Government for its annual budget. After reform it will be financially autonomous, able to generate and utilise its own resources. The reform also enables SNPA to: create new posts and offer better salary packages to staff through its Board (previously done by the Department of Public Administration); streamline procurement and invest its capital back into infrastructure; and implement changes in entry fees more quickly. It will report to the Government on policy matters and to the Public Enterprise Monitoring Commission for financial matters. This change to its incentive structure will potentially help SNPA to fulfil its potential as a conservation organisation, rather than a revenue collection agency.²⁶

UNDP has also been providing substantive support to SNPA to achieve this vision, including support for its Strategic Plan, which is presented as an illustration of best practice on the Indian Ocean Commission website, and is a model for other ministries in Seychelles. UNDP has also supported the development of SNPA corporate identity and branding guidelines, which are being applied to all SNPA signage and information materials to ensure consistent messaging and build awareness of SNPA. This has the potential to increase the number of visitors, and thus revenue for SNPA.²⁷

A final area of focus of the project has been to support the establishment of the Seychelles Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust Fund (Sey-

CCAT). Using funds from the Seychelles 2015 debt buy-back agreement,²⁸ this builds an asset base to finance management and conservation of the expanded Marine Parks Authority (MPA) system. The project has a grant agreement with the SeyCCAT Secretariat, mainly to provide start-up capital to SeyCCAT for various administrative activities such as recruitment of staff, office equipment, development of operational manuals and support for submission of requests for proposals. This arrangement will be maintained until SeyCCAT is fully functional and able to mobilize adequate funds for all its operations. The Protected Area Finance Technical Advisor also sits on the SeyCCAT Finance Committee, and thus the project has an on-going role in the strategic development of protected area finance.

The 2018 mid-term review of the project rated progress toward results as 'satisfactory' against its two outcomes. Looking forward, the project faces a number of important challenges. SNPA faces financial gaps, is under-staffed and has weak management capability. In this sense, the work to reform and revitalize SNPA is not finished, although some positive steps have been taken.²⁹

The 'Management of Outer Island Protected Areas' project aimed to promote the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and marine biodiversity in the Seychelles Outer Islands. The strategy was to integrate a National Subsystem of Coastal and Marine Protected Areas (CMPA) into the broader land- and sea-scape, while reducing the pressures on natural resources from competing land uses.

The 2017 mid-term review for the project rated project implementation as 'moderately unsatisfactory' because implementation and delivery for

²⁶ Mid-Term Review of the GEF funded Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project. Final Report. 10 August 2018.

²⁷ Mid-Term Review of the GEF funded Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project. Final Report. 10 August 2018.

²⁸ One of the more interesting and innovative measures adopted by Seychelles to address the challenges it faces as a small island state has been the agreement it reached to restructure nearly \$30 million of its Paris Club debt through an innovative debt-for climate adaptation swap. This will allow the Government to redirect its debt payments to an independent trust fund dedicated to reducing the vulnerability of marine and coastal ecosystems to climate change.

²⁹ Mid-Term Review of the GEF funded Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project, 10 August 2018.

several core outputs was zero.³⁰ These included outputs relating to the legal establishment of protected areas, establishment of protected area management structures, and development and implementation of protected area management plans. In addition, on another core output 'Biodiversity and Ecosystem Assessment, Monitoring and Conservation Programmes to strengthen Protected Area Management' delivery was only 35 per cent, and about 15 per cent for two critical outputs 'Ecosystem Restoration and Invasive Species Management', and 'Monitoring and Management of Ecosystem Functions'.

According to stakeholders engaged during the field mission, and reflected in the mid-term review, a major cause for these challenges was the irregular attendance of the Island Development Company (IDC) at project steering committee meetings. Given that IDC has a critical role in controlling access to the outer islands and providing logistical support to the project, this had a major impact on the pace of implementation. Accessing the outer islands proved to be exceptionally difficult for project partners and the IDC was slow in resolving these difficulties. Loss of facilities on Farquhar due to Cyclone Fantala, and delayed establishment of facilities on Poivre further challenged implementation. The main implementing partner, the Island Conservation Society (ICS),³¹ responsible for 60 per cent of project activities, also lost some capacity during project inception, causing further delays.

Key stakeholders informed the evaluation team that the mid-term review had been effective in focusing

the project on the implementation of outputs that were within its control. Since then, the project has made reasonable progress towards achieving its outcomes. For example, by 2018, Land Use Plans had been approved by the IDC Board for four sites (Desroches, Alphonse, Poivre and Farquhar), with provision for 573.4 ha of new terrestrial protected area and associated MPAs³². Nomination files for new terrestrial and marine protected areas at Alphonse, Desroches, Farquhar and Poivre are awaiting completion of baseline ecological data and protected area management and business plans, and will be prepared in 2019.

Finding 4. Whether the work of UNDP on protected area management succeeds in elevating the conservation status and improving the management of important marine and terrestrial biodiversity will ultimately depend on decisions outside of the control of the project.

A key objective of the 'Management of Outer Island Protected Areas' project is that the protected area estate of Seychelles expands from 28,939 ha (marine) and 15,261 ha (terrestrial) to 105,197 ha and 16,498 ha respectively, and the number of protected areas legally established and demarcated in Outer Islands will increase from four to nine. Whether these outcomes are realised will depend on the passage of the Nature Reserves and Conservancy Bill,³³ which has been under development for several years, and at the time of the evaluation was at the White Paper stage with the Attorney General's Office.³⁴ This Bill also includes welcome measures to increase the involvement of non-state actors in the management of protected areas.

³⁰ Project Mid-Term Review Report. Expansion and Strengthening of the Protected Area Subsystem of the Outer Islands of Seychelles and its Integration into the broader land and seascape. Government of Seychelles and UNDP.

³¹ ICS has been designated by IDC as their main responsible partner for conservation issues on the Outer Islands, and plays a leading role in the implementation of project activities. Formed in 2000, ICS has a special interest in biodiversity conservation on the Outer Islands, and currently has staff located on the islands of Desroches and Alphonse. Its expertise includes: species conservation; vegetation rehabilitation; eradication of invasive species (rats, cats); endangered species recovery programmes; and marine surveys. In addition, ICS has assumed management responsibility for the Aride Island Special Reserve under a lease agreement with the Royal Society for Nature Conservation.

³² GEF/UNDP Project Implementation Review (PIR) 2018.

³³ This Bill, which will create an improved framework for the classification of the protected area system to reflect national circumstances in reference to protected areas, and in line with international norms and practices, will replace the National Parks and Nature Conservancy Act (1969). Expansion of the protected area system will be done through designation orders.

³⁴ Mid-Term Review of the GEF funded Seychelles Protected Areas Finance Project. Final Report. 10 August 2018, Key informant interviews.

2.4 Energy efficiency



RELATED CPD OUTPUTS

Output 3: Inclusive and sustainable solutions are adopted to achieve increased energy efficiency (especially off-grid sources of renewable energy).

Output 5: Climate change adaptation and mitigation actions are scaled up across sectors.

Finding 5. The contribution of UNDP to improved resource efficiency has been modest and well short of targets. The scope for UNDP to make a more substantial contribution may increase when a review of energy sector policies being conducted by the Seychelles Government is completed. This will help to clarify which energy efficiency strategies and incentives are likely to be most effective.

The INDC of Seychelles under the UNFCCC reflects the fact that, as a net carbon sink, the country's contributions to climate change mitigation are driven primarily by its desire to improve its energy security and reduce its energy bill. Until recently, Seychelles has been completely reliant on imported fossil fuels to meet its energy needs, making it vulnerable to global price volatility and supply disruption. Recognising this, the Seychelles Government has committed to increase renewable energy production to 15 per cent of total production by 2030.³⁵

The UNDP-GEF 'Resource Efficiency in Seychelles' project aims to reduce this vulnerability, while at the same time responding to the country's commitments to address climate change by bringing down the rate of electricity and water consumption in Seychelles. The project is executed by the Seychelles Energy Commission, a statutory body that falls under the purview of the Ministry of Environment and Energy.

The project has been challenging to implement, and the 2017 project mid-term review found that progress towards four of the six targets was either unsatisfactory or at risk. While project implementation and adaptive management were rated as moderately satisfactory, the review was critical of several key assumptions in the project design, lack of clarity on how to target support in certain areas, and unrealistic objectives.³⁶

A core problem for the project was a lack of clarity about energy policy settings, which were key to the design of resource efficiency incentive schemes. For example, a critical unresolved question was the impact of subsidized tariffs on the economic motivation of low consumption households (representing about 72 per cent of residential electricity customers) to invest in more efficient appliances. This was an important factor in the low uptake of the preferential loan scheme which the project helped establish to enable low-income households to purchase energy-efficient appliances.³⁷

As highlighted in the mid-term review, this also constituted a major risk to the effectiveness of the energy efficiency labelling scheme advocated by the project, given that subsidies reduce the economic incentive to purchase more efficient appliances. Given this, it is possible that alternative strategies would be more effective.

³⁵ Seychelles Energy Commission & MEECC, (2018) DRAFT Seychelles Energy Efficiency Policy.

³⁶ In particular, the review noted assumptions about the quantum of reduced emissions were extremely optimistic reflecting maximal response to incentives offered by the project to households to purchase energy and water saving appliances and technologies.

³⁷ UNDP (2017), Mid-Term Review of the promotion and up-scaling of climate-resilient, resource efficient technologies in a tropical island context, Seychelles project. The UNDP country office advised the review that: 'While the project recognizes that there are issues with the incentives schemes being offered by the bank, this is being rectified and some banks are already pushing for small green loans for purchase of energy efficient appliances. This will be rolled out fully once the necessary policies and legislation are passed and become operational.'

Another area where progress has been difficult was in the support to establish regulations for the safe disposal of electric appliances. Such regulations require significant investment in recycling and waste disposal facilities and waste collection infrastructure, as well as funding for the operation of the waste collection, recycling and safe disposal system. Unfortunately, the costs of these investments and options for financing them were not given adequate attention in the project document, placing this key project objective at risk.³⁸

Recognising the interdependence of policy settings in the sector, the Seychelles Government is completing a comprehensive review of Seychelles energy-related policies and legislation so as to avoid the risk of developing and implementing individual regulations that do not support each other. The project advocated for approval of legislation to introduce minimum energy and water performance standards, restrict imports of appliances that do not comply with the standard and establish an energy labelling scheme. This has been delayed pending the review, the outcomes of which, and resulting policy changes, will significantly influence project outcomes.

2.5 Overall portfolio performance

Finding 6. The UNDP environment portfolio in Seychelles focuses on important and challenging issues and provides a highly valued source of external support for partners. Notwithstanding, overall the performance of the portfolio has been uneven, and a lack of resources has limited UNDP engagement and support for policy development outside of projects.

Four of the five projects considered by this evaluation have faced significant implementation chal-

lenges, and thus far there has been little evidence of significant improvements against key UNDP outcomes, although there are good prospects for this to happen in the next few years.

UNDP plays a positive but small role supporting Seychelles policy development, including, for example, helping the Seychelles Government to formulate the National Development Strategy currently in development. Reflecting its resource limitations, there is limited evidence of deep or sustained policy analysis, dialogue or engagement in policy development outside of the scope of projects. UNDP is a significant partner for Seychelles, but its contributions in terms of high-level analysis and policy advice are not as visible as that of some other partners, such as the World Bank³⁹ or IMF⁴⁰, even on issues and challenges addressed by the projects. Many of the more innovative policy developments in Seychelles, such as the establishment of the world's first sovereign blue bond or the establishment of a debt for biodiversity swap, did not involve UNDP.

The country office will require greater resources and increased engagement from its policy experts if it is to improve the depth and influence of its policy advisory role.

Finding 7. Given the context, and the limitations of existing GEF funding mechanisms, the PCU established by UNDP within the Ministry of Environment and Energy is a sensible arrangement to absorb the project management costs of UNDP support to the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change (MEECC) through multiple projects.

The context of Seychelles as a geographically remote small island state is a key challenge for the UNDP programme. In particular, the small size

³⁸ UNDP (2017), Mid-Term Review of the promotion and up-scaling of climate-resilient, resource efficient technologies in a tropical island context, Seychelles project. UNDP (2017), Mid-Term Review of the promotion and up-scaling of climate-resilient, resource efficient technologies in a tropical island context, Seychelles project. The UNDP country office advised the review that: 'While the project recognizes that there are issues with the incentives schemes being offered by the bank, this is being rectified and some banks are already pushing for small green loans for purchase of energy efficient appliances. This will be rolled out fully once the necessary policies and legislation are passed and become operational.'

³⁹ In particular, World Bank Group (2017), The Republic of Seychelles: Systematic Country Diagnostic; and World Bank Group, Seychelles National Bureau of Statistics, (2016), A Poverty Profile of the Republic of the Seychelles: Poverty Report for the Household Budget Survey 2013, <https://www.nbs.gov.sc/files/Poverty-Profile-for-Seychelles.pdf>.

⁴⁰ IMF (2017), IMF Country Report No. 17/162, Seychelles Climate Change Policy Assessment.

of Seychelles bureaucracy means that the capacity of key institutions and decision-makers is often stretched, which can slow things down. This is especially apparent for issues where cross-agency concerns and interests are at play. The impact of SIDS characteristics on performance has been empirically demonstrated by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office, which concluded in its 2014 performance review that “[E]valuations of projects implemented in SIDS were twice as likely to have lessons highlighting weaknesses in project management or oversight as evaluations of projects implemented in non SIDS.”⁴¹ Similarly, the 2018 evaluation of the Adaptation Fund highlighted that SIDS face “complex operating environment and costs that were not appropriately factored into project formulations, especially in the Pacific.”⁴²

The PCU is firmly embedded within the operations of the Ministry of Environment. There are cost efficiencies associated with this set up, as one person manages the finances for all projects rather than having separate finance and administration staff for each project.

Finding 8. Implementation has been made more challenging by unnecessarily complex project designs and insufficient attention to the feasibility of some major components of projects.

For three of the five projects (Resource Efficiency, Ecosystem-Based Adaptation and Outer Island Protected Areas), project designs were unnecessarily complex, presenting challenges in implementation. In particular, the large number of project components and counterparts amplified the existing challenges of operating in a small island context where institutional capacity is stretched. A common design problem in projects involving physical works, were sub-projects which had not been subjected to adequate feasibility testing at the design stage, and therefore needed to be substantially modified or dropped in light of more detailed information. For example, the GCCA+ project design

could not be implemented because of a serious underestimation of the cost of the civil works. Similarly, there was insufficient attention to the feasibility of major components of the Energy Efficiency and Ecosystem-Based Adaptation projects. UNDP should increase its attention to feasibility risks at the design stage, so as not to develop projects, or major project components, that cannot be implemented in practice. Alternatively, UNDP should ensure that project designs provide sufficient flexibility for adaptive management if feasibility testing has not been sufficient to foresee and cover implementation risks.

Finding 9. For a small sub-office like UNDP Seychelles, the ability to access technical backstopping and support from relevant UNDP experts is critical to ensure high quality project design and implementation.

Overall, the Seychelles programme has received reasonable technical backstopping and support, and advisors have made important interventions to address problems in project implementation. However, engagement in two of the five projects was inconsistent, reducing the quality of UNDP oversight and implementation. This was identified as a problem by mid-term reviews of the ‘Outer Island Protected Areas’ project and the ‘Ecosystem-Based Adaptation’ project. The former observed that “[h]igh staff turn-over at the Regional Service Centre is likely to have affected the speed of response and technical support to the project, with three changes on the Regional Technical Advisor responsible for the project in 2 years”. The latter similarly observed that “... there has been three changes to the UNDP Regional Technical Advisor responsible for providing technical support to the project since project inception (3.5 years).”

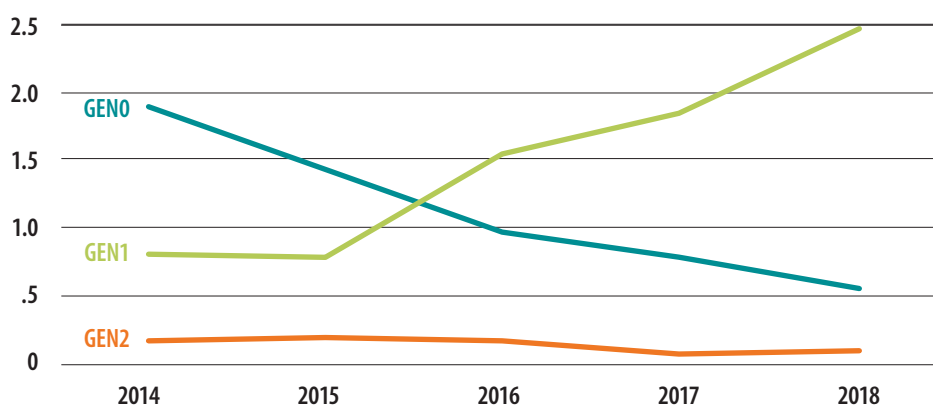
Finding 10. Given the environmental focus of the current programme, the scope to promote gender equality in a significant and consistent way is constrained. Reflecting this, in the current programme

⁴¹ GEF Independent Evaluation Office (2015), GEF Annual Performance Report 2014.

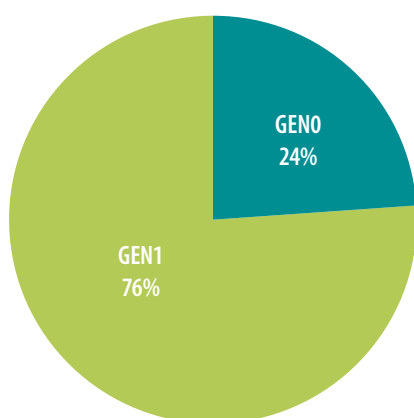
⁴² Adaptation Fund (2018), Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund Final Report. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/AF_Phase2_Eval_4June.pdf.

FIGURE 2. Attribution of Seychelles programme spending using the gender marker, million (US \$)

Expenditure by gender marker and year



Programme expenditure by gender marker, 2017-2018



cycle, 75 per cent of expenditure was reported as making a limited contribution to gender equality (GEN1). The remaining 25 per cent of expenditure did not make a noticeable contribution to gender equality (GEN0).

The Seychelles country programme attributed its spending to different gender markers over the past two programme cycles (2012-16 and 2017-20) as presented in Figure 2. Programme spending marked as having ‘promoted gender equality in a significant and consistent way’ (GEN2) ceased in 2014, reflecting the phase out of its governance programme which had a focus on gender equality. Expenditure

reported as making ‘a limited contribution to gender equality’ (GEN1) has progressively grown compared to expenditure ‘without a noticeable contribution to gender equality’ (GEN0). There is no part of the country programme that has been reported as having gender equality as the main objective.

The limited scope for the programme to promote gender equality is most striking in the ‘Outer Islands Protected Areas’ project, which focused on the establishment and management of protected areas on uninhabited islands. Similarly, it is not obvious how the protected area finance project could pursue gender equality given its scope. For the ‘Ecosys-

tem-Based Adaptation' project, gender equality has been supported by encouraging representation of women in watershed committees and training activities. The 'Resource Efficiency' project addressed gender in its design, by committing to the development of gender equality indicators, although it has very limited scope to address gender equality.

While project staff recognised the limited scope to promote gender equality in the projects they were implementing, they emphasised that they understood the importance of ensuring gender balance in staffing and project activities, and of collecting sex-disaggregated data. Seychelles government representatives interviewed by the evaluation team were not concerned about the lack of focus on gender equality in the environment portfolio, especially given the strong representation of women in the Seychelles bureaucracy, including at senior levels. Project staff also presented evidence of good gender balance in project staffing and oversight bodies.

At the time of the evaluation, the Seychelles sub-office had six staff, all service contract holders: one at the SB5 level (male), two each at the SB4 and SB3 (all female), and a one SB1 contract holder, a woman. Overall leadership was provided through a female Resident Representative based in Mauritius.

Finding 11. The Seychelles Country Programme Document does not serve as an effective vehicle for accountability to the UNDP Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme.

Given the limited donor base and low core resource allocation, the CPD does not accurately reflect UNDP capacity to contribute to national development in Seychelles. Much of the stated outcome of the CPD is well outside of the sphere of influence of the UNDP programme in Seychelles.⁴³ As such, the results framework in the CPD, including outputs, targets and indicators, dramatically overstate UNDP

capacity to make a difference given the resources it has to work with. Of the 14 targets and indicators in the CPD, there are 10 where UNDP has no or negligible influence, and four where it has a moderate influence (in energy efficiency, watershed and protected area management) (see Annex 3).

Finding 12. There are significant weaknesses in results-based management at the project level.

Three of the five major active projects of the UNDP Seychelles programme are burdened with weak results frameworks, which do not provide a sound base for monitoring and reporting results and do not promote effective oversight and adaptive management. The 'Ecosystem-Based Adaptation' project results framework includes 15 targets and indicators, of which 11 were considered by the mid-term review to be vague, difficult or impossible to measure, unrealistic or outside of the control of the project to influence. The 'Outer Islands Protected Areas' project is committed to results which are outside of the control of the project, including the expansion of the protected area estate and an increase in the number of Protected Areas legally established and demarcated in Outer Islands. Achievement of these targets depends on the approval of a new protected area law (Nature Reserves and Conservancy Act), a draft of which was completed in 2015 but has not yet been approved. For the same project, the results framework includes the use of ecosystem health indicators which can be affected by developments outside of the control of the project. The resource efficiency project suffered from the inclusion of unrealistic targets and components, lack of clarity about the targeted beneficiaries, an overly complex array of indicators and, at midpoint, the lack of any system to enable measurement of energy efficiency outcomes from the project.

The country office advised the evaluation team that many of these issues arose from the need to design

⁴³ The overall outcome of the CPD is: "A sustainable Seychelles with enhanced economic growth, income opportunities and social inclusion, supported and promoted by responsive strategies towards poverty reduction and gender equality. Building economic and environmental resilience through the design, implementation and integration of sustainable solutions into development planning processes at national and subnational levels to support the blue economy concept, while ensuring climate change adaptation and mitigation concerns are fully addressed."

projects to meet the criteria for funding, which are often not very flexible. Specifically, indicators are often included in project designs to respond to specific criteria for approval by GEF or the Adaptation Fund, which ultimately leads to many of the projects being revised after their mid-term review. In the case of the 'Outer Islands Protected Areas' and 'Ecosystem-based Adaptation' projects, these problems have been compounded by the failure of the steering committee to regularly consider and use monitoring information for structured decision-making and adaptive management.

Across the projects, there are weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation and the documentation and

communication of results and lessons learned. More emphasis needs to be placed on these activities to maximise the influence and scalability of projects and retain lessons. UNDP should consider ways to strengthen monitoring and evaluation and knowledge management capacity, either by building it into individual project designs, or by establishing a shared resource to provide support across the PCU. Currently, there is limited capacity to develop a common narrative across the programme about the challenges it is helping the Seychelles Government to address, or to adapt support to its changing needs, which may require work outside of the constraints of individual projects.



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
sustainability MANAGING FOR RESULTS responsiveness COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness
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This chapter presents the conclusions of the evaluation on the performance and contributions of UNDP to development results in Seychelles, along with the subsequent recommendations. Also included is the UNDP Seychelles **management response to the recommendations**.

3.1 Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1. Over the past decade, Seychelles has registered sustained improvements in per capita income and achieved a relatively high level of human development, trends that have limited the scope of UNDP support.**

Since 2017, Seychelles has received just \$50,000 of core resources (TRAC) annually, which means that the UNDP programme is almost entirely dependent on non-core contributions. As Seychelles has risen to high-income status it has suffered a rapid fall in ODA from close to \$50m in 2010 to around \$5m in 2017 and resource mobilisation opportunities have been severely limited. Currently, the UNDP programme is supported by funding through global environment institutions, which account for over 86 per cent of its delivery. However, opportunities to access climate-related concessional funding for Seychelles are likely to become increasingly constrained given its graduation to high-income status.

- **Conclusion 2. Notwithstanding Seychelles strong progress on economic and social indicators, the country faces some significant challenges.**

As a small island state with limited land mass and resources, Seychelles will face high costs in adapting to the consequences of climate change, especially from expected sea level rises. Meeting these challenges effectively will depend on the ability of Seychelles to protect and preserve valuable marine and terrestrial biodiversity, which account for about 70 per cent of its GDP.

- **Conclusion 3. Government partners consulted by the evaluation highlighted the value of the UNDP role to facilitate access to funding through global environmental and climate change organisations. The resources UNDP has mobilised through these mechanisms have been important**

instruments to extend the reach of the Government's own programmes, trial new approaches and develop the evidence-base required to underpin reforms.

Some good results have been achieved, including support to reform of the governing framework for the Seychelles National Parks Authority, analysis to underpin improved financing and management of protected areas and introduction of ecosystem-based adaptation approaches with the potential for significant influence over government thinking on the management of water resources.

- **Conclusion 4. The UNDP contribution to targeted outcomes has been undermined by implementation challenges affecting four of the five major projects considered by this evaluation.**

The UNDP contribution to improved resource efficiency has been modest. UNDP work on water resource management has significant potential but this was mostly unrealised. Despite some challenges, in the area of protected area management, progress towards the outcomes, outputs and indicators set out in the CPD has been adequate, especially following key adjustments made after the mid-term reviews of the two projects. However, targets to expand marine and terrestrial protected areas have not yet been achieved due to delays in the passage of the draft Nature Conservancy Act, which is out of the direct control of UNDP. Overall, there is little evidence of actual improvements in the management of the Seychelles protected area estate.

- **Conclusion 5. The uneven performance of the programme reflects four main factors: the small island state context; problems with project design; inconsistencies in technical support; and the quality of monitoring, evaluation and communications.**

1. **First, it reflects the known challenges of working effectively in small island states.** In particular, the small size of Seychelles bureaucracy means that the capacity of key institutions and decision-makers is often stretched, with broad mandates and heavy travel schedules which can slow things down.
 2. **Second, it reflects challenges in developing designs with solid implementation frameworks.** In project designs for physical works, some sub-projects were not subjected to sufficient feasibility testing and needed to be substantially modified or dropped in light of more detailed information. The unnecessary complexity of some project designs increased the project management risks, given external challenges.
 3. **Third, it reflects inconsistencies in the quality of technical backstopping and support from UNDP regional technical advisors in Addis Ababa.** While most of the programme received good technical backstopping and support, and the current level of engagement is good, there was a period when engagement in two of the five projects was weaker, reducing the quality of oversight. Consistent engagement from technical experts, including at the design stage, is especially important given the small size of the Seychelles country office.
 4. **Finally, it reflects weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation, documentation of lessons learned, communications and results-based management practices of the country office.** At programme level, existing reporting frameworks have limited utility for either learning or accountability and should be revised. Because of weaknesses in project formulation, many of the current projects have weak results frameworks, which do not provide a sound basis for monitoring and reporting results or encourage adaptive management. Across the projects, more emphasis needs to be given to monitoring and evaluation, documentation of lessons learned and communications to maximize their influence and retain lessons. Currently, there is limited capacity to develop a common narrative across the programme on the challenges it is helping the Government to address, or to adapt support to its changing needs outside of the constraints of individual projects.
- **Conclusion 6. Given the high-income status of Seychelles, a small island state vulnerable to climate change, UNDP can play a significant role to contribute knowledge and advisory services in areas where it has a direct role and global expertise.**
- There is room for improvement in this area.

3.2 Recommendations and Management Response

Recommendation 1.



In developing the new Country Programme Document, care should be taken to reflect the particular needs and issues of Seychelles as a small island state with high-income status, and the capacity of UNDP to provide support. UNDP should focus its limited resources on strengthening the focus of the programme on environmental management and climate change, and synergies between its different components.

The CPD should reflect the fact that, while it is a significant partner in the environment sector in Seychelles, the resources UNDP can mobilise are very small relative to the size of the Seychelles economy. In recent years they have represented less than 1 per cent of general government expenditure. This

means that the ability of UNDP to directly generate benefits is limited by the small scale of its interventions, relying on its ability to generate larger impacts by promoting systemic changes in Seychelles Government policy or practice in its focus areas.

The CPD should be based on a conservative assessment of future resource mobilisation prospects. UNDP has done well to mobilise the funding it has, despite increasing competition for GEF funding.⁴⁴ There is currently enough funding to justify the country sub-office structure, largely through GEF 6 and 7, but it is likely that Seychelles will not continue to enjoy access to these sources of funding. This is something the country office should prepare for, even if it might not happen for another five years.

For the next CPD period, and reflecting these likely constraints, UNDP should place greater emphasis on its role as a provider of knowledge and advisory services in its existing focus areas. UNDP should seek support from internal experts and funding to engage in analytical and preparatory work to support Seychelles to mobilise climate change finance. Given the income status of Seychelles, this is likely to be the main source of concessional funding available for the country over the next CPD period and beyond.

**Management
Response:
Partially Agree**



In formulating the new Seychelles CPD, UNDP will consult with the Seychelles Government and other national stakeholders (academia, private sector, civil society organizations) on the key development priorities and the UNDP support to Government required to facilitate sustainable growth of its' economy. The new CPD will be fully aligned with the National Development Priorities and within the UN Strategic Partnership Framework for Seychelles. It is expected that the new Seychelles CPD will focus on assisting the country to shift towards a Blue Economy building on sound management of its unique natural resources and addressing the challenges climate change poses to Seychelles as a small island state and large ocean economy.

Links will be made between natural resources management and climate change adaptation and facilitating Seychelles economic sectors including tourism and fisheries which are largely dependent on effective management of risk. Human rights, social justice and gender equality will also inform the foundation of the new Seychelles CPD. The country office will, therefore, align the new CPD to the newly approved National Development Strategy 2019-2023, the UN Strategic Partnership Framework 2019-2023 and the Seychelles Long term Vision 2033 with emphasis on strengthening areas of UNDP comparative advantage. Emphasis will also be placed on de-risking over-reliance on vertical funds, through programme diversification in line with UNDP Strategic Plan six signature solutions.

⁴⁴ The number of accredited agencies has risen from 10 to 18 under GEF 6.

As noted in the UNDP Human Development Report 2019, inequality matters. It should be noted that, though Seychelles is ranked as a high-income economy, the gap between rich and poor has increased, with the latest poverty digest indicating almost 40% of households below the poverty line. Thus, whilst important, environment-related development issues are still perceived by a significant share of the population as low priority compared to their socio-economic challenges. Thus, the Government's capacity to plan and implement actions to protect the country's environment and use its natural resources in a sustainable way, while valid, also presents a need to rationalize this development priority with citizens' socio-economic development expectations to address social issues.

New thinking, particularly in the face of sweeping technological change and the climate crisis, will be needed to rationalize the need for climate action with socio-economic imperatives. UNDP is well positioned to support platforms for dialogue and knowledge development to address some of the priority social issues and safeguard erosion of past gains in human development. As a small island country, Seychelles is particularly vulnerable to global climate change and internal and external threats to its rich but fragile terrestrial and marine biodiversity. All this provides policy space and a programming environment for UNDP beyond a narrow environment focus, to assist Seychelles to address its sustainable development challenges through world-class international expertise and promoting innovations capitalizing on what has been done to date.

UNDP will provide strategic interventions targeting the issues which are high priority for the country, and can result in significant and durable development impact. It should be noted that the Seychelles Government values UNDP as a reliable, professional and impartial partner; and has expressed its readiness and willingness to continue and further expand its cooperation with UNDP.

Though continuing to tap into vertical fund mechanisms such as the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the Adaptation Fund (AF), UNDP will actively explore other options available to finance its Seychelles technical assistance programmes, including expansion of cooperation with the European Union and building new relationships with bilateral donors and the private sector. UNDP will also discuss with the Seychelles Government options to obtain governmental cost sharing of UNDP-led programmes beyond the existing parallel co-financing provided by the country to some projects. UNDP will also work to utilize available in-house knowledge, expertise and funding opportunities through cooperation with the Africa Regional Service Centre and the UNDP Global Policy Network.

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Consultations with key Seychelles partners on the country's priorities and needs.	Aug 2019 forward	UNDP	On-going	
1.2. Formulation of the new Seychelles CPD reflecting the country's priorities and fully aligned UNDP Executive Board requirements.	February 2020	UNDP	Pending	The CPD development process will start in December 2019
1.3. Exploring options to expand the donor base beyond GEF and EU (e.g. national governments, private sector etc.).	2019 and forward	UNDP	On-going	
1.4. Engage the Seychelles Government in a discussion for getting governmental co-financing of UNDP-led programmes.	Feb 2020 and forward	UNDP	Pending	Requires internal UNDP consultations and engagement of high-rank UNDP officials

Recommendation 2.



The country office should ensure that future project designs avoid unnecessary proliferation of project components and counterparts and include only well-reasoned, straightforward monitoring and evaluation frameworks and targets. Where designs include plans for complex physical works that have not been subject to detailed feasibility studies, sufficient time should be allocated to complete this work, and flexibility should be provided to respond appropriately to the outcomes.

The unnecessary complexity of some project designs, and insufficient due diligence in the identification of sub-projects, created significant delays and increased project management risks. Recognising the small island state context, as far as possible, project designs should be kept simple, and flexibility for adaptive management should be retained.

**Management
Response:**
Partially Agree



UNDP Seychelles will pay special attention to ensuring that project design - including the scope of activities, expected outcomes and outputs, RRF, budget and M&E framework - are presented in a clear and concise manner to national partners; with a manageable number of counterparts and clear, concise, meaningful and monitorable outcomes and indicators. This requirement will be included in the terms of reference of any specialists engaged in designing new projects.

It should be pointed out, however, that project documents for some donor templates remain very complex and require a significant amount of technical information and data. Similarly, donor requirements for project reporting continues to be complicated. Thus, for UNDP to comply with the respective donor requirements, we are obliged to follow templates and procedures that often do not lend themselves to simplicity and clarity. The matter is further complicated when considering regional projects. Considering the ICPE recommendations, while some project documents will remain complex and highly technical; UNDP Seychelles will encourage counterparts to seek simplified and accessible design for greater efficiency and effectiveness in implementation. In addition, to address the issue of project complexity, UNDP will engage with national project partners at the earliest possible stage of project formulation to ensure common understanding of UNDP and donor requirements regarding technical assistance projects. UNDP will also seek feedback from national partners on project design and will address, to the extent possible, partners' suggestions for simplification.

UNDP agrees with the need to allocate enough time and resources to conduct assessments and feasibility studies prior the beginning of extensive physical works. For all new projects which include significant physical works, activities on respective assessments/feasibility studies will be included in the project scope and, adequate resources (time, financial and expertise) will be incorporated into project design.

UNDP welcomes the evaluation conclusion that enough flexibility should be allowed in complex projects to provide for adaptive management in response to changing situations and circumstances. UNDP has been applying adaptive management to its projects when required and will continue to do so.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. Ensuring the design of new projects is not overcomplicated and overburdened with excessive number of partners, outcomes, outputs and indicators.	2019 and forward	UNDP	On-going	

Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

2.2. Engaging local counterparts in project design at the earliest possible stage.	2019 and forward	UNDP	On-going	
2.3. Ensuring that projects with significant physical works have quality feasibility studies completed prior to the start of actual physical works. Project design should also provide for enough resources (time, financial, human) for such studies.	2019 and forward	UNDP	On-going	

Recommendation 3.



The country office should improve results-based management through a series of recommended measures. Programme level reporting frameworks should only include objectives, targets and related indicators over which UNDP can realistically have a measurable influence. Increased monitoring and evaluation and research capacity should be built into individual project designs or a shared resource should be established to provide analytical support across the PCU. Finally, a common narrative should be developed across the programme explaining the challenges that UNDP is helping Seychelles Government to address.

Management Response:

Agree



To address the issue, UNDP will explore various options to include a dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialist into the Seychelles country office team who will also cover the M&E needs of UNDP-led projects. The main task of the specialist will be to monitor achievement of the key results of UNDP actions, along with advising the Project Coordination Unit on monitoring and evaluation issues. The specialist will also lead monitoring and evaluation of the long-term impact of UNDP interventions, the sustainability of results and the extent of successful experience replication throughout the country.

To address the recommendation, UNDP will conduct regular training of the Seychelles country office team and project personnel on results-based management. With improvements in monitoring and evaluations, documentation; and communication of results and lessons learned are being taken on board. Following the ICPE, Bureau for Africa Regional Service Centre colleagues

provided in-depth training on project management requirements, reporting and M&E to project staff in April 2019. UNDP will consider, funds permitting, engaging a dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialist as part of the UNDP Seychelles team.

Currently, the Seychelles country office have very limited capacity to monitor, measure and disseminate the impact of UNDP interventions in Seychelles, along with monitoring and evaluating the sustainability and scale of replication of the results of UNDP projects and initiatives. To address the issue, UNDP will explore various options to include a dedicated monitoring and evaluation specialist into the Seychelles country office team who will also cover the M&E needs of UNDP-led projects. The main task of the specialist will be to monitor achievement of the key results of UNDP actions, along with advising the Project Coordination Unit on monitoring and evaluation issues. The specialist will also lead monitoring and evaluation of the long-term impact of UNDP interventions, the sustainability of results and the extent of successful experience replication throughout the country.

Meanwhile, the communications function as part of RBM will be integrated into the various projects as a core development function. In the interim, and to address the lack of communication personnel, the country office has augmented its capacity through fielding detailed assignments of a communications specialist to the country office.

It should be noted that the indicators under the Adaptation Fund do not adhere to an RBM approach; but were agreed at the design stage using criteria laid out by the donors. Furthermore, a lack of national capacity to critically review the log frame at inception stage required revisions at mid-term review stage. Furthermore, the time lag between programme design and implementation can cause a logical disconnect with agreed indicators, due to an evolving development context. For example, the Adaptation Fund project was developed in 2012, while funds were only made available in 2014. Similarly, for the GEF6 cycle, the Project Identification Form was readied in 2015, while funds for full project preparation were only made available in 2018, with the project document approved in late 2019.

Under the GCCA+ project all cost estimates were done by the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Change and UNDP was called in at a later stage after negotiations were completed to implement the project. The limited consultation on costs and community views resulted in significant cost under-estimation for the transportation of goods by sea to La Digue. The result was the need for UNDP, as the implementing partner, to raise significant resources in a very limited market to cover additional costs – which in turn resulted in delayed delivery. National stakeholders have expressed that this finding should be raised at the COP events or channelled through partnerships to bring to the attention of donor parties through country-led interventions highlighting the complexities of SIDS.

Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. Conduct regular RBM training of the country office team and project personnel.	2019 and forward	UNDP, PCU	On-going	
3.2. Explore various options to engage a dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist to cover the needs of the Seychelles UNDP Office and UNDP-led projects.	2019 - 2020	UNDP, PCU	On-going	The options include a Junior Programme Officer, sharing costs among UNDP-led projects, UNDP core resources, etc.
3.3. Explore various options to engage a dedicated Communication Specialist to cover the needs of the Seychelles UNDP Office and UNDP-led projects.	2019 - 2020	UNDP, PCU	On-going	The options include a Junior Programme Officer, sharing costs among UNDP-led projects, UNDP core resources, etc.

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

Annexes



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at:
<https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12285>

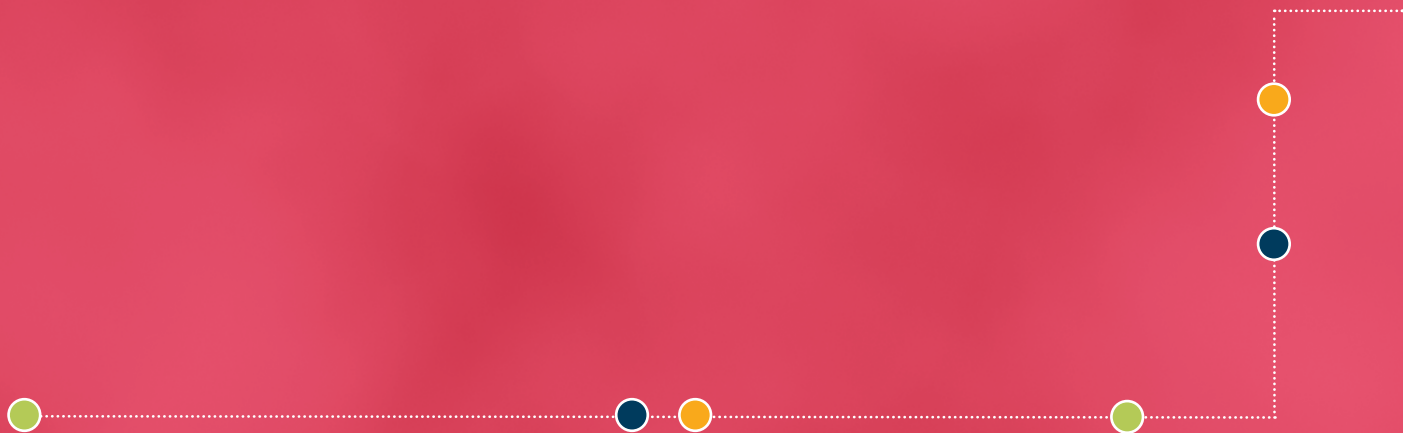
Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Key projects for ICPE

Annex 3. IEO Assessment of Seychelles country office results reporting

Annex 4. Stakeholders consulted

Annex 5. Detailed management response



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