



INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION MAURITIUS



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Foreword

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

The vulnerability of small island states such as Mauritius is well understood. In combination, factors such as small population, geographic isolation, and limited land mass and resources make island states particularly exposed to external shocks. The costs of adapting to climate change will be high, and felt through increased coastal erosion, damage to coastal infrastructure and salination of soil and aquifers. This risk is made more acute for Mauritius by its exposure to major storms.

This evaluation provides an affirmation of the continuing value of the support UNDP is providing Mauritius to meet these challenges. In particular, UNDP has provided access to specialized skills which are in short supply locally (given the country's small population size) and has played an important role

in supporting Mauritius to access external climate change and environmental management financing. Without the local presence of UNDP, it would have been much harder for the Government to access the amount or quality of the support that it has.

I would like to thank the Government of Mauritius, national stakeholders, and colleagues at the UNDP Mauritius 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

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GNI	Gross National Income
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
NIM	National Implementation Modality
ODA	Official Development Assistance
PV	Photovoltaic
RBA	Regional Bureau for Africa
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRAC	Target for Resource Assignment from the Core
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

Evaluation Brief: Mauritius

Country context and UNDP programme

Over the past decade, Mauritius has achieved sustained improvements in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, which currently stands at \$12,050. This places Mauritius in the top tier of upper-middle-income economies, and it is pushing towards the World Bank's threshold for high-income status. Mauritius has also done well on many social indicators, and absolute poverty is minimal. Reflecting this, Mauritius is ranked 65 in the world in the 2018 Human Development Index, and second in Africa (behind Seychelles).

The upper-middle-income status and small population of Mauritius constrains the resource base for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). UNDP core funding to Mauritius is just \$150,000 annually, and with no donors active in the country and few alternative sources of finance available, there is almost exclusive dependence on vertical funds for programming. Within these constraints, the UNDP country office has been successful in mobilising resources from the Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and Green Climate Fund for work to address climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy efficiency, biodiversity protection and the management of chemicals and hazardous waste.

Findings and conclusions

Government partners were complimentary about the quality and influence of UNDP work, and stressed the continued relevance and value of UNDP assistance. Government informants highlighted specific problems where technical support of the kind that UNDP is capable of sourcing would continue to be valuable. They emphasized that graduation to higher income status had not fundamentally altered the value they placed on external assistance and the importance, for a small island state, of help to access specialised skills which are in short supply locally.

The strongest results of UNDP have been its contributions to improved environmental management. In particular, it has provided momentum to the Government's efforts to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar photovoltaic (PV) energy sector. It has enabled the Mauritius Government to conduct a more comprehensive consideration of options for protecting coastal communities and assets than it could have achieved on its own, and supported it to incrementally adapt to rising sea levels caused by climate change. Overall, UNDP was recognized as playing an important role in smoothing and facilitating access to funding available through global environmental and climate change organisations. Government partners expressed that, without local UNDP presence, it would have been much harder for the Government to have accessed the quantum of support that it has.

Though the environment programme is performing well, its reliance on external funding sources constitutes a key risk and constraint. In particular, there is a risk that the programme will become fragmented, and Government partners will be overwhelmed with the task of managing multiple environment projects. This risk is increased by a lack of flexible resources to offset the limitations of working to the parameters and requirements of external funders. Given that the environment portfolio is projected to expand from a portfolio value of \$26 million in 2015 to over \$100 million by 2020, there are also some significant emerging risks related to procurement. This was one of the few areas of complaint about UNDP support from the Mauritius Government.

The programme has done some useful work in the governance area in the past, but the scale of the current programme is very small, and UNDP influence has reduced with declining resources. Currently, none of the governance activities managed by the

country programme are operating at a large enough scale to be able to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them. Unless the limited Target for Resource Assignment from the Core (TRAC) resources can be used to leverage external resources for a long-term programme of work on governance, the transaction and opportunity costs of the current TRAC-funded governance engagement will be increasingly hard to justify.

The UNDP country programme document (CPD) for Mauritius is not realistic about the capacity and influence of UNDP, and does not prioritise sufficiently. Existing human resources are too thinly spread across too many partners and activities, and performance frameworks and reporting promote an overly optimistic representation of UNDP capacity to influence change. This tendency to spread resources thinly helps to generate goodwill across

government, but limits UNDP capacity to increase its role as a knowledge provider and broker, where it can be of greatest value, given the country's stage of development.

Overall, resource constraints have limited the country programme's scope to have a significant impact on gender equality. What's more, there are no realistic mechanisms for the country office to pursue the corporate target of allocating 15 per cent of all budgets to work which has a principal objective of advancing gender equality and/or empowering women (GEN3). The use of the gender marker substantially overstates the programme's contribution to gender equality. Current coding practices present a risk that the UNDP management and board will be misled about the extent to which UNDP programmes are effectively promoting gender equality.

Recommendations

- The next Mauritius CPD should be far more focused and realistic than the current one, reflecting more accurately the country office's capacity and resources. CPD objectives, targets and indicators should only be included if there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them. Results reporting should focus on indicators that have a moderate to high level of significance in terms of the scale or the substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has sufficient resources to make a substantive contribution to results achieved against them.
- In developing its next CPD, UNDP should position the programme - and align staffing structures and resources - to support and enhance the performance of its growing environment and climate change portfolio, and mitigate the risks associated with this growth.
- CPD core funding allocations for governance should be contingent on minimum levels of resource mobilisation, or the ability of these funds to leverage contributions from the global and regional UNDP networks or the UN system. If additional resources cannot be mobilised for existing democratic governance work, the country office should allocate its core resources to strengthen engagement in policy development relevant to the work being undertaken in the environment portfolio.
- The country office should develop a strategy for addressing gender equality that is founded on a clear assessment of the scope of its different activities to do so. This strategy should outline how gender equality will be addressed by different activities, and the extent to which these can reasonably be expected to produce significant and consistent gender equality outcomes. Gender marker coding should be reviewed annually, and coding updated where necessary to ensure that the data provides an accurate picture of the level of focus of UNDP programmes on gender equality.



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 the 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 is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
- What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and the sustainability of results?
- What can UNDP learn from the evaluation about how it can best position itself to support small island states that are pushing towards graduation, or have graduated from official development assistance (ODA) eligibility?

The current UNDP country programme in Mauritius runs from 2017 to 2020. This ICPE was conducted in 2018–19 to feed into the development of the Mauritius programme beyond the current cycle. Intended audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Executive Board, UNDP country office, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) and the Mauritius Government.

1.2. Country context

Mauritius is a small island state in the Indian Ocean and has many of the vulnerabilities typically faced by countries in this grouping.

It is small, with a population of just under 1.3 million it stands at 158 out of 235 countries ranked by United Nations on population size. This creates labour market and capacity constraints, and also a constrained tax base from which to cover the costs of government.

It is geographically isolated, with its nearest neighbours over 1,000km away from its centre. This imposes high costs on trade as imports are expensive, and exports less competitive. The cost of delivering services to people on remote islands is prohibitive.

It is an ocean state, with limited land mass and resources, but a large marine area. Mauritius is among the largest marine territories in the world, with an exclusive economic zone of 1.9 million square km and a co-managed economic zone with Seychelles of 0.4 million square kilometres.

It is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As a coastal nation, Mauritius will have to bear the costs of sea level rises, including likely increases in coastal erosion, damage to coastal infrastructure and salination of soil and aquifers. This risk is made more acute by the country's exposure to major storms. In particular, Mauritius is amongst the countries most exposed to cyclones.

The strong performance of Mauritius demonstrates that the challenges it faces as a small island state are not insurmountable. Over the past decade, Mauritius has achieved sustained improvements in Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, which currently stands at \$12,050. This places Mauritius in the top tier of upper-middle-income economies, and it is pushing towards the World Bank's threshold for high-income status. Absolute poverty is minimal, and Mauritius has done well on many social indicators. Reflecting this, Mauritius is ranked 65 in the world in the Human Development Index and is ranked second in Africa behind Seychelles.

The 2018 Global Gender Gap Report ranks Mauritius 109 out of 149 countries for gender equality.¹ Gender inequalities in Mauritius are evident in women's low political and economic participation, despite equitable rates of educational attainment. Women represent just 11.6 per cent of the parliament, and 10 per cent of ministerial positions. The 2011 Local Government Act, which established a quota of one-third women candidates for local elections, has increased local representation, but Mauritius has not yet established

¹ World Economic Forum 2018, Global Gender Gap Report, Available Online at http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf, pg. 11, last accessed April 2019.

a quota at the national level.² In 2018, women's rate of participation in the labour force was estimated to be 45 per cent, 28 points lower than for men, and the gender wage gap was 32 percentage points.³

Notwithstanding these persistent gaps, the direction of change is positive. Women's labour force participation increased steadily over the last decade. More women are occupying high positions in public services. The proportion of women in the most senior positions has increased from 20 per cent to 37 per cent over the past 20 years.⁴ The Government enacted the 2008 Equal Opportunities Act prohibiting gender discrimination, which includes provisions against sexual harassment in employment, services and education, and established an Equal Opportunity Commission in 2012 for its enforcement.⁵ Gender Mainstreaming was one of the top ten priorities of the Mauritius Government's Three-Year Strategic Plan 2018/19-2020/21.

Preservation of environmental and marine assets is a significant feature of the Mauritius national development strategy. This reflects the importance of marine resources, including fisheries and tourism, to its economy. Tourism accounts for around 13 per cent of GDP and is an important source of foreign exchange. Gross value-added of the tourism sector at current basic prices was 8.6 per cent in 2018.⁶

The emphasis on environmental sustainability in the country's development plans reflects its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Given that it is an insignificant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, efforts to develop renewables and improve energy efficiency are driven less by mitigation objectives than by the need for an alternative to dependence on imported fossil fuels, a source of economic vulnerability.

1.3. UNDP programme under review

Over the last six years there have been large reductions in core resource allocations to Mauritius, which in 2017 amounted to just one third of 2012 allocations. Access to TRAC funds is currently very limited (roughly \$150,000 annually) and, with no active donors present, alternative sources of finance are limited almost entirely to environment and climate finance funds. Working with different parts of the Mauritius Government, UNDP has been successful in accessing these funds. UNDP Mauritius receives a small amount of government cost-sharing contributions for implementation of their programmes, and received a small allocation of TRAC2 resources in 2019 (\$136,452), for innovation initiatives.

Currently the UNDP portfolio in Mauritius consists of nine projects at different stages of completion (see Annex 2). All but one are climate or environment related, funded through vertical funds including Global Environment Facility (GEF) (five active projects), Green Climate Fund (GCF) (one active project) and Adaptation Fund (one active project). There are five main areas of focus:

- **Improved public sector management:** The governance area includes support for the development of social protection policies and system, support for the Gender Caucus of the Mauritius Parliament, and support for public sector management through work to develop business intelligence tools and client and citizen feedback mechanisms. This work is constrained by lack of finance but continues to be a focus through a small TRAC-funded project to strengthen the integration of public sector planning, budgeting and execution to improve efficiency and achieve inclusive growth.

² Women's representation increased from 12.7 per cent in 2005 to 36.7 per cent and 34.2 per cent in 2012 and 2015 respectively in Municipal Councils and from 5.7 per cent in 2005 to 25.4 per cent in 2012 in Village Councils. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Mauritius, 20 June 2018, 19. https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MUS/CEDAW_C_MUS_8_5976_E.pdf

³ World Bank, 2018, "Addressing Inequality Through More Equitable Labour Markets", Available Online at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mauritius/publication/mauritius-addressing-inequality-through-more-equitable-labor-markets>, Last Accessed April 2019; International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT, Accessed 1 Oct 2018. www.ilo.org/ilostat/

⁴ Statistics Mauritius: Gender Statistics (Year 2017).

⁵ CEDAW, 6.

⁶ Source: Statistics Mauritius- National Accounts estimates - December 2018.

- **Climate change mitigation and energy efficiency:** Work on climate change mitigation is supported by the largest single grant mobilised by UNDP Mauritius (\$28.2 million), through the GCF, for a renewable energy investment project. This project, with a total value of \$191.4 million, will be executed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with support from UNDP. In addition to the GCF grant, the project financing comprises a \$37.9 million loan from the French Development Agency to the Central Electricity Board, \$123.9 million grant financing from the Mauritian Government and a \$1.4 million contribution from UNDP.
- **Climate change adaptation:** With the support of the Adaptation Fund, UNDP is supporting the Mauritius Government to develop its approach to protecting coastal communities and assets that are under threat from climate change.
- **Biodiversity protection:** With funding from GEF, UNDP has a major focus on biodiversity protection in Mauritius, supporting the Government to develop and manage its system of protected areas covering both land and marine resources.
- **Sustainable management of chemicals and hazardous waste:** Through GEF, UNDP is supporting Mauritius to develop systems for the management, handling and disposal of chemical and hazardous waste.

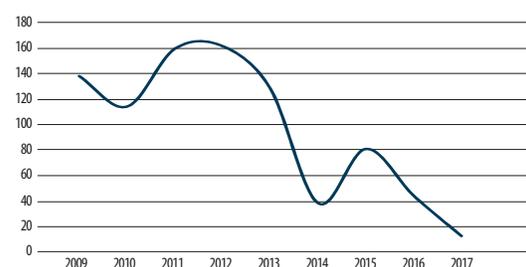
TABLE 1: Mauritius country programme outcomes and indicative resources (2017-2020)

Country programme outcome	Indicative resources (million US\$)	Expenditures at 5 April 2019 (million US\$)
Improved public sector management supporting poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality is promoted through responsive strategies.	Regular: 0.9 Other: 0.9	0.6
Design and implementation of a portfolio of activities and solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, integration of ecosystem services approaches, sound management of chemicals and waste, while ensuring that climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation are fully addressed.	Regular: 0.1 Other: 46.9	12.3
Totals	48.8	12.9

Source: UNDP Mauritius Country Programme Document 2017-2020 (DP/DCP/MUS/4)

Resource mobilisation for governance has fallen short of expectations set out in the CPD. Opportunities to mobilise resources from bilateral donors are constrained. The country's strong economic performance has affected aid allocations (Figure 1). ODA has been volatile, reaching a high of around \$160m in 2012, but has declined since that time, and was just one-quarter of that amount in 2016.

FIGURE 1. ODA to Mauritius from official donors, 2007–2016, constant (2017) prices, million (US\$)



As a middle-income country, the window for Mauritius to access development finance is still open, as shown by the recent mobilisation of a large GCF grant (\$28.2m) and \$37.9m French Government loan for a renewable energy project. However, Mauritius is pushing towards graduation, with a GNI per capita of \$12,050 in 2018 it is not far off the threshold for high-income status (\$12,376), given current rates of growth.

The average UNDP spend in Mauritius over the last five years has been around \$6 million per annum. With declining ODA, this makes UNDP a significant partner in Mauritius, delivering around 25 per cent of its ODA receipts in recent years, largely through global environment funds.

UNDP is in the process of developing a strategic partnership framework to formalize its work in Mauritius, and has completed a Common Country Assessment to position the UN system in the country and inform programming decisions. Only three United Nations agencies are represented in Mauritius (the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration and UNDP). With such a small number of resident agencies, there is no United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Mauritius.

1.4. Methodology

This evaluation was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms & Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct.⁷

The evaluation approach involved a one-week field mission, 20 days of support from a national consultant, and approximately 30 days of work from the lead evaluator. The method included interviews with over 70 informants from UNDP and 16 partner organisations, along with examination of government data and documentation, project reporting, media reporting and existing independent reviews and evaluations.

The limited time available for field work meant that systematic collection and analysis of beneficiary views on project implementation and outcomes could not be gathered, nor could extensive outcome mapping

be done to examine unintended consequences of projects on non-target beneficiaries. With the exception of data collected from stakeholder interviews and field observations, the evaluation did not involve primary data collection. Given these constraints, the rigour of the evaluation's outcome assessments depends on the quality of available documentation about the objectives and outcomes of UNDP work. To offset this limitation, the evaluation sought to tap into diverse data sources.

The projects selected for examination are identified in Annex 1. They accounted for 83 per cent of programme expenditure from 2016 to 2018. Selection was based on the following three criteria:

- the project has been active in the current CPD period, or was a precursor to an ongoing project;
- the project is evaluable in the sense that it is mature enough (has been a focus for UNDP over a long enough period) to be able to say something meaningful about its progress and outcomes;
- the project is large enough in terms of scope, breadth of audience and investment to warrant specific attention.

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

The extent to which the evaluation was able to assess outcomes from different aspects of UNDP work depended on the stage of completion of different components of the work. Where projects were in their early stages, the focus of the evaluation was on evidence that their design reflected learning or built on outcomes from previous projects.

The evaluation methodology included an attempt to assess the significance of UNDP reported results against objective and outcome statements included in the CPD.

The draft ICPE report was quality assured by two IEO internal reviewers, as well as an external expert (member of IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel), before being submitted to the country office and RBA to check for factual errors, and finally to the Government and other national partners for comments.

⁷ www.uneval.org



CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

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This chapter outlines the findings of the evaluation on UNDP effectiveness in achieving its objectives 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 assessment, which is qualitative in nature, is based on an analysis of the correlation between reported project achievements, their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and the overall outcome objectives.

2.1. Improved public sector management

Related CPD Outputs

Output 1: Social workers and public institutions are enabled to perform core functions to fight poverty through implementation of the Marshall Plan Against Poverty

Output 2: Measures in place to increase women's capacities to participate in decision-making processes at all levels and to fight gender-based violence

Output 3: Institutions enabled to optimize use of foresight and e-learning techniques, performance management tools and citizen feedback mechanisms for enhanced public sector performance

Finding 1: UNDP expected its regular resources to amount to less than \$ 250,000 annually and to be able to mobilise a similar amount from other sources. Actual TRAC resources have been even less than the small amount anticipated (\$150,000), and external resource mobilisation for governance activities has been limited to a small amount of government cost-sharing (around \$100,000 in 2018). To put this in context, total public-spending in Mauritius is anticipated to amount to over \$ 3.7 billion in 2017–18.⁸ Given these very limited resources, it is

unrealistic to expect that all the activities associated with the governance objective could be addressed in any meaningful way.

The Mauritius programme's objectives for improving governance in the 2017–2020 CPD are: "improved public-sector management supporting poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality is promoted through responsive strategies." Within this broad objective a wide variety of activities are identified, including: working with social workers and service providers to improve services to the poor; promoting women's leadership and decision making "at all levels"; fighting gender-based violence; developing public sector use of e-learning; improving public sector use of foresight techniques; improving public sector performance management; and improving the collection and use of citizen feedback by public institutions.

The governance programme is implemented by a small team of one UNDP staff member (the head of the unit), and two national service contractors: a gender expert based at the Parliamentary Gender Caucus and a social protection expert (partially funded by government cost sharing) based at the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. A United Nations Volunteers monitoring and evaluation officer position (fully funded by government cost sharing) at the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is vacant and expected to be filled in mid-2019. The programme should theoretically have access to support from a senior international economist, but has been unable to access this support since the end of 2017. The economist is based in Zimbabwe, and the country office has had insufficient funding for the in-country missions required for them to support the work of the office.

Reflecting staffing constraints and the limited availability of TRAC funding, the work done under each of the three public sector management outputs is small scale compared to that suggested by the output descriptions in the CPD. For 2018, the main activities under each of the outputs was as follows:

⁸ RS 127,715 million at exchange rates as at 5 October 2018. [http://budget.mof.govmu.org/budget2018-19/V_B2018_19AppendixB.pdf]

- **Output 1.** Technical assistance supporting the implementation of the Marshall Plan including staff training, analytical work and advocacy and support for implementation of aspects of the plan that have not yet been implemented. This is a continuation of the work UNDP has done under previous strategies in support of Mauritius' developing welfare system, including the formulation of its Marshall Plan to fight poverty, which has been commended at the highest levels of the Mauritius Government.⁹
- **Output 2.** Commissioned a gender audit of the Mauritius civil service, conducted capacity building and workshops with civil servants on gender issues, and provided technical assistance to set up the Parliamentary Gender Caucus.
- **Output 3.** Supported a scoping mission to explore the possibility of a United Nations Technology Innovation Lab in Mauritius in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology. Supported the Ministry of Civil Service in conducting the 9th Regional Southern African Development Community/ United Nations Public Administration Network Portal workshop in collaboration with UNDP South Africa and the Centre for Public Service Innovation.

The work carried out by this small team is well regarded, has been well-received and is valued by the Mauritius Government. However, the scale of influence that UNDP can exert through it is very limited. Currently none of the governance activities managed by the country programme are operating at a scale large enough to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them. Reflecting resourcing trends, the extent of UNDP influence has declined in recent years.

2.2. Environment and natural resource management

Related CPD Outputs

Output 1: Scaled-up action on climate change mitigation across sectors, funded and implemented

Output 2: Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and subnational levels

Output 3: Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals and hazardous waste

The objectives for improving environment and natural resource management in the UNDP Mauritius 2017–2020 CPD are: “Design and implementation of a portfolio of activities and solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, integration of ecosystem services approaches, sound management of chemicals and waste, while ensuring that climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation are fully addressed.”

Finding 2: Although the programme objective of improving environment and natural resource management is ambitious, the mobilisation of significant resources from environment funds has enabled UNDP to mount a credible response. Given the progress seen three years into the four-year CPD, the country office CPD delivery target of \$46.9 million for the period (2017–2020) looks optimistic. However, the environment portfolio is currently projected to expand from a value of \$26 million in 2015 to one potentially worth over \$100 million by 2020.

⁹ See: “Mauritius Marshall Plan aims to eradicate poverty and exclusion,” Jul 12, 2017 http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/07/12/mauritius_marshall_plan_aims_to_eradicate_poverty_and_exclusion.html. Also see Statement by the Right Honorable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius at the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2016 https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/71/71_MU_en.pdf

Progress on each of the four outputs in the environment portfolio is assessed below.

Scaled-up action on climate change mitigation across sectors, funded and implemented

Finding 3: UNDP has developed a strong and well-respected programme of work in climate change mitigation through grants from GEF and GCF, supporting the Government to make progress in reducing its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar photovoltaic (PV) energy sector.

Mauritius views the expansion of renewable energy generation—particularly harnessing its abundant solar radiation to supply the grid—as central to its development prospects. The key driver for this is a desire to increase the country’s energy independence and improve its balance of payments, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This reflects the fact that over the last two decades there has been an almost threefold increase in electricity generation, which translates into an increase in emissions of three per cent per year. Development of renewable energy sources has not kept pace with growing needs in the country, with 87 per cent of energy requirements being met by imported fossil fuels in 2018. Imported energy sources account for close to one-fifth of the value of imports.¹⁰

The 2011–2017 “Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Power Generation” project, funded through a \$ 2 million GEF grant and government co-financing, provided technical assistance to support the development of an energy policy, and legal and regulatory framework, to promote PV grid-connected electricity generation in the country.

The project has been successful in meeting or exceeding its objectives. For example, the project supported the installation of over 11 MW of installed capacity, compared to the 3 MW target in the project design. Private sector investment stimulated by the creation of a market for Solar PV generation was some \$ 40 million, over double the target. This is a major change from the situation that prevailed before the project started when negligible investments were taking place in on-grid PV electricity generation.

Looking forward, the Electricity Board expects that at least a further 100MW of PV will be installed by 2025.

Of course, strong leadership from the Mauritius Government has been instrumental to achieving this outcome. Government co-financing through in-kind support, feed-in-tariffs (\$ 32 million) and tax exemptions for PV equipment (\$ 43 million) was fundamental to the high impact and sustainability of UNDP technical contributions.¹¹ However UNDP also deserves significant credit for its role. Mauritius Government informants from the Central Electricity Board and recently established Mauritius Renewable Energy Authority highlighted that UNDP had been a highly effective source of support for the Government towards this objective. They highlighted that the project supported a fundamental shift in thinking in the energy sector about the role that could be played by solar PV power generation.

One of the outcomes from the “Removal of Barriers” project is that it supported the establishment of a larger project to further develop the Mauritius renewable energy market. ‘Accelerating the Transformational Shift to a Low-Carbon Economy in the Republic of Mauritius,’ will be funded from a \$ 28.2 million GCF grant, combined with a \$ 37.9 million French loan, and in-kind contributions amounting to \$123.9 million from the Mauritius Government.

Approved in 2016, the project commenced implementation in 2018, which means it is too early to assess its effectiveness. However, it is expected to enable Mauritius to fully meet its stated target of 35 per cent renewable electricity production by 2025, which would constitute a significant transformation in Mauritius energy systems. The Mauritius Government’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution statement highlights the importance of external finance to this outcome: “Mauritius is working towards mitigating its emissions and implementing adaptation actions. However, the proposed adaptation and mitigation activities can only be implemented in the medium and long term with necessary support from international funding agencies, grants from climate funds, transfer of appropriate and affordable adaptation

¹⁰ Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (2018), Renewable Energy Strategic Plan 2018-2023, https://www.marena.org/resp-2018-23#h.p_ASNXuTsWAlJd

¹¹ Final Evaluation Report of the UNDP-GEF Project: “Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Power Generation in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands,” August 2017.

and mitigation technologies, technical assistance and capacity development.”¹²

Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and subnational levels

Finding 4: UNDP, with funding from the Adaptation Fund, has supported a comprehensive consideration of options for protecting coastal communities and assets, to a level that would not have been achievable by the Mauritius Government alone.

Work on coastal erosion and flood management was conducted primarily through the \$ 9.1 million “Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Coastal Zone of Mauritius” project funded by the Adaptation Fund. The project supports the Adaptation Fund’s goal of assisting developing country parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change to meet the costs of concrete adaptation projects and resilience building measures. Specifically, the project aims to test different solutions to beach erosion and flood risk from storm surges at three locations, and inform climate-proofing exercises on vulnerable sites elsewhere in the country.

The project was originally expected to run from 2012 to 2017, but after two successive 12-month extensions approved by the Adaptation Fund Board, the project was finally expected to close in August 2019. These extensions reflect the complexity of the three sub-projects funded by the project, from a technical, social and political perspective.

The first of these sub-projects aimed to protect the small coastal community of Rivière des Galets from storm surges. Rivière des Galets is located on the southern coast of the main island of Mauritius. Open to swells from the southern Indian Ocean, the community is highly exposed to storm surges, with a failing seawall and an inadequate drainage system. With rising sea levels, the overtopping of the seawall

and the resulting inundation of the most seaward and lower lying properties will become more frequent. This is already a serious problem, with many in the community living in fear of the next major storm surge.

Options for responding to this threat have been the subject of ongoing discussions between the Government and the community. In 2015, with the support of UNDP and the Adaptation Fund, the Mauritius Government completed a formal assessment of the costs and benefits of the two main options: construction of a physical barrier to protect the community, or a managed retreat.

The option pursued by the Government with project funding was the construction of a coastal protection wall. The cost benefit analysis estimated that the benefits of the wall would be equal to or exceed the costs if it prevented a storm surge with the capacity to flood the community within 39 years of its construction. This was the preferred option compared to the more complicated and expensive measure of relocating the community, given its financial and technical feasibility. Given projected sea level rises, the chosen measure is one that buys time for the Government to develop a plan and strategy for the ultimate necessity of relocating the community.¹³

The second major sub-project focuses on coastal protection measures at Mon Choisy, the location of one of the most popular beaches in Mauritius. Due to a variety of both human- and climate-related pressures, the beach has been eroding rapidly, placing its significant scenic and recreational values at risk (Box 1). To address this problem, the project supported a comprehensive study and consideration of options for protecting and restoring the beach. Studies funded by the project confirmed that large investments and new technologies will need to be mobilised, combined with changes in the management of the beach, lagoon and reef, to improve its resilience and adaptation to climate change.¹⁴

¹² Intended Nationally Determined Contribution for the Republic of Mauritius, 28 September 2015. <https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Mauritius%20First/Final%20INDC%20for%20Mauritius%2028%20Sept%202015.pdf>

¹³ Source: Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management (2015), Cost Benefit Analysis for Adapting to Sea Level Rise: Protection or Managed Retreat in Rivière des Galets.

¹⁴ Indufor (2015), Coastal Adaptation Measures for Mon Choisy Beach, Republic of Mauritius: Options for Adaptation.

Reflecting the high profile of the location, aesthetic considerations and existing uses of the site, extended and time-consuming discussions were required to agree on an acceptable physical solution, and technically and politically feasible design for the works.¹⁵ While there were aspects of the process that could have been improved, the evaluation team considers that, overall, the project made a positive contribution in providing the evidence base required to arrive at an appropriate solution.

BOX 1. Supporting the development of measures to protect beaches under threat from climate change

It is currently estimated that 23 per cent of the beaches on the island of Mauritius are at risk from sea level rises, and that half of these beaches will be lost in the next 50 years if no intervention is made. The potential impact of this scenario on the economy, especially through loss of tourism, is large and it could result in the loss of income for over 13,000 people that either directly or indirectly benefit from beach tourism.

The state of Mon Choisy—one of the most popular beaches in Mauritius—is indicative of the challenges that lie ahead. An estimate of the annual total economic value of Mon Choisy found that it generates more than MUR 3 billion (or some \$ 80 million) in economic value per year in tourism, recreation, water sports, fishing livelihoods and ecosystem services. These values are under serious threat. Currently the beach is losing its shoreline of about 1-2 meters of beach width per year and recent studies indicate that the beach is at risk of disappearing from beach erosion within the next 10-15 years if no sustainable solution is implemented.

This situation has arisen from a combination of anthropomorphic and natural factors. There has been a significant loss in coral cover on the fore reef and back reef at Mon Choisy over the past 15 years, which has reduced the reefs capacity to act as a baffle to dampen oncoming waves, and reduce water movement inside the lagoon, which would help to retain sediment. Loss of seagrass beds in the lagoon has affected the mobility of sediments and reduced the capacity of the lagoon to retain sand. As sea level rises due to climate change, there is the potential for enhanced erosion of the beach due to increased wave penetration.

Source: Project Proposal, Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Coastal Zone of Mauritius.

The final components were the construction of a flood-proof public refuge centre and procurement of a \$350,000 early warning system for storm surges.

Finding 5: While the core focus of adaptation work was sensible, it has been challenging to implement with many different components, including a substantial physical works component, and significant interface with affected communities.

This has affected timelines, with the project requiring two no-cost extensions, and leaving a very constrained timeframe for completion of works on Mon Choisy, a central focus for the project. There is significant risk that this will leave insufficient time for proper evaluation and documentation of the effectiveness of the different components of the project.

UNDP has also supported the Mauritius National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre with a number of small activities funded through the Adaptation Fund Board.¹⁶

Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services

Finding 6: Despite some early challenges with the dedicated teams at the Forestry Service and the National Parks and Conservation Service,¹⁷ UNDP has achieved some good results in the area of biodiversity protection.

Working with environment funds, UNDP Mauritius has developed a strong focus on supporting the Government to protect and enhance ecological diversity, and in particular its protected area network. With UNDP assistance and funding from GEF, the Mauritius Government implemented the “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management

¹⁵ There was significant debate about two options proposed as an outcome of the international consultancy firm that conducted the technical assessments. These were that a submerged rock breakwater be installed to protect the beach from wave penetration and the removal and replacement of 400 non-native Casuarina trees with native endemic vegetation to improve sand retention and reduce sand loss during storm events. Ultimately, this approach was varied in order to protect the amenity provided by existing trees and access by recreational and commercial boat users which would be affected by the breakwater. Instead of removal of all the exotic trees on the site the decision was made to undertake a phased removal and replacement of the trees. Instead of a submerged breakwater, the more expensive option of a submerged reef was chosen, so as to avoid impact of the proposed breakwater on existing recreational uses.

¹⁶ These include: a training workshop on Post Disaster Needs Assessment conducted in September 2018; a scoping mission for the establishment of a Disaster Information Management System in Mauritius; a study on the vulnerability of Republic of Mauritius to seismic hazards and tsunamis; and the Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative.

¹⁷ The Protected Area Network project encountered a series of setbacks during the first few years of implementation. These included: lengthy delays in recruitment of staff and consultants; poor performance of the Project Manager and the Chief Technical Advisor which required further rounds of recruitment; and poor performance by the contractor for preparation of the Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy which was supposed to provide the basis guiding the protected areas network project implementation. These problems were compounded by the low engagement of the Project Steering Committee and inadequate oversight by UNDP, and a general lack of ownership and commitment by some key stakeholders (especially the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security).

Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network” project, with the goal of expanding and strengthening management of the protected area network. This addresses the fact that the protected area network in Mauritius is small and fragmented with several ecologically important private lands currently excluded from the protected area system, including large habitat blocks and corridor areas. Less than two per cent of native forest remains and only four per cent of the country is covered by protected areas, well-short of the Convention on Biological Diversity target that each nation should expand its protected land area to 17 per cent of the country’s land area by 2020. Species and native habitat are under threat from invasive species and development pressures.¹⁸

The project cleared 600+ hectares of invasive alien species (IAS), and prompted the Government to agree to employ 100 additional contracted laborers to continue IAS clearance. It developed management plans for two National Parks and supported a review of 13 laws affecting protected area management, the recommendations of which informed the development of the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act (2015). This Act replaced the old National Parks Act of 1993 and provides the legal framework for implementation of the Government’s Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy which was approved by the Cabinet in 2017. This is complemented by other acts such as the Forest and Reserve Act.¹⁹

Finding 7: Unfortunately, the project has fallen far short of its objective of expanding the protected area network of Mauritius, which remains at near baseline levels because of the difficulty of establishing a framework to incorporate private lands into the system. Notwithstanding this shortfall, the Government’s Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy reflects a commitment to increase coverage to 16 per cent of land area by incorporating land with degrees of protection which fall short of the

level required by the IUCN definition of Protected Areas. Ultimately, achieving effective coverage of the country’s most important biodiversity will require the incorporation of private lands, an important target for the project that was not met. While the project helped to establish a delicate relationship between the public and private sectors, it failed to broaden the involvement of the owners of private reserves. Progress on this will depend on whether the provisions of the new Act can be exploited to enable the establishment of private reserves that contribute to conservation goals, while providing benefits to land owners.

Building on this work, there are currently two strands to the UNDP focus on sustainable land management, covering marine and land ecosystems. These are supported by two GEF grants, including \$ 4.7 million for the “Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the management of coastal zone management” project,²⁰ and \$ 3.9 million for the “Prevention, Management and Control of IAS in Mauritius” project. These grants complement much larger co-financing contributions from the Mauritius Government, which are managed separately from GEF resources. While it is too early to evaluate outcomes of the new projects in this area,²¹ they form part of a programme of work focused on biodiversity, which reflects good continuity of focus by the programme.

Using the two current biodiversity projects as a base, the UNDP country office should continue to maintain a dialogue with the Government on biodiversity protection measures, advocating for the objectives of the protected area network project.

Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of chemicals and hazardous waste

Finding 8: UNDP was the primary provider of support for the September 2017 ratification of the Minamata

¹⁸ Project Final Evaluation: “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Terrestrial Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius.”

¹⁹ Project Final Evaluation: “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Terrestrial Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius.”

²⁰ The biodiversity protection in coastal zone management project tries to address the fact that ‘key habitats along the coast and in nearshore waters of the Republic of Mauritius face high anthropogenic pressures, are largely unprotected and are being unsustainably managed.’

²¹ Approved in 2016 the first of these projects is still in its establishment phase. The invasive species management project is still in its formulation stage and is expected to be approved for commencement in June 2019.

Convention by Mauritius.²² A final small but important part of the UNDP environment portfolio is the work it has done to support implementation of a \$200,000 GEF grant to enable the Government of Mauritius to determine the national requirements and needs for ratification of the Minamata Convention²³ and establish a national foundation to undertake future work towards implementation of the Convention.²⁴

This funded a technical team (which included an international mercury expert, four local consultants to support data collection and a project manager) to produce a national policy assessment, a Mercury Inventory by sector, an environmental health impact analysis, and a Minamata Initial Assessment report. The project also supported the training of laboratory representatives to measure mercury use, advising industry on substituting alternative substances for mercury, and awareness-raising activities.

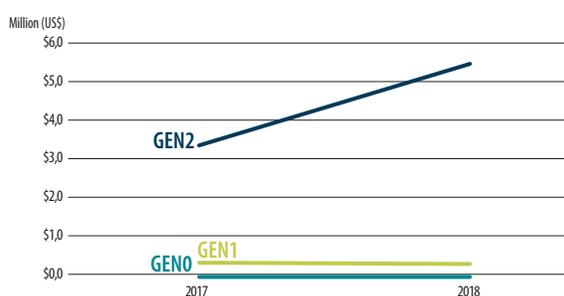
2.3. Gender

Finding 9: The evaluation team’s assessment of the country office portfolio, and its heavy reliance on resources from environment funds, suggests that scope for using programme resources to achieve significant gender equality outcomes is currently constrained. The classification of programme activities using the gender marker system substantially overstates the extent to which the programme promotes gender equality.

UNDP uses gender markers as a tool to track its financial allocations and expenditures to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and classify the extent to which its activities have a focus on promoting gender equality. This tool indicates that, during the programme cycle (2017-2018),²⁵ the largest proportion of programme expenditure (93

per cent) was coded as promoting gender equality in a *significant and consistent way* (i.e. GEN2). Outputs reported as making a *limited* contribution to gender equality (i.e. GEN1) represented six per cent of the portfolio²⁶ and those reported as “not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality” (i.e. GEN0) represented less than one per cent. The country programme has not reported implementing any projects with gender equality as a main objective (i.e. GEN3) in this period.

FIGURE 2. Reported expenditure by gender marker and year



Under the governance portfolio the country office engaged in a number of small scale activities to promote gender equality. For example, it supported the establishment of a Parliamentary Gender Caucus to promote gender equality and the political empowerment of women.²⁷ The UNDP National Gender Expert supported the Caucus, including conducting a civil service gender audit on behalf of the Caucus in 2018,²⁸ as well as supporting the Ministry of Gender Equality. Effort was made to develop a project focused on gender equality as a main objective (GEN3) submitting a proposal “Setting up a Gender Based Violence Observatory” to one of

²² http://www.zeromercury.org/phocadownload/Developments_at_UNEP_level/FAO_project_2014-17/Mauritius-MAP_transition_Study_Dec_2017-FINAL.pdf

²³ The Minamata Convention is a global treaty which came into force in 2017 to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The convention is named after the city of Minamata in Japan, where local communities were poisoned by mercury-tainted industrial wastewater in the late 1950s and suffered crippling, untreatable and stigmatizing effects.

²⁴ In past programming periods UNDP also supported Mauritius with a project dealing with the disposal of hazardous chemicals. This was not assessed by the evaluation.

²⁵ All gender marker data is through reported Atlas/PowerBI programme expenditures for 2017-2018 as of February 2019.

²⁶ UNDP, Guidance Note, UNDP Gender Marker: Tracking Gender-Related Investments and Expenditures in ATLAS, Revised Edition, Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, Gender Team, 2014.

²⁷ UNDP assisted in the drafting of a Strategic Framework. The 2017-2020 “Inclusive Development and Public Sector Efficiency” project (Atlas ID 00102319) 2017 budget includes \$51,774 for gender equality activities (to the National Assembly; for contractual services, and local and international consultants).

²⁸ The audit found that while there was a “gender sensitive institutional culture,” there was weak technical capacity in terms of mainstreaming gender (e.g. limited use of gender sensitive indicators), recommending Training of Trainers for Government, creating sector gender action plans, and instituting gender budget statements. The Caucus also commissioned a study on the sociological profile of domestic violence perpetrators in 2018.

the UNDP Bureau for Programme and Policy Support funding windows with support from the UNDP regional support centre, but this was not successful.

Overall, there is reasonable emphasis on promoting gender equality within the governance portfolio, with 70 per cent of expenditure being attributed to activities that promote gender equality in a *significant and consistent way* (i.e. GEN2). Overwhelmingly, gender results reflected in results oriented annual reports (ROARs) reflect the work of the governance portfolio. Notwithstanding the importance of the governance programme to gender results, it is important to note that the small scale of the activities implemented mean it is not possible to discern any measurable improvement in gender equality resulting from this work.²⁹

UNDP has sought to improve gender sensitivity in its environment portfolio by conducting gender analyses, collecting sex-disaggregated data, and targeting women's participation in livelihoods and awareness-building activities. Overall, 98 per cent of expenditure in the environment portfolio has been marked as promoting gender equality in a *significant and consistent way* (i.e. GEN2). This reported focus on gender equality within the portfolio has not translated into significant gender results, with only one gender outcome from across the portfolio reported in the 2018 ROAR.³⁰

The UNDP/ GEF Mainstreaming Biodiversity project aims to address gendered labour divisions in coastal communities, and maintain gender balance in livelihoods trainings (e.g. ecotourism) and leadership at all levels, building on past initiatives which engaged women in mangrove reforestation, seaweed farming, chicken rearing and organic farming. It is hard to see how these activities conform to expectations for GEN2 coding that they promote gender equality in a *significant and consistent way*. Therefore, it may be more accurately labeled as GEN1 rather than GEN2.

The final evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Protected Area Network project found that the project had hired 19 women (of 121 workers) for forest removal, who were found to be more efficient in herbicide application and were recommended for inclusion in all teams, but that the practice was not necessarily maintained. These outputs, while valuable, do not meet the level of a "significant and consistent" contribution to gender equality due to their small-scale. Therefore, it may be more accurately labeled as GEN1 rather than GEN2.

The UNDP/Adaptation Fund "Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Zone" project aimed to "increase adaptive capacity... in a gender-sensitive way," namely, by targeting men and women in training and community leadership. While the programme design does consider women's participation in activities and community committees to guide project site decisions, there is little gender analysis and targeted women's entrepreneurship activities are limited in scope.³¹ The project is thus likely to produce benefit for men and women equally, with little impact on prevailing gender relations. The country office advised that it is too early to make assumptions on impact and that a Gender Impact Analysis will inform whether there has been any change in gender relations. Notwithstanding this advice, the evaluation team considers targeted outputs do not meet the level of a "significant and consistent" contribution to gender equality due to their small-scale, and the project more accurately fits within the GEN1 criteria.

The UNDP/GEF Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Generation project achieved its targets for lowered carbon dioxide emissions and solar energy uptake, which benefits Mauritian households' access to energy and long-term environmental sustainability. Similarly, the Green Climate Fund renewable energy project proposal states that the intervention does not anticipate direct gender benefits beyond improved electricity access for poor female-headed households in Agalega,

²⁹ Gender results identified in the 2018 ROAR were as follows: Support for review of the Government's policy on gender mainstreaming, gender equity and equality; contributed to the formulation of a Gender Equality Bill; support for introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting; review of the National Gender Policy Framework (2008); civil service gender audit exercise followed by training for 60 civil servants on gender mainstreaming; provision of technical support to write up the 8th periodic CEDAW report; follow up of study on domestic violence perpetrators. These are all in the governance sector.

³⁰ This was the employment of 20 per cent women labourers for weed removal under the protected area network project, a result which is hard to assess given there was no clear baseline established for it.

³¹ UNDP partnered with the Grand Sable Women Planters Farmers Entrepreneur Association to provide two sewing machines, 800 promotional bags with a mangrove logo, and seed funding which they used to produce veliger, a storm-buffering sea grass. The total grant is \$15,000.

who are actively targeted. The project was expected to disaggregate beneficiaries and target women to participate in training and job opportunities, as well as including the perspectives of women's organizations and the Ministry of Gender Equality in its Programme Board. The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities agreed to target 30 per cent women representation in The Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency staff and Board, at least 33 per cent women's participation in commercial PV-related activities, and training of 100 female entrepreneurs in PV systems. As such, aspects of the design conform to GEN2 criteria, but the bulk of funding is directed toward actions that more accurately fit with GEN1 criteria.

The UNDP country office comprises 25 staff, 16 female and nine male, evenly distributed at different levels of the hierarchy.

2.4. UNDP positioning and capacity in Mauritius

Finding 10: The Mauritius CPD has some positive features³² but still reads as highly aspirational and unrealistic given the existing human resource base and prospects for resource mobilisation. The country office is small, with just 25 staff, and also provides support to the Seychelles sub-office. The office's access to high end-analytical expertise is constrained, with support provided by a senior economist shared with another country office in the region, and not available at the time of the evaluation.³³ Human resources are too thinly spread across partners and activities, meaning that staff are consumed with the task of programme

delivery and resource mobilisation. There are insufficient resources for the country office to play a significant role in providing high-end knowledge and analytical services, and strengthening partnerships and networks with UN and other actors to this end.

Mauritius staff survey results for 2018 are much improved from 2016, but reflect a level of staff satisfaction still markedly below UNDP averages in the domains addressed. In particular, the Mauritius results reflect a high degree of uncertainty about the direction of the office, and how the work of individuals and the country office align with the direction of UNDP.

2.5. Results-based management

Finding 11: UNDP programming policy states that the CPD is intended to outline UNDP contributions to national results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board. Given the broad scope and ambition of the CPD, its results and resources framework does not provide a basis for clear and transparent reporting of UNDP contributions to national results. This point has been made repeatedly by IEO evaluations and also requires a corporate response given that the country office operates within the constraints of corporate policies and systems.³⁴

Rather than focusing performance discussions on core areas of focus and influence, performance frameworks promote an overly optimistic representation of UNDP capacity to influence change, given its level of resources.³⁵ This is evident in the fact that, of the 17 indicators in the CPD, there are eight where UNDP has

³² The UNDP Mauritius CPD correctly identifies many of the key features of an effective strategy of assistance given the context and constraints of the programme. This includes for example:

- A commitment to narrow its focus on fewer outcomes and activities, prioritising work to address Mauritius' environmental and climate change challenges, reflecting its middle-income context, and status as a small island developing state. The CPD commits to a more focused programme of work on social protection and public sector management;
- An emphasis on high level policy support, research and analytical work to inform and broaden debate on the national development agenda and the sustainable development goals, in collaboration with other key stakeholders;
- An emphasis on a broader, more creative approach to partnerships in support of increased emphasis on its role as a knowledge organisation.

³³ The country office first shared a senior economist with Madagascar, and then with Zimbabwe. This support is currently not available as the position is vacant.

³⁴ UNDP corporate evaluations have found that, despite increased emphasis on results-based management (RBM), there is limited evidence of its use beyond programme design. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is the most common ICPE recommendation. Overall, a consistent finding, affirmed by this evaluation, is that country office staff see RBM as time intensive and lack sufficient resources and training to build their capacity. While there are some successful examples of country offices developing theories of change and identifying lessons for improved effectiveness, overall RBM functions more as a compliance and reporting requirement. For more detailed discussion see: UNDP IEO, Independent Country Programme Evaluation Synthesis, August 2018; UNDP IEO and Office of Audit and Investigations, Joint Assessment of the Institutional Effectiveness of UNDP, January 2017.

³⁵ This is evidenced by statements such as the following from Mauritius' 2017 Results Oriented Annual Report, which is the key internal reporting tool within UNDP which fundamentally misrepresent the scope of UNDP influence: "The overarching theory of change of the CPD supports the underlying notion of strengthening development pathways to tackle the connected issues of poverty, inequality, exclusion and the environment while transforming productive capacities, avoiding the irreversible depletion of social and natural capital, and reducing risks arising from shocks. A fundamental conviction is that strengthening national capacities across the priority areas will lead to economic growth and sustainable development."

made either no or a negligible contribution and five where UNDP makes a significant contribution but where the indicators themselves have low significance in terms of the scale and substance of the change they indicate. There is little value in reporting against these indicators from either accountability or learning perspectives.

There should be more attention to identifying realistic goals and supporting indicators that provide a basis for meaningful consideration of progress and results. Of the 17 indicators in the CPD there are four that reflect a moderate or higher level of significance in terms of the scale or substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has made a substantive contribution to results achieved against them. It is these areas that should form the core of the country office reporting of the programme, including what it is trying to achieve and how it is performing.

2.6. Support for national implementation

Finding 12: More rigorous monitoring of contract and performance management is required, and should be a shared responsibility between implementing partners and UNDP, for timely detection of problem areas and application of corrective measures.

Under its support to National Implementation (NIM), the country office supports implementing partners with services such as procurement of goods and hiring of consultants, experts and project staff. Programme staff conduct quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation activities.

While implementing partners expressed appreciation for the good work done by UNDP in these areas, they also expressed some concerns about delays and poor quality of consultants or project managers hired in some instances. In some cases, these concerns were amplified by the fact that implementing partners felt they had insufficient say in the selection or contract award process (their role being limited to observer status), given their accountability for project activities. To address this concern, country office management should routinely include representative(s) from the

implementing partners concerned on evaluation committees, with UNDP retaining the majority vote, as is allowed by UNDP procurement policies.³⁶

Moving forward, given the anticipated size of the environment portfolio of \$100 million, with about 33 project staff to manage and procurement support to complex environment projects, UNDP should strengthen its small environment team with at least one additional programme officer and one administrative associate to support monitoring and procurement activities. Requirements for the office's procurement function will depend on the type of office UNDP decides is appropriate for Mauritius, whether it is to be a stand-alone multi-country office as it is now, or with operations activities clustered with other countries or centralized at the regional office in Addis Ababa or globally in Kuala Lumpur.

Based on current trends within UNDP, the evaluation considers it would be most cost-effective for this function to be clustered and handled by a team of procurement experts. Under such an arrangement, the country office could manage low value procurement of supplies and goods, review terms of reference (TOR), monitor and manage the performance of project staff and consultants.

At an operational level, the evaluation notes some gaps in UNDP oversight of projects. This was evident, for example, in the case of the procurement of a consulting firm for the development of the Expansion of Protected Area Network Strategy, to be undertaken by the implementing partner under the Protected Area Network project. UNDP failed to ensure that the TOR submitted by the implementing partner was sufficiently clear about the tasks to be undertaken, timeframes and payment schedules for deliverables. This led to incomplete deliverables with important products such as the legal framework and business plan missing. A general lack of oversight on the part of UNDP during the first few years of the Protected Area Network project led to qualified audit overpayments of over \$500,000 to government personnel, which is against UNDP rules.

³⁶ UNDP policy states that: "Representatives from the funding source of the project, the client organization, or national project implementing partners may participate in the evaluation process, provided they are only present as observers. Nevertheless, if any such institutions requests participation as a full evaluation team member (i.e., with voting rights), the request shall be cleared directly by the Operations Manager or the Head of the Procurement Unit, and UNDP shall maintain the majority vote in the team at all times. If the Operations Manager/Head of the Unit authorizes participation of non-UNDP personnel as a full member, considerations shall be taken to ensure that UNDP staff members selected for the evaluation team are equal in seniority and constituting the majority of the evaluation team. When determining the number of members constituting the majority of the evaluation team, external experts selected and engaged by UNDP to supplement its technical capacity shall be counted as part of UNDP."



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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This chapter presents the evaluation's conclusions on the UNDP performance and contributions to development results in Mauritius, alongside its recommendations and the management response.

3.1. Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1. Reflecting the country's upper-middle-income status, UNDP core funding allocation to Mauritius is small (just \$150,000 annually). This, combined with a steep decline in official development assistance to Mauritius over the past five years, means UNDP is almost entirely dependent on vertical funds for programming.** If its current rate of economic growth continues, there are good prospects that Mauritius will graduate to a high-income country in the next five years. Irrespective of this outcome, it is likely that substantial funding will only be available for climate and environment-related work, and that resources for other parts of the UNDP mandate will become even more constrained.
- **Conclusion 2. Government partners were complimentary about the quality and influence of UNDP work overall and continue to see the relevance and value of UNDP assistance.** Mauritius Government informants identified several specific problems where technical support of the kind that UNDP is capable of sourcing would continue to be valuable. They emphasized that graduation to higher income levels had not fundamentally altered the value they placed on external assistance and that, as a small island state, UNDP played an important role in helping to provide access to specialised skills which are in short supply locally.
- **Conclusion 3. The strongest UNDP results are in the contributions it has made to improved environmental management and climate change adaptation. In particular, it has provided momentum to the Government's efforts to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar PV energy sector. It has also enabled the Mauritius Government to consider options for protecting coastal communities and assets more comprehensively than it could have achieved by itself, thus supporting it to incrementally adapt to**
- **the long-term impacts of climate change.** Overall, UNDP was recognized as playing an important role in smoothing and facilitating access to funding available through environmental conventions. Without the local UNDP presence, it would have been much harder for the Government to access the amount of support that it has.
- **Conclusion 4. While the environment programme is performing well, a key risk and constraint relates to its reliance on external funding sources, and lack of resources to offset the limitations of working to the parameters and requirements of external funders.** There is a risk that the programme will become fragmented, and that government partners will be overwhelmed with the task of managing multiple environment projects. Given the UNDP country office has projected that the environment portfolio will expand from a value of \$26 million in 2015 to one potentially worth over \$100 million by 2020, there are also some significant emerging risks related to procurement, which is one of the few current areas of complaint from the Government about the programme.
- **Conclusion 5. The country office has done some useful work in the past in the governance area, but the current programme is very small scale, and UNDP influence has declined with declining resources.** The stand-out contribution of UNDP in this area has been its technical input and guidance on Mauritius' developing welfare system, including formulation of the Marshall Plan. Other areas include engagement in programme-based budgeting, development of citizen feedback mechanisms and support for the women's caucus. These have been well-received, although the scale of the influence UNDP exerts through this work is very limited. Currently, none of the governance activities managed by the country programme are operating at a large enough scale to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them.
- **Conclusion 6. Unless limited TRAC resources can be used to leverage external resources for a long-term programme of work in governance, then the transaction and opportunity costs of the**

current TRAC-funded governance engagement will be increasingly hard to justify. Unless UNDP can leverage additional resources for its existing governance work, this evaluation concludes that it would be more effective for the country office to focus its limited TRAC resources on complementing its programmes in the environment and energy areas. This work is the strength of the programme and is growing rapidly, creating both opportunities and risks.

- **Conclusion 7. The CPD for Mauritius is not realistic about UNDP capacity and influence and not well prioritised. Existing human resources are too thinly spread across too many partners and activities, and performance frameworks and reporting promote an overly optimistic representation of the capacity of UNDP to influence change. This constrains UNDP capacity to increase its role as a knowledge provider and broker, which is where it can be of greatest value, given the stage of development of Mauritius.** Currently, this aspect of the work of the country programme is under-developed, with little evidence of the programme producing high-end research or analytical work in the recent programming period, outside of that produced by individual projects.

- **Conclusion 8. Overall, resource constraints have limited the programme's scope to have a significant impact on gender equality. What's more, there are no realistic mechanisms for the country office to pursue the corporate target of allocating 15 per cent of all budgets to work with a principal objective to advance gender equality and/or empower women (GEN3).³⁷ The use of the gender marker substantially overstates the programme's contribution to gender equality.** Current coding practices present a risk that the UNDP management and board will be misled about the extent to which UNDP programmes are effectively promoting gender equality.

³⁷ A target in both the previous (2014–17) and current (2018–2021) Gender Equality Strategies.

3.2. Recommendations and management response

Overall comments: The Independent Country Programme Evaluation provides comprehensive analysis of the development impact, sustainability and scope of the current UNDP Country Programme for Mauritius. The country office management largely agrees in principle with the findings and recommendations regarding resource mobilization, staffing structure and the future scope and definition of the portfolio. The management also takes due note of the deficiencies in results-based management, including the identification of performance indicators and feasibility of key results; and in the mainstreaming of gender.

Recommendation 1.



The next Mauritius CPD should be far more focused and realistic than the current one, reflecting more accurately the country office's capacity and resources. CPD objectives, targets and indicators should only be included if there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them. Results reporting should focus on indicators that have a moderate to high level of significance in terms of the scale or the substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has sufficient resources to make a substantive contribution to results achieved against them.

The current CPD significantly misrepresents the scope and scale of UNDP work in several areas, and promotes fragmentation of limited resources, instead of a selective focus on areas where UNDP can make a significant difference.

Management Response:

Agreed



From a monitoring and evaluation point of view, it was noted that some targets were beyond the human, technical and financial resources available to UNDP, notwithstanding that the CPD ought to measure outcomes to which other partners also contribute. On the other hand, it may be noted that some indicators were included at the request of the various key stakeholders from both Government and UNDP Regional Centre. Hence the next CPD should be more focused and include fewer indicators.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Identify key indicators on which UNDP has a measurable influence	January 2020-June 2020	UNDP/ Programme Team	In Progress	Working group to be established with stakeholders to identify parameters which Government is willing to support

Evaluation Recommendation 1. (cont'd)

1.2. Review indicators for CPD 2017-2020	September 2019 to June 2020	UNDP/ Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit	In Progress	Indicators that were not achievable were adjusted during Project Board Meeting
1.3. Engage RBA on the optimal office capabilities to support the evolving offer	February 2020 to December 2020	UNDP/ Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit	In Progress	Short Term Economist support made available by RBA to support the portfolio for the time being while the Senior Economist will be recruited on full time basis in 2020

Recommendation 2.



In developing its next country programme document UNDP should position the programme and align staffing structures and resources to support and enhance the performance of its growing environment and climate change portfolio, and mitigate the risks associated with this growth.

This should include consideration of ways to offset the limitations of project-based constraints associated with environment funds, by providing additional capacity development support, building larger and more integrated environment projects, increasing focus on knowledge and advisory services, improving sectoral coordination and supporting policy development. The country office should work with the Regional Bureau to improve its access to support from the UNDP cadre of regional technical advisers. While this reflects corporate priorities and limitations on existing resources, engagement with UNDP experts in the recent period has been uneven and is an area where performance can be improved. This is especially critical for a small country office such as Mauritius, which is lightly staffed. The country office should also use what flexibility it has to strengthen its small environment team to support monitoring and procurement activities.



Management Response:

Agreed



The Mauritius country office currently has the largest environment portfolio in Africa; and it is projected to grow further. Management agrees that this suggests a need for adequate staffing, fit for purpose profiling, and due attention to risk management.

Furthermore, the country office will need to consider the overarching office structure in terms of limitations in key core functions that provide the backstopping, risk and management oversight of the growing environment portfolio. Workload imbalance was highlighted in the last two Global Staff Survey responses to which substantive solutions remain under consideration. The limiting nature of the country office's overreliance on vertical funds, which do not provide enough flexibility to augment roles beyond narrow project considerations, means a diversification in partnerships and funding sources will be necessary to adequately address this imbalance in programme, staff and resources. Going forward, the country office aims to engage with UNDP at global level to develop solutions for a sustainable office footprint and profile that enables economies of scale and efficient programme delivery and design.

The country office management agrees that attention will also need to be paid to the country office capability for governance work even as it relates to the environment portfolio. In this regard the economist function and increased technical advisory capacity in the social and environmental development unit will be required.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. The country office is applying staffing gap filling measures including deployment of UNV positions to supplement the Environment and Governance portfolios	September 2019	UNDP/ Head of Environment Unit	Ongoing	RBA has approved the deployment of a senior economist and temporary establishment of an operations manager to enhance performance and mitigate risk
2.2. Review structure of country office to meet the requirement of the future CPD	February 2020- December 2020	UNDP/RBA/RR	Not yet started	Discussions to be held in the context of the new CPD formulation as the size of the portfolio demands more programmatic support

Recommendation 3.



CPD core funding allocations for governance should be contingent on minimum levels of resource mobilisation, or the ability of these funds to leverage contributions from the global and regional UNDP networks or the UN system. If additional resources cannot be mobilised for existing democratic governance work, the country office should allocate its core resources to strengthen engagement in policy development relevant to the work being undertaken in the environment portfolio.

Activities in the UNDP democratic governance portfolio are almost completely reliant on the very small core resource allocation to Mauritius and are very lightly spread across different stakeholders and issues. The activities being implemented are not on a sufficient scale to leverage significant development results, and do not strongly connect with or leverage contributions from the global and regional UNDP networks, or the UN system. Focusing available resources and the next CPD on the environment portfolio is aligned with the UNDP strategic plan and provides a substantive example of two of the six signature solutions (close the energy gap and promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet). These solutions address fundamental and existential issues for Mauritius. The environment is core to the country's long-term economic interests. Its natural assets are especially important to its attraction as a global tourist destination. Tourism is an important source of foreign currency and represents a large component of GNI. Developing an affordable and sustainable energy sector is also vital.

Management Response:

Partially agreed



In line with the imperatives of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and with the UNDP offer as an SDG integrator; the governance portfolio remains relevant to our positioning in Mauritius. Furthermore, the prospective attainment of high-income status while also seeing an increase in inequality, as reported in in the UNDP Human Development Report 2019, suggests that the work towards addressing inequality remains of key importance.

In this transitional phase, UNDP will increase its relevance and leverage comparative advantage in supporting Government of Mauritius to strengthen socio-economic transformation with a view to sustainability through provision of knowledge and policy advisory services.

During the CPD period under evaluation, UNDP support has been instrumental for the development of the "Marshall Plan for Poverty Alleviation", the Social Register <https://www.globalinnovationexchange.org/innovation/social-register-of-mauritius> and the Voluntary National Report on SDG progress <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/mauritius>. The country office plans to undertake a resource mobilisation discussion with the Government in the context of the new UNDP Climate Promise and Small Island Developing States Offer and with other non-traditional development partners.

As evidenced by the findings of the 2019 Human Development Report and other research, a key issue within middle- and upper-income contexts such as Mauritius is growing inequality and the governance policy options that may be necessary to address this phenomenon. As such, the governance portfolio of UNDP Mauritius, which supported the currently used and seminal policy framework for addressing inequality in the Marshall Plan for Mauritius, remains relevant.

Management Response:
Partially agreed
 (cont'd)



The Management agrees that due attention will need to be paid towards minimum resource mobilisation; supported by key investments in staffing, communications and strategic partnerships development. Management also agrees that there is scope for addressing environmental governance issues within the portfolio. We do not, however, agree that a discrete governance pillar should be eliminated; and UNDP in Mauritius focus solely on environment work. Such a position does not properly consider the UNDP integrator role and the iterative nature of the SDGs, which requires iterative engagement across thematic and policy spaces to achieve development impact.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. Step up resource mobilisation efforts for the governance portfolio to identify new projects which can show that the portfolio will continue to have impact considering the need to be more focused	September 2019 to June 2020	UNDP Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit	Ongoing	RBA has agreed to strengthen the Socio-economic unit in FY 2020 through the deployment of a senior economist; with the aim of increasing our capacity to strengthen strategic partnerships for research and policy advisory collaboration; and to develop concept notes and ideation for resource mobilisation
3.2. Identify key actions for Resource Mobilisation	September 2019- June 2020	UNDP/ Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit	In Progress	-TRAC 2 mobilised in 2019 -Cost Sharing from Government received -Direct Aid Programme- Australian High Commission -Application for AFDB Technical Assistance Fund
3.3. Review indicators for CPD 2017-2020	September 2019 to June 2020	UNDP/ Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit	In Progress	Indicators that were not achievable were adjusted during Project Board Meeting

<p>3.4. Engage RBA on the optimal office capabilities to support the evolving offer</p>	<p>February 2020 to December 2020</p>	<p>UNDP/ Head of Socio-Economic Development Unit</p>	<p>In Progress</p>	<p>Short Term Economist support made available by RBA to support the portfolio for the time being while the Senior Economist will be recruited on full time basis in 2020</p>
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Recommendation 4.  **The country office should develop a strategy for addressing gender equality that is founded on a clear assessment of the scope provided by different activities to do so. This strategy should outline how gender equality will be addressed by different activities and the extent to which these can reasonably be expected to produce significant and consistent gender equality outcomes. Gender marker coding should be reviewed annually, and coding updated where necessary to ensure that the data provide an accurate picture of the level of focus of UNDP programmes on gender equality.**

Inaccuracies in coding of programme activities using the gender marker mean it is not possible to accurately establish how well the programme is performing in promoting gender equality, but it is clear that the actual focus on gender is far less than reported. Tangible gender equality results produced by the programme are limited, especially for the environment component, which accounts for 95 per cent of programme expenditure.

Management Response:  **Agreed** The country office management agrees with the noted deficiencies in terms of the scale of ambition, identification of possible outputs and development impact. Internally, and following the completion of the Gender Action plans which were developed in the period 2016 onwards, there will be need to deploy the necessary technical expertise to ensure accurate use of the gender markers; and provide technical advice and capacity development for programme and project staff on gender mainstreaming. As a normative institution, seeking to ensure implementation of international standards on inclusion and a rights-based approach to development – the UNDP management and key staff will need to make significant commitment to align our programmes with these standards and SDGs.



Evaluation Recommendation 4. (cont'd)

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1. Recruiting gender and M&E expert	End of November - Mid-December 2019	UNDP/HR	Initiated	TORs are drafted and will be advertised by end of December 2019- Recruitment should be finalized by end of January 2020
4.2. Review gender markers on an annual basis in accordance with actual project activities	February to March 2020	UNDP/Gender expert/ Head of	Not yet started	To be integrated as part of the Annual Work Plan process The new GCF portfolio includes recruitment of a gender focal point to assist in mainstreaming
4.3. Undertake gender mainstreaming training sessions for Environment Unit project staff	February to March 2020	UNDP/Head environment Unit/ Head of	Not yet started	To be included as key deliverables of the Learning Committee
4.4. Review and implement the office Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan	February to March 2020	UNDP/Gender expert/ Head environment Unit/ Head of	Not yet started	The minimum requirements of a gender focal point do not align with the approved core structure of the Country Office despite meeting the programme volume threshold. The country office will engage with RBA on the need to align the approved structure with the corporate policy

* The implementation status is tracked in the UNDP 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/12282>

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Project list

Annex 3. People consulted

Annex 4. Status of country programme action plan outcome indicators



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