

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Somalia

Somalia is a uniquely difficult context, characterized by a very complex and fragmented architecture of international support; a rapidly changing and contested political settlement, with tensions between the Federal Government of Somalia and Federal Member States; complex regional politics which include rivalry among Middle Eastern powers; an enduring major insurgency and related military offensives; widespread societal, criminal violence; rock-bottom State capacity; and massive poverty and economic hardship, compounded by severe environmental challenges, including drought, illegal depletion of natural resources and vulnerability to climate change. The evaluation recognizes that most of these factors are inter-linked and mutually reinforcing, creating a highly complex environment.

UNDP is a key actor in Somalia, with a programme structured around five portfolios, three of which have been providing the core of the long-standing engagement of UNDP in the country, focusing on governance aspects (effective institutions, inclusive politics, rule of law) and two emerging portfolios (environment and resilience to climate change, economic recovery and development) that address emerging priorities as Somalia gradually moves towards stability.

Key findings and conclusions

UNDP in Somalia is widely recognized as a strong partner to government counterparts at the level of the Federal Government and of Federal Member States. Some partnerships are long-standing and others are emerging in response to current needs

and the proactive attitude of UNDP staff. Equally, UNDP is centrally positioned to act as a platform, convenor and trusted partner for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), other United Nations agencies and donors working across Somalia, thanks to its long-standing presence and relationships, its extensive footprint on the ground, its commitment to deliver jointly with other agencies, its extensive network of local staff and advisers and the breadth of its technical portfolio. It also showed that it can, with partners, promote the need to address very complex and sensitive issues like human rights.

The evaluation highlights that capacity injection has been helpful in supporting key processes like the development of the first National Development Plan in 30 years, a peaceful election in 2017 and others. UNDP will continue to play a role in Somalia in the medium term through capacity injection. However, the evaluation notes that there is no long-term capacity development strategy and the sustainability of interventions is at risk. Current implementation modalities do not support a shift towards long-term creation of capacity within institutions. Sustainability is also at risk for interventions on the ground, due to lack of long-term capacity and commitment of local government authorities to maintain results, the short span of donor funding and lack of integration of sustainability measures from the design stage. Crucial areas like gender require attention and there is scope for improvement of monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management to ensure that UNDP better designs, implements and reports on its work.

Recommendations

In framing its next country programme, UNDP should determine its added value in the Somali aid ecosystem, review its communication strategies with partners and donors, and explicitly articulate its contributions to overall development results through theory of change approaches. The country programme development process should ultimately strengthen the strategic focus of the programme, develop synergies across portfolios and ensure sustainability. In particular, UNDP should ensure that sustainability in relation to capacity development, financing and projects is at the centre of project design, monitoring and adaptive management efforts, in cooperation with partners in the country. A rights-based approach is central to UNDP approaches and should be a central part of the mutual accountability framework.

This evaluation finds that UNDP is centrally positioned to play a key role within the Federal Government's Recovery and Resilience Framework, which encourages a move towards long-term resilience. However, it also notes that UNDP expertise will be required in the immediate future in long-standing core areas of governance like elections, local governance and rule of law. In addition to the existing areas of UNDP

work, on which the evaluation team makes specific recommendations below, the evaluation stresses a major gap in the current country programme: work on anti-corruption. The evaluation team recognizes that addressing corruption in a context such as Somalia is incredibly difficult, but the issue is central to peacebuilding and sustainable development. The anti-corruption programme currently in development is welcome but will need to be seen as part of a wider political approach at the level of UNDP and UNSOM leadership, working collectively with all donors and Somali stakeholders.

For the next country programme, it will be crucial to find the right balance to ensure that UNDP retains focus and uses its facilitation abilities to encourage other actors to play an active role in the Somali context rather than trying to expand its two smaller portfolios, on environment and energy and early recovery, at the expense of effective institutions, inclusive politics and rule of law.

The office should strengthen its results-based systems and practices. In particular, solid evidence, systematically collected and used for adaptive management, and communications with donors and partners

are central to the success of the UNDP effort in Somalia. UNDP needs to make sure that it has the best possible systems in place to ensure efficient delivery of its programme. Specifically, UNDP needs to ensure that it is staffed and structured appropriately, with both technical and strategic capacities in place. At the same time, UNDP will need to improve how it communicates with Somali partners and donors to be clear about the role UNDP plays. The reorganization of the gender function should be supported through the establishment of incentives and measures which will embed it in the implementation of the programme to ensure that gender results move towards transformative levels.

In cooperation with the office of the Resident Coordinator and UNSOM, UNDP should clarify its own roles and responsibilities and those of other actors in the management and support of the aid coordination system, in line with roles and responsibilities of each actor under the United Nations reform, with a view to streamlining and simplifying the process, improving operational efficiency and ensuring transparent aid flows to both the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States.