

**EXTERNAL PROGRESS ASSESSMENT  
UNDP GREEN COMMODITIES PROGRAMME (GCP)**

Final Report

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

CI	Conservation International
CO	Country Office
FC2A	From Commitment to Action
FOLUR	Food Systems, Land Use and Restoration
GCC	Green Commodities Community
GCP	Green Commodities Programme
GGP	Good Growth Partnership
GMC	Global Sustainable Supply Chains for Marine Commodities.
HS	Highly Satisfactory
HR	Highly Relevant
ID	Indonesia
IDH	The Sustainable Trade Initiative
MSCFSC	Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration For Systemic Change
NAP	National Action Plans
NCP	National Commodities Platforms
P4F	Partnership for Forests
PAGE	Partnership for Action on Green Economy
PEAS	Project for Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SCAN	Sustainable Commodity Assistance Network
S	Satisfactory
SL	Somewhat Likely
TFA	Tropical Forest Alliance
TSA	Targeted Scenario Analysis
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme.
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
VBVC	Value Beyond Value Chains
VSS	Voluntary Sustainability Standard
WBCSD	World Business Council for Sustainable Development
WCF	World Cocoa Foundation
WWF	World Wildlife Fund

## Project Summary Matrix

<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Green Commodities Programme</b>
<b>Objective</b>	Transformation of the production of agricultural commodities, to reduce its environmental impacts, while increasing economic opportunities for low income producers in developing countries.
<b>Executing Entity</b>	UNDP
<b>Implementing Agency</b>	UNDP
<b>Allocated Resources</b>	Regular 0.8 m Other: Norway (UN REDD) 1.6m SECO 4.4m
<b>Start / Termination date</b>	January 2014 – December 2017 (Extended to December 2019)
<b>Evaluation Period</b>	2014-2019

### 0 Executive Summary

This report contains the main findings, conclusions and recommendations that were drawn from an external progress assessment of the Green Commodities Programme’s global activities. The GCP was established in 2009 as a global initiative to address the sustainability challenges of agricultural commodity production. The project under review constitutes the backbone of the GCP, and acts as umbrella and foundation for different country level activities. The project is intrinsically linked to the activities and functioning of GCP as a programme.

With a 10 year track record in supporting multi-stakeholder collaboration to foster sustainability in commodity sectors, GCP has accumulated experience and expertise that is of great value in times where governments, the international community and private sector seek solutions for complex interrelated problems they cannot address and solve in isolation. Stakeholders see in UNDP’s ability to engage governments and its convening power the main comparative advantages of the programme compared to other multi-stakeholder initiatives. GCP is well aligned with UNDP’s mission, relevant sectoral policies and the Agenda 2030. With a growing recognition that new innovative approaches are needed to address the main global challenges, the private sector has been identified as a key player to effectively achieve the SDGs. As a result, UNDP has increasingly embraced collaboration with the private sector and more innovative strategies to achieve the SDGs. In doing so, the GCP approach is trickling into the DNA of UNDP.

GCP undertook continued efforts to position itself within UNDP and beyond in an ever more crowded environment of multi-stakeholder commodity initiatives, many of which are competing for funds and private sector attention. GCP has participated in, engaged with and/or launched a number

of initiatives, programmes and projects. Sometimes engagement happened because of the strategic fit and complementarity, sometimes also to take advantage of funding opportunities. Recent efforts to sharpen its profile and communicate its raison d'être both within UNDP and vis-a-vis external stakeholders are applaudable but have not yet fully produced the desired impact, and the perception of what GCP does and stands for continues to be somewhat vague in the view of many. It appears that the different roles GCP takes in different initiatives is confusing for some stakeholders.

Implementing national action plans and platforms has been challenging, progress slow and dependent on numerous external factors. GCP proactively engaged in expectation management regarding the progress of such processes, particularly with the private sector. But although no quick wins can be reasonably expected, the success of GCP depends on its ability to demonstrate and report concrete results. Recent investments into the development of valuable M&E tools and the generation of data have not yet been fully implemented and it is therefore not possible to assess whether GCP is on track of reaching its 2020 goal. The project's results reporting remains output based. Alternative ways of measuring impact (e.g. measuring trust building; strengthening of institutional capacities for MSC) are in early stages of development.

GCP as a programme has undergone an important transformation during the period under review. The global programme expanded its portfolio of countries and commodities, refined its ToC and strategy and developed tools and methodologies that were transmitted to and applied in different country led interventions. The growing experience is being systematized and since 2018 disseminated and discussed within the GCC. More generally, GCP has actively participated in the global debate on sustainable commodities and contributed to the shaping of the agenda. Although the continuous review of strategies and tools allowed to adjust to a rapidly changing context, and build-in learnings from implementation, it might have deviated some attention from actual implementation and achieving results on the ground (inward looking perspective).

On the operational front, the growth of the GCP team (particularly due to GGP) led to the review of some management processes in order to assure appropriate flow of information and internal alignment of a geographically dispersed team. Management tools (e.g. dashboard; strategic committee) are considered fit for purpose although some stakeholders would like to have a clearer understanding of the programme as a whole (what are others doing, how does it connect to my work). The consultancy-based business model allowed GCP to work with a dedicated high quality team with complementary geographic and thematic backgrounds. The downside of this operating model is a potential lack of stability and plannability for individual consultants, and limitations regarding the team's ability to engage in non-billable activities (e.g. design stage of GEF/GCP programmes; ad hoc advisory), particularly in times of limited core funding.

Using the rating scale proposed in the ToR, we assess the project as follows:

Criteria	Comments	Rating <sup>1</sup>
Relevance	Pioneer in multi-stakeholder approaches and private sector engagement; Goal well aligned with Agenda 2030, UNDP Strategic Plan; Concrete example of innovative approach.	Highly relevant
Effectiveness	GCP strategy and tools strengthened; Partner network and portfolio expanded; knowledge systematized and disseminated (GCC); Not possible to assess achievement of outcomes; difficulty to mobilize funding for core operations.	Satisfactory
Efficiency	Highly qualified global team; Review of management processes as result of team growth; Interesting developments in communication, M&E: results yet to materialize; Consultancy-based business model; lack of core-funding;	Satisfactory
Sustainability	Need for continued funding of core global operations; reflect about positioning within UNDP; establish strategic partnerships.	Somewhat likely

Chapter 6 of this report formulates 8 recommendations that we believe will help GCP to leverage its comparative advantage, keep its relevance in a changing environment, and strengthen its operations.

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the rating scale, please refer to p.11.

## **1 Introduction and overview**

This Progress Assessment covers the global component of the Green Commodities Programme (GCP) over the last five years (2014-2019). As per the Terms of Reference (see annex 1), the assessment focuses on understanding progress made by GCP on its global activities and capturing good practices and lessons learned with a forward-looking approach.

Following this introduction and overview on GCP (chapter 1), this report contains a project description which clarifies the boundaries and overlaps between the project being evaluated and the broader GCP programme (2); the report then describes the evaluation scope, approach and methodology (3); discusses the main findings in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (4), and finally provides conclusions (5) and formulates recommendations (6).

The Green Commodities Program (GCP) was established in 2009 as a global initiative to transform agricultural commodity production. The programme seeks to create a framework for systemic change, in order to improve the national economic, social and environmental performance of agricultural commodity sectors, focusing on strengthening the livelihoods of smallholder producers within commodity supply chains, and reducing environmental footprints, particularly deforestation. The programme aims to demonstrate that this approach is effective at country level and replicable across commodities and countries.

GCP is structured at two levels: global and national. The global component is responsible for developing the vision and strategy for GCP, manage knowledge generated from project portfolio, contribute to global policy on commodities, develop partnerships, provide technical support to country level activities, lead internal coordination within UNDP and fundraising. Country level activities engage with national governments, focus on strengthening the enabling environment for investment and collaboration for commodity production and drive the implementation of National Commodity Platforms an innovative mechanism pioneered by GCP.

As an umbrella program GCP has supported over the years 17 different national-level projects, developed several own initiatives and joined forces with other actors/initiatives to reach common objectives. The role of GCP in these different collaborative efforts takes different forms, from lead agency (responsible party), over key partner to (paid) services or (unpaid) support provider. GCP has worked in 12 countries and helped address sustainability challenges in commodities such as palm oil, cocoa, coffee, pineapple, cashmere, fisheries, soy and beef.

More recently (2018/2019) GCP developed a theory of change, identifying specific contributions to SDGs, specifying the systems perspectives of the programme, its approach, scope and cross cutting issues and defining specific interventions or service portfolio (ToC Draft for Validation).

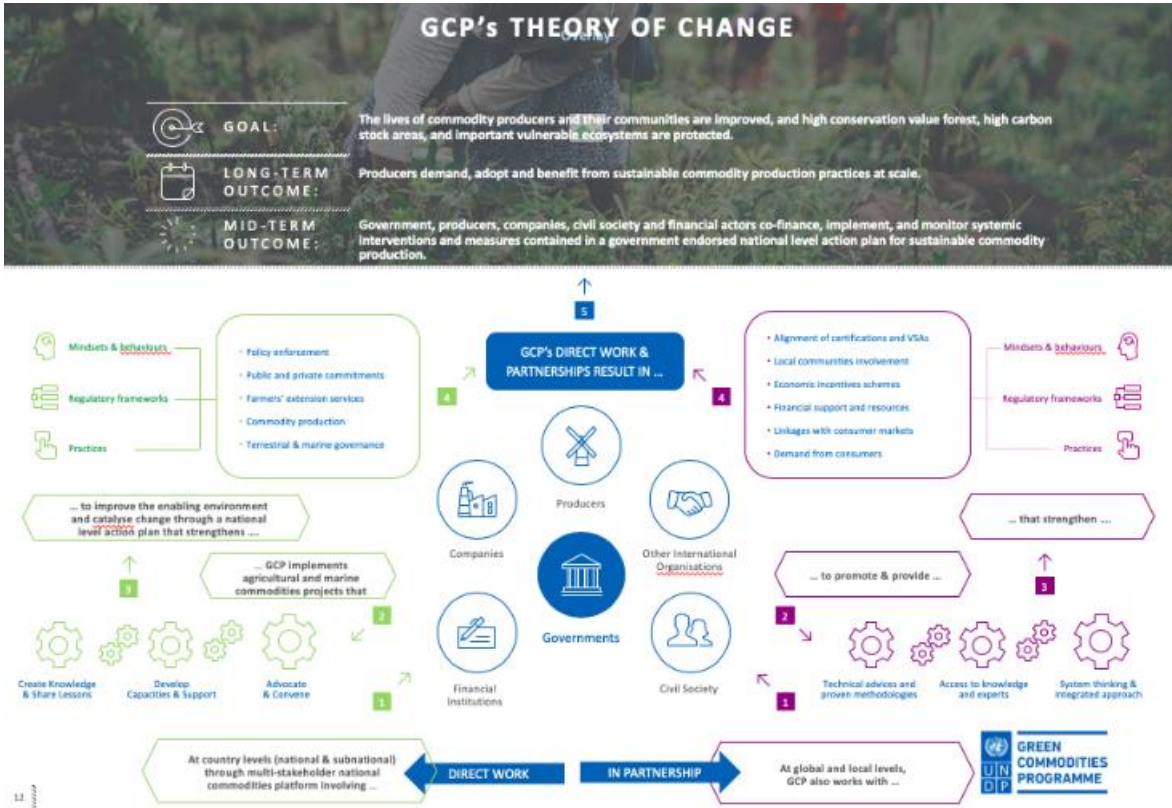


Figure 1: GCP Theory of change

## 2 Project description

The GCP project under review (the project) is the core tool to support GCP and fund core programme operations. Mirroring the design of the programme, the project is composed of a global component which develops and manages the strategy, knowledge, global partnerships and fundraising, and a component at the national level that seeks to support efforts towards strengthening of the enabling environment for investments and collaboration for commodity production, namely through the National Commodity Platform Approach.

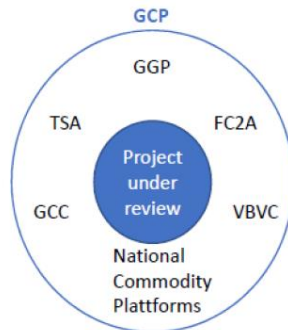


Figure 2: Relation Project – Programme (elaborated by evaluator)



The project defined the following outcome and outputs:

<b>Objective</b>	<i>Transformation of the production of agricultural commodities, to reduce its environmental impacts, while increasing economic opportunities for low income producers in developing countries.</i>
<b>Output 1</b>	Global Strategy, Partnerships & Knowledge Management to create an enabling environment conducive for change.
	<p>1.1 Methodological framework and guidance for transforming commodity production (design, platform implementation, institutional capacity, policy reform)</p> <p>1.2 Technical assistance and quality management system for country level implementation (technical and quality management system, cover risk, process, procedures, indicators, M&amp;E)</p> <p>1.3 Partnerships with companies and organizations</p> <p>1.4 Scaling up innovative models for sustainable commodity production (website, south-south networking, global and regional workshops and study tours)</p>
<b>Output 2</b>	Country Support for Sustainable Commodity Production

*Figure 3: Simplified Project Logframe*

This evaluation focuses on output 1 (global strategy, partnerships and knowledge management). Work at the country level (output 2) has already been evaluated/will be evaluated and has therefore been excluded from this assessment.

It is important to understand that the project is a UNDP internal construction that seeks to establish a reference framework for GCP's global activities. As such, funding for the global component is drawn from other national projects. Given this reality, the boundaries for the project evaluation are somewhat diffuse as project results are intrinsically linked to broader GCP activities at different levels:

- The results of Output 1 are to a large extent materialized (and verifiable) through outcomes of specific country / commodity projects (Output 2); yet the attribution of success/failure does not depend exclusively on Output 1. For example, the relevance and effectiveness of methodological inputs provided by the global team to design and implement NCP at country level (Output 1.1) can be linked to the level of success of the NCP, but the level of success does not depend exclusively on the advisory provided by the global team.
- GCP programme outcomes are closely interlinked with other initiatives that have emerged in response to or as part of the systemic approach intended by GCP and others to transform global commodities. The evaluation framework of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability has a linear (cause/effect) approach to project implementation and does not completely capture synergies/duplications between different initiatives interacting in a system (emergence/system dynamics).

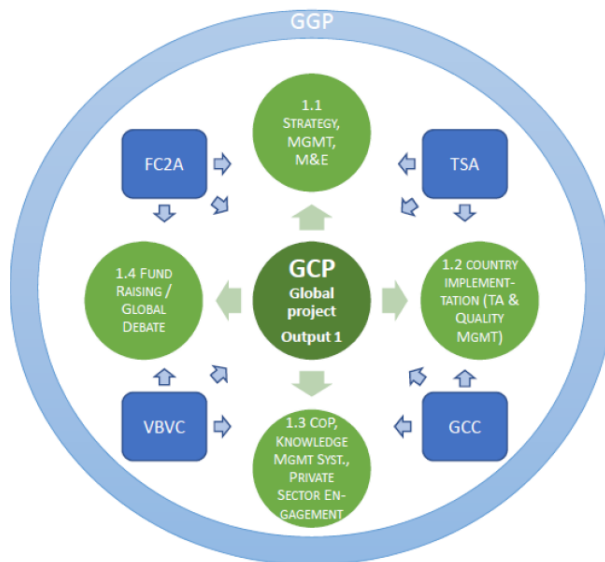


Figure 4: GCP global project output 1 and its relationship with other initiatives (elaborated by evaluator)

The following section discusses the scope, approach and methodology used in the assessment to navigate these complexities and to fulfil the twofold objective of accountability and learning.

### 3 Evaluation scope, approach and methodology

#### SCOPE

The progress assessment evaluated the global strategy, partnerships and knowledge management Output (Output 1). The ToR define the scope as “a broad assessment of whether the strategy adopted is the correct approach to achieve the higher-level results agreed upon at the beginning of the project”.

The following table describes the specific elements to be assessed as per the ToR and Inception Report and clarifies the extent to which those elements could effectively be assessed:

Expected assessment scope	Effective assessment scope
Outcomes and the key factors that affect the outcomes (both positive and negative)	It was not possible to measure the achievement of project outcomes. There is an attribution gap between the project outputs and intended outcomes.
GCP’s strategy, management and monitoring system.	GCP’s strategy, management and monitoring system were assessed.
The technical assistance provided to country activities and projects.	The technical assistance provided to country activities and projects was assessed.
The Community of Practice and asses that the Knowledge Management system is functioning within UNDP.	The Community of Practice and the Knowledge Management systems where assessed. The latter through a limited approach as the evaluation could

	not determine if the system is being systematically adopted by CO.
The engagement with the private sector and its participation in GCP.	The engagement with the private sector and its participation in GCP was assessed to a limited extent.
The effectiveness of fund raising and donor engagement.	The effectiveness of fundraising and donor engagement was assessed.
How the project has contributed to global debate and policy for sustainable commodities.	The contributions to global debate and policy for sustainable commodities was assessed at a programme rather than project level.

The evaluator sought to clarify project attribution wherever possible. Yet, given all the interdependencies between the project / the programme / different partner initiatives and the fact that stakeholders speak to GCP more broadly, the scope of the assessment resulted in a stronger programme than project approach. This also speaks to the overarching objective of the evaluation: learning and forward-looking approach.

## **APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY**

The proposed approach and methodology were largely maintained throughout the assessment with minor adjustments, following the guidance provided in the ToR, and in line with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines (2019). This section describes the process, limitations and adjustments.

### *Document review*

The review of secondary data focused on main project documents including the ProDoc, its results framework, annual workplans and reports, and board and other meeting minutes. In addition, products of the main areas of work (GCP strategy, TA to country offices, CoP, private sector engagement, fundraising) were reviewed, including selected project evaluation reports. GCP internal surveys provided useful inputs on topics such as strategic planning and learning (the Global Private Sector Engagement strategy review (2017), the NCP Assessment (2018), the GCC Survey Report (2019), or the Strategy Review Survey (2019)). In addition to the documentation made available by the GCP team, the evaluator accessed other relevant documents (e.g. UNDP Private Sector Strategy). A full list of documents reviewed can be found in Annex 2.

### *Semi-structured interviews*

The evaluator conducted semi-structured interviews with stakeholders from the following groups: private sector, NGOs, donors, UNDP HQ, regional and country offices as well as the GCP team. Interviews provided qualitative primary data to validate and triangulate information from the document review. Moreover, interviews captured stakeholder views and expectations to inform future programme strategy. Out of the 24 planned interviews 18 took place, including representatives of all stakeholder groups. A full list of interviewees can be found in Annex 3.

Semi-structured interviews followed the main evaluation questions and specific questions from the questionnaire were made to specific stakeholders.

### On-line Questionnaire

Considering the limited time available for interviews and the long list of potentially interested interview partners, selected stakeholders (9) were invited to submit written comments on the project. Questions were of a general nature. The evaluator received 4 responses to the online questionnaire.

### Data Analysis

The information/data obtained from first and secondary sources was analysed using mainly qualitative evaluation criteria. Stakeholder perceptions were highly relevant to the evaluation. Results on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability were rated taking into account both design and implementation. The following rating scale was used:

Criteria	Ratings
Relevance	Relevance was assessed using a four-point rating scale, where objectives at the design stage and results achieved were assessed between Highly Relevant (HR) and Not Relevant (NR).
Effectiveness Efficiency	Effectiveness and efficiency were assessed using a six-point rating scale where highly satisfactory (HS) means that there were no short comings and quality of effectiveness/efficiency exceed expectations; and highly unsatisfactory (HU) means that there were major short comings in quality of effectiveness / efficiency.
Sustainability	Sustainability was assessed using a four-point scale where Likely (L) means that there is Little or no risks to sustainability and Unlikely (U) means that there are severe risks to sustainability.

## 4 Main findings

### 4.1 Relevance

HR

**When looking at relevance, it is important to differentiate between the project under evaluation and the relevance of GCP as such.** The project under review constitutes the backbone of the GCP, and acts as umbrella and foundation for different country level activities. The project aims to develop the strategies, tools, knowledge products and networks necessary for the achievement of the programme's goal. From a funding perspective, it can be considered as the core funding of GCP that enables the program to support substantive activities on the ground (in collaboration with others and proper funding). Assessing the relevance of this project is intrinsically linked to an assessment of the relevance of GCP's objectives as a programme. We will first look at the relevance of having such an "umbrella" project, before looking at the relevance of GCP's objectives more broadly.

**The project has been important to strengthen GCP as a cohesive global programme.** For a programme that closely interacts with different initiatives, both at global and national levels, it is important to count on dedicated support for its core functions. The project allowed GCP to further

strengthen strategies and tools, reach out to stakeholders within and beyond UNDP, engage in (joint) fundraising and strengthen a shared vision on the programme within the team. Although all these activities only indirectly contribute to GCP's ultimate objective, they are an important prerequisite for a successful implementation of the programme.

**The project has no proponent, other than GCP itself, because it is an internal UNDP construction.**

The project is a UNDP internal construction that seeks to establish a reference framework for GCP's global activities. Funds for this umbrella project were drawn from global components of other projects, which makes it difficult to identify an owner/proponent of the project that supports its standing outside the proper GCP Team. GCP has undertaken efforts to become the corporate initiative of UNDP on sustainable agricultural commodities, however within UNDP GCP continues to be seen as one out of 7 core UNDP programmes<sup>2</sup> (Cf UNDP Guidance Note).

**GCP's objective as a programme is highly relevant.** Looking at the relevance of GCP's objective more broadly, the programme addresses several highly relevant subjects. Commodity sectors in developing countries affect ecosystems and livelihoods of rural communities. Public and private sector committed to global goals of zero commodity-driven deforestation by 2020, however will fall short of their commitments. Reducing the negative environmental and social impact of global commodity production and turn it into a driver of positive rural development is a challenging but highly relevant objective. Because of the high relevance of the topic, GCP's efforts to contribute to economic, social and environmental sustainability in global agricultural commodities do not happen in isolation but happen in an ever more crowded universe of different national and commodity initiatives.

**Successful national/subnational action plans/commodity platforms play an important role in demonstrating the relevance of the approach.**

Commodity platforms can be powerful instruments to contribute to sector transformation. However, progress in implementation is generally slow and full of hurdles. Systemic changes require time and resources, and their ultimate success depends on numerous external factors, including continued political commitment. Although an assessment of the factors that determine the successful implementation of National Action Plans and Commodity Platforms is beyond the scope of this evaluation, it is important to recognize here that successful examples are important for the recognition and relevance of the GCP approach, whereas a lack of progress in implementation or unsuccessful intents question the potential of the approach. A few interviewees were of the view that existing platforms have not yet produced the desired impact.

**Collaboration with the private sector and commodity related development cooperation and private sector initiatives have multiplied over the last years.**

Many new initiatives have emerged that compete with GCP to capture the interest of national governments and the private sector<sup>3</sup>. But also, UNDP as such is moving quickly towards more engagement with the private sector/multi-stakeholder approaches and has broadened its portfolio of initiatives and projects on the topic (Business Call to Action; UNDP GEF commodities focused projects; etc). UNDP implemented in 2018 7 core programmes related to agricultural commodities. Understanding this portfolio of initiatives,

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<sup>2</sup> UNDP "Guidance Note: Sustainable Commodities: ensuring smallholder benefits, better environmental management, and durable growth".

<sup>3</sup> Initiatives include the TFA; the New NY Declaration for Forests; PAGE; PEAS; SCAN; UNCTAD Green Export Reviews; WCF; Commodity Roundtables; IDH; VSS; P4F and numerous regional, national and local initiatives.

all contributing to the overarching goals defined in UNDP's strategic plan, but each and every one with its own implementation strategy, identity and specific focus is not easy for external stakeholders. The above-mentioned guidance note is a very valuable intent to present the broader engagement of UNDP and the embedding of GCP within it.

**GCP has been an early mover in putting sustainable commodities on the development agenda and developing multi-stakeholder and sectoral approaches for systemic change, long before the current hype of landscape and jurisdictional approaches has captured the attention of many others.** GCP started to develop a more systemic approach at a time, when most efforts still considered certification and the transformation of individual supply chains as the panacea. GCP draw on UNDP's experience in public sector dialogue and consensus building and refined it to be used in the commodity sector. By being ahead of the curve, GCP played an important role in agenda setting and over the years accumulated valuable experience that today can serve UNDP to strengthen its portfolio of private sector oriented programmes/initiatives.

**The GCP approach is well aligned with UNDP's Strategic Plan.** GCP contributes to UNDP's overall objectives as defined by the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, contributing directly to Outcome 1 and indirectly to Outcomes 2 and 3. Also, GCP is aligned with relevant sectoral UNDP frameworks such as the Biodiversity and Ecosystems Global Framework 2012-20 or UNDP's Private Sector and Foundations Strategy 2016-2020. GCP has made a special effort to demonstrate its contribution to the SDG's and its latest ToC is guided by the Agenda 2030.

UNDP combines several characteristics that make it a particularly useful promotor of the GCP approach. These characteristics include:

- Values and strategic goals in line with GCP;
- Neutrality and level of trust with the public sector. Access to the highest level of government;
- Local presence through a broad network of country offices;
- Convening power;
- Track-record in dialogue, multi-stakeholder platforms and consensus building outside the commodity sector.

Some of these characteristics clearly differentiate UNDP from other private or civil society actors (WCF, IDH, TFA, CI, WWF, Solidaridad) that seek to promote multi-stakeholder platforms in commodity sectors.

**Within UNDP, GCP played an important role in thinking beyond "business as usual" by promoting a systemic approach which challenges the traditional way of implementing projects.** GCP's strategy is progressive and its implementation in coordination with country offices that are still used to more linear processes requires time. Institutional change happens slowly, but GCP is making a valuable contribution to more innovative thinking within the organization on sustainable commodities and private sector engagement and thereby paves the way for a broader appropriation of systemic approaches to commodity sector transformation within UNDP.

## 4.2 Effectiveness

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The project under review and its outcome 1 defined four outputs. Hereafter we assess the level of achievement of these outputs and its contribution to the achievement of broader GCP goals.

### Output 1.1 Methodological framework and guidance for transforming commodity production

#### STRATEGY

The project aimed at supporting the development of a GCP Strategy that allows GCP to be well positioned globally, operate effectively at country level and grow its portfolio.

**GCP undertook a consistent strategy review process guided by internal and external stakeholder inputs.** During the time covered by this evaluation, GCP has undertaken important efforts to revise and sharpen its strategy. Two strategy documents were developed (2015-17; 2018-2020) in participatory processes. Although the overall mission remained the same (“GCP exists to improve the national economic, social and environmental performance of agricultural commodity sectors”), the programme’s values and implementation modalities have been further defined. For example, based on experience, GCP has adopted a more flexible approach, recognizing that commodity sector transformation does not have to happen through National Commodity Platforms in all cases. Sometimes other forms of multi-stakeholder collaborations/action plans can be more appropriate to achieve the desired systemic change. This new MSCFSC approach leaves more room to adapt to specific local contexts. Also, GCP over time recognized the importance of more collaborative leadership. Although governments continue to be the main entry door for any UNDP activity in a country, it is important to develop parallel work streams with different stakeholder groups in order not to be entirely conditioned to the governments’ work pace.

**Expectations regarding GCP’s thematic strategic focus are diverse.** Interviewees expressed that GCP’s strategy is addressing the right issues, although different perceptions regarding the fine tuning of GCP’s focus exist. Whereas some suggested to strengthen the environmental dimension (ecosystem services, climate change, emissions reductions), others found that GCP is not sufficiently addressing the social dimension of sustainability (livelihoods, gender). Others again, wish that GCP intensifies its work beyond deforestation and addresses all aspects of environmental resource degradation. Being able to address all three dimensions of sustainability in an integrated way and at the same time, keeping a clear profile without losing focus and dissipate limited resources is a challenge. The MSCFSC strategy puts the focus on the approach (the „how“), rather than weighing the different dimensions of sustainability against each other. This gives GCP the ability to adjust the content of each MSCFSC intervention according to any given country and sector context, while maintaining its distinctive approach (consistency). Depending on the sector, a special focus can be given to social or environmental topics.

**Despite the excellent alignment of GCP’s strategy with UNDP’s mission and strategies and an increased communication effort, GCP continues to struggle to get appropriate recognition within UNDP.** Although most interviewees confirmed that GCP has improved its communication and outreach efforts, several interviewees are still of the view that there is a lack of understanding and recognition at the higher levels and country offices of what GCP does. Some interviewees expressed the view that the programme’s role is not easy to grasp. Others found that GCP is isolated from the

work of some of the other UNDP areas and more horizontal integration is needed (for example with democratic governance teams). A good integration is reported with the UNDP climate and forest team.

The challenge to get appropriate recognition within the broader UNDP structure may be explained by three complementary factors:

1) GCP is not just another programme. With its knowledge hub and technical service offer to RB/CO, GEF/GCF funded projects and UNDP REDD, GCP plays a role that diverges from the traditional UNDP project portfolio logic 2) Country offices and beneficiary governments are not always keen to accept and pay for international advisory 3) There are other competing initiatives with more direct presence on the ground.

**GCP and its team members engage in a variety of initiatives. It is not easy to keep track and understand the interdependence of all these activities.** The fact that GCP and its team members participate in several different initiatives, programmes, and projects seems to lead to a certain confusion of external stakeholders. Apart from promoting the MSCFSC approach in different country projects, GCP plays a leading role in the implementation of GGP, leads the Forest Coordination Group, and implements a few own initiatives such as FC2A or VBVC, each with its own strategy, structure (for ex. VBVC advisory group) and branding. For outsiders, it appears sometimes difficult to understand the different roles GCP takes and how they interrelate. But even programme “insiders” reported that it is not always easy for them to keep track and be informed of all that happens under the GCP. It might be necessary to reflect whether GCP should continue to be seen as “a programme” or rather position itself as a transversal UNDP knowledge hub and corporate-wide service offer for MSCFSC.

## **METHODOLOGY AND GUIDANCE**

With support from the project under review, GCP has developed and supported the implementation of relevant tools such as the root causes analysis, the targeted scenario analysis or numerous tools related to the setting up and implementation of national commodity platforms.

**GCP has been successful in putting sustainable commodity production on the international agenda and forged a new vision for the development of commodity sectors.** With its National Platform Approach, GCP provided a concrete tool that aimed at translating global talk into concrete action on the ground. GCP’s methodology for establishing and operating platforms and relevant guidance aims at supporting national teams in the development and implementation of national action plans.

**UNDP’s relationship with governments provides GCP a strategic position to promote government led platform initiatives.** Government leadership in sector transformation is key to impact policy, legislative and institutional frameworks that enable sector transformation. Establishing the extent to which National Platforms have influenced policy, legislative and institutional frameworks is difficult and beyond the scope of this evaluation. Nonetheless the fact that experiences are moving beyond dialogue to National Action Plans and in some cases platforms at the national or subnational levels is highly positive and speaks to the effectiveness of the GCP approach.



**Evaluations of country specific platforms confirm positive learning loops between national experiences and learning and development of support tools provided by GCP.** Ongoing improvements of guidance and materials reflect that GCP has successfully implemented a mechanism to capture and use feedback from national experiences to enhance its value proposition. While the Costa Rica responsible pineapple platform faced important methodological challenges, project teams in Indonesia and Peru benefited from high quality materials and strong support in applying the methodologies, developed in part through lessons learned from Costa Rica (MTE National Commodities Platforms to Support Sectoral Transformations, 26 July 2017). Access to relevant global experience in setting up multi-stakeholder collaboration has been mentioned as one main comparative advantage of GCP by many interviewees.

## **Output 1.2 Technical assistance and quality management system for country level implementation**

**Country focal points assure communication between the global and national levels.** Each country level implementation is supported by a focal point of the GCP global team, which in coordination with the national team identifies needs, provides support and monitors progress in implementation. In 2018, GCP defined several measures to deliver greater impact of the global team at country level<sup>4</sup>. Measures adopted included monthly calls with national platform teams, multi-advisory country missions, cross-portfolio learning for Country Office Programme Officers, management integration with country projects (e.g. support to CO in contracting consultants directly through Panama office), and thematic third-party reviews of GCP interventions. Based on our discussions and review of documents, we conclude that there was a partial follow-up to these measures.

**GCP can be an important broker for knowledge-sharing between UNDP practitioners and bridge builder between international actors/the global debate and country offices.** GCP value proposition becomes strong when closely connected with country offices. In the opinion of various interviewees, UNDP country offices are increasingly aware about the need to engage with the private sector. However, UNDP being an organization that primarily interacts with government counterparts, country offices are not prepared to engage with the private sector. They often lack the methodologies, tools and networks to engage and create interest from private sector partners for joint efforts. GCP has been helpful to build up capacities in CO on engagement with the private sector and multi-stakeholder collaboration.

**Evaluations of country projects attest good quality of GCPs support to country level implementation.** Different project and programme evaluations highlight the quality of frameworks, guidance and templates provided by GCP throughout the lifecycle of platforms. This includes elements such as root cause analysis, stakeholder engagement planning, vision setting and the process to develop and endorse a National Action Plan (NAP). Evaluations also highlight the role of GCP in building UNDP CO capacities to understand and drive sector transformation through National Platforms. Materials, missions and the CoP are positively valued by beneficiary CO.

**GCP defined a clear value proposition for Country Offices, however sometimes greater understanding of effective demand is needed.** In May 2017, GCP developed an internal note for

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<sup>4</sup> Internal note “Improving delivery of country Impact”, 2018.

UNDP country offices informing about the GCP services to UNDP projects<sup>5</sup>. This note was a valuable attempt to clarify the kind of services GCP can provide and administrative modalities of engagement (cost recovery). While it is important to define a global service offer, when offering these services to a specific country<sup>6</sup>, it is important to tailor the offer to the specific country needs. Some interviewees were of the view that global advisors were not always sufficiently familiar with the local context which limited their capacity to appropriately adjust their offer to country needs. If for example a country already has a certain multi-stakeholder/platform process underway, it is necessary to assess how GCP can support existing efforts, adjusting its tools and methodologies, rather than suggesting the launch of a new process. The Global Sustainable Supply Chains for Marine Commodities (GMC) has been mentioned as a successful example where GCP methodologies and tools were adjusted to local needs. Because CO's and governments are increasingly reluctant to pay for global advisory, the service offer must be all the more tailor-made, adjusting international knowledge/experience to the given national context, in order to be attractive.

**Recent developments in M&E are important but need to be strengthened and fully implemented as an integral component of technical assistance.** According to the ProDoc “the establishment of quality management oversight systems aimed to ensure that the country activities produce timely results and National Commodity Platform members become accountable for the implementation of the actions laid down to enable the expected outcomes”. As we will discuss in chapter 4.3 below, GCP has undertaken efforts to develop M&E tools (e.g. NAP monitoring tools), however their systematic use in country projects could not be confirmed by this evaluation. The global team manages a “Project’s Framework” Excel sheet to keep track of different country level interventions. As multi-stakeholder approaches become more mainstream and the environment for platforms more competitive, it is of paramount importance to provide the GCP model with a strong but light M&E that accounts for sector transformation. The advantages of developing this at a global rather than national level include comparability and the development of new GCP products based on data and analytics.

## **Output 1.3 Partnerships with companies and organizations**

### **PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

**In 2016, GCP defined its engagement with global partners in a strategy document.** The Global Partnership & Stakeholder Strategy 2016, an internal operational document, aimed at guiding the work of GCP with respect to partnerships and global stakeholder engagement. The document defined the objectives of engaging global partners and ways how this contributes to the implementation of GCP Platforms at the national level. The strategy identified benefits and formulated commitments that GCP expected from its global partners. The idea of a Partnership Charter that would define roles and responsibilities and to which global partners would have to adhere to was launched. The strategy foresaw a regular review and update process.

**The implementation of the 2016 strategy was partial. The VBVC Initiative was more successful in framing the dialogue with global private sector partners.** The 2016 strategy was reviewed in 2017

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<sup>5</sup> GCP Services to UNDP Projects – Internal note to country offices, May 2017. The note defines 5 services: Multi-stakeholder dialogue through National Commodity Platforms; Private Sector Partnerships; Strategic, Technical and Advocacy Guidance; Support throughout the project lifecycle.

<sup>6</sup> See for example ToR “Technical Assistance from GCP in Ghana Phase II”.

and its ambition adjusted. It was proposed to “start organically and allow for flexibility in terms of membership expectations”. The idea of a Partnership Charter was abandoned because it could defer global corporates to engage with GCP. Instead, a “Private Sector Group” should be created. Based on the documents reviewed and interviews held, the evaluation could not confirm the establishment of this private sector group. Individual follow-up with potentially interested companies and participation in industry meetings and engagement of private sector in global fora were reported in the period 2017-18. In 2018, GCP launched the “Value beyond Value Chains Initiative” which aims to increase the effectiveness of private sector collaboration with governments to protect and strengthen agricultural commodity production and supply chains. Interviewees welcomed this initiative, which focuses on areas where UNDP has its greatest value added: engagement with governments and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The VBVC guidance note for the private sector, currently under development, is an interesting attempt to sensitize companies on the need to think beyond their value chains and engage in multi-stakeholder collaborations. The format looks attractive for the target public.

**At the global level, GCP maintains relationships with a manageable number of global players.** GCP reports active relationships with Cargill, IKEA, Mars, Mondelez, Tesco and Unilever and new relationships with McDonalds, Olam, PepsiCo and Kering (2018 report). While some of these partnerships appear to be more based on individual relationships, others are more institutional and include concrete (financial) commitments or joint country-level activities. When asked about the comparative advantage of GCP, large corporates value the ability of UNDP to engage with national and subnational governments and its convening power. With an increased focus on jurisdictional and landscape approaches rather than individual supply chains, the ability to connect to the local and national public sectors becomes ever more important. Main limitations of working with GCP that have been mentioned included complicated administrative and contracting procedures of UNDP, slow progress of platform implementation and limited UNDP implementation capacities on the ground (compared to competitors such as TFA, ID, CI or WWF).

**GCP maintains diverse relationships with private sector in countries of NAP implementation.** Besides engagement with global players at headquarter level, GCP interacts with private sector actors in countries where NAPs are implemented. Some interviewees noted that not in all countries where GCP was active it was possible to attract global players, particularly if the country was not a leading producer of the commodity in question. Therefore, sometimes it was more realistic and productive to engage with the local private sector.

## **EFFECTIVENESS OF FUNDRAISING AND DONOR ENGAGEMENT**

The project under review was financed by contributions from SECO (USD 4,4 Mio) and Norway/UN REDD(USD 1,6 Mio) for the period 2014-17 (see ProDoc). At the time of approval, the project reported an unfunded budget of USD 5,2 Mio. Thus, since the very beginning of this project, GCP was under pressure to identify and secure additional funding. Fundraising for co-funding was therefore an explicit activity of the project.

The strategy to identify and assure co-funding for the implementation of the project and GCP more broadly was threefold:

1. *Assure continued/new financing from bilateral donors that includes support to global activities.*

During the project period, GCP has secured funds from 2 bilateral sources. SECO contributed a total of USD 4 Mio. to GCP (phase I 2015-17: USD 2 Mio.; phase II 2018-21: USD 2 Mio). Although the mayor part of funds was earmarked for activities in Peru and Indonesia, both phases included a contribution to the global work of GCP (Outcome 3: phase I: 250k; phase II: 495k). Similarly, GIZ supported GCP with Euro 300k in 2017, whereof 105k were reserved for global activities. Other private support was destined to country activities (IKEA, Mondelez). Other bilateral donors were approached, but no concrete commitments resulted from these discussions.

Securing bilateral funds for overarching global activities is challenging. Bilateral donors often have a clear geographic and thematic focus. Global components that aim to support country-level activities are difficult to fund as stand-alone projects, mainly because results are more indirect and donors, as well as implementers, are under pressure to present concrete results. The two successful cases where GCP secured support from bilateral donors indicate that it is more likely to attract bilateral funds for global activities as part of specific country programmes and with a global replication logic.

2. *Engage/Lead the development of new initiatives that could benefit from international environmental finance and cost in support to GCP's global structure*

The GCP global team, and particularly its project director, has undertaken important efforts to identify funding opportunities for commodity related work from international environmental finance. By doing so GCP/its director has led the development of GEF initiatives such as the Good Growth Partnership launched in 2017. Although engaging in project formulation can be an effective way of assuring a certain role and funds during implementation, the execution of GEF projects increasingly happens under Full National Implementation Modality (NIM) which could leave UNDP in the future with less room to assume an executing role as it currently has in GGP.

3. *Develop a service offer for UNDP country offices implementing commodity related projects*

In line with GCP's ambition to be a knowledge center for commodity related development projects, GCP has been offering its knowhow to UNDP country offices who require support in the development or implementation of commodity-related projects on a cost-recovery basis. This service provision was done either through direct contracting of global GCP staff by country offices (consultant roster), or by transferring funds to GCP in order to fulfill specific mandates. While this modality helps to use the capacity of individual GCP consultants, it does not provide GCP with additional resources to cover for its core functions. Also, according to feedback from country offices, it is increasingly difficult to convince project managers and host governments to invest resources in international advice rather than using locally available capacities. This is particularly true in middle-income countries, where it is possible to find well qualified consultants on the local market.

**The GCP strategies 2015-17 and 2018-20 did not meet their funding targets.** Similarly to the project under review, the GCP strategy has been struggling to live up to its funding targets. The 2018-20 strategy aimed at securing annually 2 mio./year for global activities and 0.5 mio. for each country project (downscaling the ambition from the 2015-17 strategy, where GCP thought to mobilize 2.5 and 0.7 mio. respectively). This strategic funding target could not be met.

**The lack of stable core-funding for global activities has marked the development and implementation of GCP strategies.** A certain tension between the need of following the money versus maintaining GCP's strategic focus can be observed in the last years. The lack of stable core funding has obliged GCP to adopt an opportunity-driven approach which impeded long term programming and somewhat diluted the focus during the implementation of the 2015-17 and 2018-20 strategies.

#### **Output 1.4 Scaling up innovative models for sustainable commodity production**

GCP, through its global team, has acted as a broker for knowledge-sharing between UNDP practitioners aiming to improve the social and environmental performance of agricultural commodity supply chains worldwide. GCP aims to facilitate the dissemination of knowledge, information and best practices among UNDP project and country office staff. Several interviewees confirmed that knowledge dissemination and exchange between regions should be a priority for GCP.

**The activities of the GCC are considered valuable by participants, however, compete with other similar forums.** The Green Commodities Community (GCC) was re-launched in the beginning of 2018 in coordination with GGP. GCC seeks to foster learning and knowledge sharing through webinars, practitioner dialogue and training and the annual Good Growth Conference. GCC has strengthened its offer including by drawing on external partners to enrich the discussions and respond to specific needs/requests from the community. According to feedback on webinars, participants noted the high quality of discussions and the appropriateness of methodologies being used. In line with GCC's policy to favor quality over quantity, attendance was in many cases rather limited (According to the 2018 report, 23 workshops reached 170 participants, meaning an average of 8 participants per workshop). A survey on the GCC conducted by GCP in 2018 evidenced mixed results<sup>7</sup>. GCC members liked the community, were satisfied with how virtual workshops were organized, and considered them useful for discovering new ideas and approaches. Main criticism related to insufficient information about the community, too little active involvement and sentiment of being part of it. Also, time availability of participants was a limiting factor. In general, UNDP staff within the community provided a more positive feedback than members from outside UNDP.

**CoP are useful for learning through sharing, but establishing a strong community is difficult.** Global virtual Communities of Practice (CoP) are challenging to handle, both due to organizational reasons (challenge to establish strong connections without face-to-face interaction; overcoming language and time zone barriers) but also content wise (finding the right topics; responding to different needs; different sociocultural environments of participants). In addition, such platforms compete for the limited time members can dedicate to knowledge and experience sharing besides their operational responsibilities. Against this background, it is important to carefully assess how, and with which format a CoP can best address the above-mentioned challenges. Sometimes sharing information within existing CoP can be an alternative to administrating its own community. As far as the evaluator could observe, since its integration with GGP no further reflection has been made whether the GCC could increase its impact by coordinating with or integrating into other existing knowledge sharing communities.

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<sup>7</sup> Green Commodities Community GCC – Assessment and thematic planning Survey Report

The organization of in-person CoP workshops, training activities and (south-south) study tours is an effective way to deepen interaction and strengthen the community. GCP successfully took advantage of global gatherings to organize trainings back-to-back to such events. GCP's strategy to associate relevant UNDP country officers into learning workshops and study tours seems to be a useful way of deepening relationships with UNDP country offices. Interviewees praised workshop and training methodologies, also because particular attention is given to group dynamics and relationship building?

**GCP has made efforts to improve access to relevant knowledge products.** Managing a global repository of relevant tools and knowledge products on a Google Drive is certainly useful to spread information within its global community. However, its real value depends on how often and by whom the material is accessed and used. The evaluator could not determine how actively the platform is being used given that project monitoring tools do not track this information. The GCP Website does contain some references to tools and webinars, however no full access to GCP's knowledge products is available.

In conclusion, GCP during the period under review strengthened its strategy and ToC, broadened its country portfolio and sectors, deepened its partner relations and developed relevant knowledge products which are being shared within a growing CoP. In this sense, the outputs as defined in the original ProDoc have been achieved. However, because of limited implementation of the M&E system, the available information does not allow to measure the achievement of outcomes.

#### 4.3 Efficiency

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##### **MANAGEMENT**

**The GCP board provides limited strategic guidance but could be useful to position GCP within UNDP.** Project oversight is assured by a project board. The GCP Board was supposed to meet on a yearly basis and to provide strategic and operational guidance to the program. Whereas the amount of substantive strategic guidance provided by the board seems to be somewhat limited (inter alia due to a changing composition of the board and limited knowledge of UNDP RB of GCP's work; the board did not meet every year), board meetings could serve as a useful platform to create awareness among different UNDP units at regional/HQ level about the workings of the programme. Outside this formal structure of the project, GCP has undertaken a continuous effort to make itself known up the UNDP hierarchy. As a result, GCP has been successful in engaging high-level representatives in some of its activities (for ex. Good Growth Conference Peru 2019).

**GCP's main asset is a highly qualified global team.** GCP's strength is its team of experts with relevant experience in global commodity value chains, sustainability standards and multi-stakeholder collaboration. The GCP team has grown considerably over the last years, particularly since the start of GGP implementation. In order to adjust the programme structure and processes to this new reality, GCP undertook continuous efforts to strengthen internal (communications) processes and management tools. Examples include the development of internal communication guidelines, the constitution of a management committee (since 2019 the strategic committee) or the organization of monthly calls and regular virtual coffee talks. Various interviewees acknowledged that management undertook great efforts to assure team building and internal alignment and compensate for the lack of collective experience generated by day-to-day work.

Despite the fact that individuals are spread all over the world and have only limited opportunities to meet in person (at least once per year for the annual planning meeting), there appears to exist a good team spirit. The apparent low turnover of senior advisors in the last years seems to confirm this.

**The consultancy-based business model is cost effective, but with limited core funding limits the team's ability to engage in non-billable activities.** GCP team is mainly composed of international consultants. The advantage of this set-up is its flexibility that is attractive for highly experienced professionals because they can work from their location and on a part-time basis. The geographic dispersion allows proximity to the countries of intervention and a team with different language skills. Finally, this light and flexible implementation structure is cost effective compared to more traditional set-ups with fix project teams. With limited core funding, the challenge is to assure the team with enough and plannable work (lack of stability). Also, this consultancy-based business model makes it difficult for the team to engage in activities that can't be billed (ad hoc request for specific advisory; project development together with RB/CO). Some interviewees expressed concern that the lack of a guaranteed minimum paid and plannable workflow could negatively affect team stability and the sense of belonging to GCP ("we become just another consultant"). Others considered that contracting/renovation of contracts takes too long due to UNDP contracting procedures but sometimes also due to a slow response from consultants. Finally, in some cases the consultancy-based model has affected continuity of service provision when implementing national platforms.

## **MONITORING**

When assessing the M&E system, it is important to differentiate between the M&E system that has been set up for the project under review, and broader monitoring efforts of GCP as a programme. We will first look into the M&E system of the project, before discussing the monitoring of the GCP more broadly.

**The project under review achieved its output targets as defined in the ProDoc.** As far as the results framework of the project under review is concerned, the project defined 4 outputs under outcome 1 that were covered by 3 indicators. Indicators were focused on the revision of the GCP strategy (1.1.), the number of partnerships established with NGOs, donors and private sector companies (1.2.) and the establishment of an operational KM system (1.3.). GCP has reached the quantitative output targets defined in the ProDoc. Although these targets were set for 2017, as a result of the extension of the project to 2019, there was no adjustment in targets.

**There has been no reporting on outcomes and annual reports were activity-based. Thus, it is not possible to measure the achievement of project outcomes.** Outcome indicators as defined in the ProDoc indirectly measure the achievement of the proposed outcome (transformation of agricultural commodity sectors), only if we assume that the sheer existence of national platforms actually contributes to sector transformation (given the challenges in the implementation of platforms, this causality is not necessarily given). The formulation of the indicators (focus on number of countries with an enabling environment, number of platforms & schemes for multi stakeholder collaboration) evidences the difficulty to appropriately capture higher level impact. The project does not report on outcome indicators. Annual reports are activity-based and report on five activities which embrace the four outputs defined in the ProDoc. Reports do not contain information on

progress against outcome indicators. In summary, we observe an attribution gap between the project's outputs and the intended outcome. Outputs/activities only indirectly contribute to the achievement of the final project outcome. The latter is congruent with GCP's broad goal.

**Management tools for operational planning and steering are considered fit for purpose.** Besides the results-framework described above, GCP has been using different management tools for operational planning and steering. Instruments include the GCP Goal Dashboard, functional workplans per objectives, or the milestones list. The GCP Goal Dashboard is regularly reviewed and updated during the monthly management committee calls. Monthly calls are recorded with minutes and define follow-up measures and responsibilities. Project risks were reported in annual reports, although the risk matrix did not undergo a frequent update.

**GCP as a programme has developed several monitoring tools, however their implementation is only incipient.** Looking at GCP's M&E efforts more broadly, GCP undertook important efforts to strengthen its M&E and develop different monitoring tools (GCP M&E database related to ToC; Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Ladder of Change; NAP Monitoring Tool; Lessons learned system; outcome indicators in strategy documents). To operate effectively as a cohesive global programme, it is important to have a programme level monitoring, evaluation, and learning system that ties together the strategic project components and supports reporting, fundraising, and management. However, the evaluator could not evidence that these tools are currently in use. Their embedding into national monitoring efforts (including contribution of sustainable production to deforestation avoidance) would be important in order to reduce reporting burden and assure appropriation at the national level. Some tools might need simplification. GCP's M&E Database for example, which is based on the recently developed ToC, is a very complete tool that aims at tracking progress of the 16 outcomes defined in the ToC. It seems rather unlikely that a successful tracking of the 62 (!) indicators can be established in practice<sup>8</sup>.

**Although there are evident attribution challenges, there is a need to further substantiate the global results of GCP with concrete data.** In order to better prove GCP's contribution to the achievement of its broad goal, it is of utmost importance to have a monitoring system in place that captures and aggregates quantitative and qualitative data on supported country-level projects. One possibility could be the introduction of a few standard indicators into the results frameworks of projects supported by GCP. If GCP wants to measure the achievement of its stated goal, it would be necessary that each supported project is able to report on the number of farmers and hectares it has impacted in order for GCP to aggregate this information and report on overall progress. With currently available data, it is not possible to assess GCP's progress towards its stated goal (By 2020 GCP aims to transform agricultural commodity sectors that currently impact 8 million farmers and 20 million hectares).

**There is a need to think in alternative ways of measuring impact.** GCP's ambition is to contribute to systemic change in sustainable commodity production. It tries to achieve this ultimate objective by working towards strengthening of practices, regulatory frameworks and changing mindsets and behaviors which in turn should lead to more sustainable commodity sectors. This is a medium to long-term objective, and the systemic change is dependent on various external factors. Against this

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<sup>8</sup> The 62 indicators are from the green (Systematic and Direct involvement) and yellow (Partnership involvement) categories.



background, it might be necessary to re-think how to measure the programme's systemic impact. Using traditional indicators such as number of farmers with improved living conditions or hectares with sustainable production systems might not accurately address the nature of GCP's approach. GCP does not directly interact with farmers on the ground, but rather supports implementers in strengthening relationship building with different stakeholder groups, thereby creating trust and a fabric of relationships that ultimately should enable systemic change. As part of the development of the MSCFSC approach, GCP recently started a reflection on how to measure systemic change (see e.g. ladder of change). In the view of the evaluator, measuring the development of capacities of main platform stakeholders (institutional performance, stability and adaptability in regard to MSC) and the quality of interactions among them can be a good indicator of progress towards systemic change<sup>9</sup>. Without a continuous measurement of progress in these medium to long-term processes, it is difficult to substantiate that GCP actually contributes to systemic change.

## COMMUNICATION

**A reviewed communication strategy is in implementation, yet it is too early to measure its impact.**

GCP has intensified and systematized its communication efforts since 2018. A review of the communication strategy, a communication Action Plan, the development of a visual identity for the programme and its daughter initiatives, a review of the GCP website and "Country at a glance" briefing packages are some of the elements of this recent communication effort. The strategy has been designed around GCP's MSCFSC approach.

**GCP is a brand within a brand.** With the aim of positioning itself within UNDP, GCP has undertaken continuous efforts to develop and carve out its identity. Towards the outside, GCP has successfully used its belonging to UNDP as a competitive advantage and distinctive characteristic compared to other multi-stakeholder initiatives. This two-fold strategy responds to the need of having an own identity for fundraising purposes (given that GCP's budget is dependent on project funds) but bears some risks regarding the seamless integration of GCP into the UNDP corporate structure. GCP being a facilitator of a process led by others, credit of success is expected to go to the members of national platform processes. Striking the right balance between communicating on GCP's contribution and leaving credit to beneficiaries is a delicate task from a comms perspective.

### 4.4 Sustainability

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When assessing the benefits of a global programme such as GCP and their likeliness of continuing after donor funding has ended, we must look at the capacities that were built up within UNDP country offices and knowledge generated and made accessible for interested users.

**Continued work to assure the uptake of the GCP approach is needed.** After ten years of implementation, GCP has accumulated considerable experience that has enriched the development of tools and methodologies which today support the implementation of NAP and national commodity platforms. Although these tools and experiences are available for interested users,

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<sup>9</sup> For further insights on UNDP's approach to measuring capacity development, see: Measuring Capacity ([https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-paper-on-measuring-capacity/UNDP\\_Measuring\\_Capacity\\_July\\_2010.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-paper-on-measuring-capacity/UNDP_Measuring_Capacity_July_2010.pdf)).

putting them publicly accessible does not yet guarantee their future use. As a global knowledge hub and service center for MSCFSC, GCP must continue to promote the uptake of its approach and methodology within UNDP CO. Only when MSCFSC is part of UNDP's business as usual and UNDP CO are well prepared to successfully engage with the private sector at national and global levels, GCP's mission could be considered completed. Yet, this is still a long way to go and continued funding for GCP global activities is necessary.

**From a sustainability perspective continued funding of core global operations is perhaps the biggest sustainability challenge for GCP.** A multi-layered funding strategy aligned with the strategic ambition of GCP is necessary. Engaging in GEF projects (GGP, FOLUR) is interesting, helps support country activities, but might not suffice to cover core funding needs. Access to new funding sources interested in conceptual work and innovation (for ex. foundations) should be explored as a way to overcome the limitations in securing funding from traditional donors.

**With UNDP embracing GCPs approach, GCP could evolve from a programme to a thematic unit within corporate UNDP.** GCP started as a programme at a time when collaboration with the private sector was innovative and still rather unusual within standard UNDP thinking. With the adoption of the SDGs and the Agenda 2030, and a growing recognition that new innovative approaches are needed to address the world's development challenges, the private sector has been recognized as a key player to effectively achieve the global development goals. As a result, UNDP has increasingly embraced collaboration with the private sector and more innovative strategies to achieve the SDGs. In doing so, the GCP approach slowly trickles into the DNA of UNDP. Against this background, GCP in the future might be no longer considered an innovative "spin off" in the form of a programme, but could become part of core UNDP, as a thematic unit driving the organization's work on MSCFSC.

**Strategic partnerships are important.** In order to remain relevant and attractive in an ever more crowded environment of actors seeking to support the development of sustainable commodity sectors, it is important that GCP reflects on and assesses the possibility of entering into strategic partnerships with other multi-stakeholder initiatives and/or coalitions of private sector companies (e.g. WBCSD). By engaging in such partnerships GCP should be able to leverage its competitive advantage (particularly its ability to engage governments) and strengthen the implementation of the MSCFSC approach on the ground.

**Build in lessons learned and allow for adaptive management.** GCP, both at the global level and with child projects, has undertaken efforts to systematize lessons learned, identify best practices and share experiences within countries and among the global team. GGP manages an extensive "lessons learned" database where GCP global staff also reports lessons learned. In addition, lessons learned calls have been organized between GCP staff and the GGP programme manager. Finally, GCP annual reports contain a section on lessons learned. All these efforts to systematize experiences are valuable. But as already observed for other areas, it is important that tools and processes remain sufficiently light and easy to use so that they are actually used as management tools.

Over the years, GCP managed to build-up an experienced global team. As discussed in chapter 4.3, this global team is predominantly composed of consultants. Whereas this set up has its advantages, GCP must assure continuity in the support provided to CO and national level implementation. Discontinuity associated with frequent changes of consultants, both at the global and national levels, can jeopardize the quality of the advisory.

## 5 Conclusions

The project under review constitutes the backbone of the GCP, and acts as umbrella and foundation for different country level activities. The project is intrinsically linked to the activities and functioning of GCP as a programme. Therefore, and in line with the ToR of this evaluation, we focus these conclusions and recommendations on the GCP and its global activities more broadly.

With a 10 year track record in supporting multi-stakeholder collaboration to foster sustainability in commodity sectors, GCP has accumulated experience and expertise that is of great value in times where governments, the international community and private sector seek solutions for complex interrelated problems they cannot address and solve in isolation. Stakeholders see in UNDP's ability to engage governments and its convening power the main comparative advantages of the programme compared to other multi-stakeholder initiatives. GCP is well aligned with UNDP's mission, relevant sectoral policies and the Agenda 2030. With a growing recognition that new innovative approaches are needed to address the main global challenges, the private sector has been identified as a key player to effectively achieve the SDGs. As a result, UNDP has increasingly embraced collaboration with the private sector and more innovative strategies to achieve the SDGs. In doing so, the GCP approach is trickling into the DNA of UNDP.

GCP undertook continued efforts to position itself within UNDP and beyond in an ever more crowded environment of multi-stakeholder commodity initiatives, many of which are competing for funds and private sector attention. GCP has participated in, engaged with and/or launched a number of initiatives, programmes and projects. Sometimes engagement happened because of the strategic fit and complementarity, sometimes also to take advantage of funding opportunities. Recent efforts to sharpen its profile and communicate its *raison d'être*, both within UNDP and vis-a-vis external stakeholders, are applaudable but have not yet fully produced the desired impact, and the perception of what GCP does and stands for continues to be somewhat vague in the view of many. It appears that the different roles GCP takes in different initiatives is confusing for some stakeholders.

Implementing national action plans and platforms has been challenging, progress slow and dependent on numerous external factors. GCP proactively engaged in expectation management regarding the progress of such processes, particularly with the private sector. But although no quick wins can be reasonably expected, the success of GCP depends on its ability to demonstrate and report concrete results. Recent investments into the development of valuable M&E tools and the generation of data have not yet been fully implemented and it is therefore not possible to assess whether GCP is on track of reaching its 2020 goal. The project's results reporting remains output based. Alternative ways of measuring impact (e.g. measuring trust building; strengthening of institutional capacities for MSC) are in early stages of development.

GCP as a programme has undergone an important transformation during the period under review. The global programme expanded its portfolio of countries and commodities, refined its ToC and strategy and developed tools and methodologies that were transmitted to and applied in different country led interventions. The growing experience is being systematized and since 2018 disseminated and discussed within the GCC. More generally, GCP has actively participated in the global debate on sustainable commodities and contributed to the shaping of the agenda. Although

the continuous review of strategies and tools allowed to adjust to a rapidly changing context, and build-in learnings from implementation, it might have deviated some attention from actual implementation and achieving results on the ground (inward looking perspective).

On the operational front, the growth of the GCP team (particularly due to GGP) led to the review of some management processes in order to assure appropriate flow of information and internal alignment of a geographically dispersed team. Management tools (e.g. dashboard; strategic committee) are considered fit for purpose although some stakeholders would like to have a clearer understanding of the programme as a whole (what are others doing, how does it connect to my work). The consultancy-based business model allowed GCP to work with a dedicated high-quality team with complementary geographic and thematic backgrounds. The downside of this operating model is a potential lack of stability and plannability for individual consultants, and limitations regarding the team's ability to engage in non-billable activities (e.g. design stage of GEF/GCP programmes; ad hoc advisory), particularly in times of limited core funding.

## 6 Recommendations

In order to take full advantage of the experience and expertise GCP has accumulated over the last 10 years, leverage its comparative advantage and keep its relevance in a changing environment, we recommend the following:

1. **Focus on GCP's distinctive approach**, now defined as the MSCFSC approach, leverage UNDP's competitive advantage (engaging governments/convening power), and use clear criteria regarding where the MSCFSC approach can be implemented with the greatest potential impact (need to review Green Light Criteria?).

Currently GCP impact is aimed at 8 million farmers and 20 million hectares. Aligned to this ambition the Green Light Criteria prioritizes interventions using the following decision route: tropical forest hectares – commodity strategic importance – Country Office capacity – National Government interest- additional stakeholder interest.

Under the MSCFSC approach and leveraging on UNDP's competitive advantage (engaging governments / convening power), the key contribution of GCP is to become a catalyser for systemic change. Under this strategic priority, commodities, forest hectares and farmers are the ecosystem that different actors want to transform, they are an aspirational consequence of GCP action rather than a goal; likewise, the “enabling environment” is what emerges through the interactions (synergies) of different actors within the ecosystem (a means rather than an end). The direct goal of GCP is to incentivize collaboration among diverse/improbable actors and support the institutionalisation of change (formal and informal). Therefore, GCP needs to carefully assess for any given country-level intervention whether there is a genuine commitment in place that allows for a successful initiation of a systemic change process.

Under this framework, the success of GCP is linked to its ability to support networks (i.e. number, participants and dynamics of platforms and other dialogue schemes); learning processes (various types, focus on helping others understand and design collective solutions; participatory root cause analysis); strengthen the development of transformative capacity (influence, self-evolution of pilot schemes, embeddedness, policy) and finally transformative impact (hectares, farmers, etc.). GCP's value proposition is to build capacities for and accompany this process, measure progress and induce corrective action where necessary (adaptive management)<sup>10</sup>.

2. **Secure stable core funding** that enables GCP to finance its global core operations independently from country advisory. Core funding should allow the team to have enough resources for networking, conceptual/strategic reflections and to provide ad-hoc advice (for ex. in project design). Implement a multi-layered fundraising strategy that includes traditional (bilateral) donors, non-traditional donors (foundations) interested in innovation and longer-term systemic thinking, as well as access to GCF/GEF resources. Develop suitable fundraising products for each donor group.

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<sup>10</sup> For an interesting perspective on measuring transformative capacity see: <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/11/5/1304>

Bilateral donors are mainly interested in country level/regional interventions because they are under pressure to present measurable results in the short run. At the same time, they are interested to contribute to the upscaling and spreading of specific country-level experiences (including through south-south cooperation), which creates opportunities for a global programme like GCP. GCP should present itself to bilateral donors as a global knowledge platform on MSCFSC that is able to connect local results to the global debate, thereby increasing visibility and impact of bilateral donors' work. Foundations on the other hand are often less constrained to produce short-term results and have more flexibility to fund innovative work that produces medium to long term impact. GCP should identify foundations that have invested into sustainable commodity supply chains (as an example: the David & Lucile Packard Foundation and its new Agriculture, Livelihood and Conservation Program) and seek support for the advancement of the MSCFSC approach. Finally, GCP should concretize and assure continued support through larger GCF/GEF programmes (e.g. FOLUR).

3. Assess **risks and opportunities of evolving from a programme with proper identity and branding into a corporate UNDP unit/knowledge hub for MSCFSC**. Such an integration would have to be carefully designed in order to take advantage of improved leverage and access to UNDP resources, without compromising on the flexibility, agility and innovative spirit of the programme.

Keeping a proper identity or seeking to become a corporate UNDP unit needs to be assessed from a financial and impacts perspective and with a pragmatic view. In the evaluator's view, the growing embracement of UNDP of the typical GCP topics (multi-stakeholder collaboration and private sector engagement) will increase the risk that GCP's work is perceived by other UNDP programmes/projects/Country Offices as duplication of what they already do (even if they don't, or do so with a lack of capacities). Against this background, it might be better to actively advocate that UNDP as an institution capitalizes GCP's 10-year experience by integrating it into UNDP's corporate offer (knowledge hub for MSCFSC/private sector collaboration). After having completed its strategy review process, it is now a good time for GCP to start this discussion.

4. Evaluate the role of GCP in **aggregating and measuring collective intelligence** that could result from the articulation of different commodity platforms in landscapes where different commodities coexist. Further, in the same way that GCP pioneered NCPs when sustainable commodities conversations were focused on VSS, today GCP could play a role in broadening the platform approach at subnational levels by including key actors/themes (not necessarily commodity focused) that have a stake in the sustainability of local environmental services and in realizing human rights and gender inclusiveness.

Successful experiences of landscape/jurisdictional approaches remain scarce. And where they occur, they are normally linked to one single commodity within a jurisdiction/landscape, rather than the sustainability of the jurisdiction/landscape as such. Therefore, it remains challenging to make claims regarding sustainable jurisdictions/landscapes.

Collective intelligence is the emergence of solutions that are more than the sum of the parts involved. Through strategic collaboration with country offices and through strengthening data & ethnographical M&E, GCP could pilot widening the commodity perspective to an

environmental services perspective linked to landscapes with strong commodity presence. Instead of asking how do we make x commodity more sustainable, the question is how do we ensure that there will be water/soil/etc now and forever? This automatically widens the discussions to all of those with a stake in the environmental service and to cross cutting issues (gender, youth, human rights, etc) that constitute barriers to the conservation of the environmental service. This could lead to more systemic local pacts/strategies/solutions that become part of the GCP learning hub

**5. Embed M&E into the GCP strategy and put into use existing M&E tools** in order to gather data and communicate on achieved results. In parallel, continue to develop indicators that measure the systemic change GCP aims to achieve and engage in a dialogue within UNDP, donors, and peers on how to account for systemic change and indicators that go beyond the traditional focus on hectares, litres or number of smallholders.

M&E is vital for the long-term sustainability of GCP and needs to operate at two levels: the capacity of GCP to catalyse systemic change (see recommendation 1 above) and, most importantly for relevance and visibility, the transformations that take place on the ground (emergence of synergies and the results of those synergies). National actors (trade or sector associations, commodity specific initiatives, government, etc.) could be best positioned to track medium term changes in trade dynamics, sustainable offer, etc. GCP could partner with them for those inputs and focus instead on system transformation: how do actors see themselves and others (their roles)? What has changed in terms of perceptions, are actors communicating differently, are actors behaving differently, how have these changes impacted sector governance/landscape governance? what key innovations have emerged, who has benefited from them? Measuring changes in the institutional performance, stability and adaptability in regard to MSC can help capturing progress towards systemic change.

**6. Focus on implementation rather than continued revision**, once the current strategy review process has concluded. In doing so, make sure to focus on strategic deliverables, and pay attention to the needs of country offices, GCC members, and beneficiary governments. Be mindful in understanding the local context and ensure that global tools and advisory fit in and are tailored to local needs.

The successful uptake of a conceptually sound global approach (MSCFSC) at the national level depends on the ability of the transmitter (GCP global expert) and receptor (Country office/NCP coordinator) to develop a joint understanding and strategy on how to adjust the MSCFSC approach to a given country context. Whereas the transmitter must assure the consistent use of methodologies and tools and draw on best practices and lessons learned, the receptor needs to be able to translate and adapt this global knowledge into local practicalities. For the success of the subsequent systemic change process, it is of utmost importance that the intervention design is done with enough resources, time and capacities. It determines to a notable degree the success of the subsequent process. Cultural sensitivity and work-experience of the transmitter in the country of intervention facilitates the process.

7. **Regarding operations**, make sure that new members are properly introduced into GCP and that they are aware about the “broader picture” and not just their area of work. As far as possible, assure foreseeability and contractual stability for GCP consultants (speed up contracting). Maintain good practices related to team building. Make an effort to prioritize and simplify materials and tools in order to facilitate their uptake.

8. If a new internal project for “core GCP” was developed (similar to the one being reviewed), make sure that targets and indicators are aligned with broader GCP M&E efforts and establish a reporting format that besides internal UNDP reporting purposes also serves GCP team’s information needs.



## 7 Annexes

### Annex 1: Terms of Reference



TOR GCP Final  
Evaluation.pdf

### Annex 2: List of documents reviewed



GCP -  
Documentation\_V3.i

### Annex 3: List of peoples interviewed

Organization	Name	Title
<b>GCP Team</b>		
	Andrew Bovarnick	Global Head GCP
	Charles O'Malley	Senior Partnership Advisor
	Nicolas Petit	Senior Advisor Commodities
	Leif Pedersen	Senior Commodities Advisor
	Pascal Fabie	Senior Adviser Learning and Impact
	Lise Melvin	Senior Programme Advisor
	Christina Archer	C2A Regional Coordinator
	Nadia Puerta	Monitoring and Evaluation Specialist
<b>Private sector</b>		
Cargill	Nick Martell Bundock	Senior Director, CR & Sustainable Development
Unilever	Rauf Prasadjo	Sustainable Sourcing Manager
Mars	Kevin Rabinovitch*	Global VP Sustainability
<b>NGOs</b>		
Conservation International	John Buchanan	Vice President, Sustainable Production
WWF	Elizabeth Schueler	Senior Director, Markets
<b>Country Offices</b>		
UNDP - Peru	James Leslie	Technical Advisor Ecosystems and Climate Change
UNDP - Costa Rica	Jose Vicente Troya	Resident Representative
UNDP - Ecuador	Monica Andrade	Programme Officer
<b>UNDP NY/HQ Regional</b>		
	Midori Paxton	Executive Coordinator- Environmental Finance, HQ/GEF
	Lyes Ferroukhi	Regional Technical Adviser - Biodiversity, Ecosystems & Ecosystems Based Adaptation to CC, CO/RSCPA
	Tim Scott*	Policy Advisor on Inclusive Green Economy, HQ/BPPS
	Srilata Kammila*	Principal Technical Advisor, GEF/Asia and the Pacific, CO/TH
	Onno Van Den Heuvel*	Manager, The Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN), CO/RSCTR,
	Pheмо Karen Kgomotso*	Regional Technical Specialist Biodiversity and Ecosystems, CO/RSCSA, GEF/Africa
<b>Donors</b>		
GIZ	Andreas Brede	Team leader Deforestation free value chains
SECO	Christian Robin	Deputy Head Trade Promotion

\* by questionnaire