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United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION GEORGIA



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INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: GEORGIA

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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation for the United Nations Development Programme in Georgia, the second country-level assessment conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office in that country. The evaluation covered the programme period 2016 to 2019.

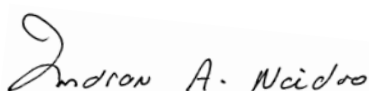
Georgia has achieved important results in terms of socioeconomic development and democratization of its institutions. However, as parts of the country remain occupied and a high number of internally displaced persons suffer challenging conditions, a number of pressing issues must still be addressed. These include poverty and inequality as well as the unsustainable use of natural resources, aggravated by the effects of climate change.

The evaluation found that UNDP support contributed to strengthening Georgia's parliamentary democracy through a demand-driven approach that allowed it to respond to changing priorities. UNDP supported the development of vulnerable rural areas, facilitating cooperation among stakeholders and promoting the involvement of citizens in decision-making. UNDP has been the main provider of international assistance in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, where it helped meet important education, health and livelihood needs. The Coordination Platform has maintained dialogue between the Georgian Government and de facto Abkhaz authorities, although work in the area is still very much affected by the lack of a political solution. In terms of disaster risk reduction and natural resource management, UNDP has emerged as the

country's leading development partner. Its support produced good results that require further integration into national government policies and plans to ensure sustainability.

The evaluation concluded that UNDP's programme was highly relevant, targeting key national priorities, including those stemming from the European Union-Georgia agreement. Programme interventions have addressed a wide range of issues, with a significant focus on the policy level, but also demonstrations on the ground. Key results derived from sustained engagement over time. As national institutions become progressively stronger, national development needs appear to be converging around the issue of inequality, in accordance with the principle of leaving no one behind.

I would like to thank the Government of Georgia, the various national stakeholders and colleagues at the UNDP Georgia Office for their support throughout the evaluation. I trust this report will be of use to readers seeking to achieve a better understanding of the broad support that UNDP has provided, including what has worked and what has not, and in prompting discussions on how UNDP may be best positioned to contribute to sustainable development in Georgia in the years to come.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

COBERM	Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism
CPD	Country programme document
CRP	Crisis prevention and recovery
CSO	Civil society organization
DGG	Decentralization and good governance
DPC	Direct project costs
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FRLD	Fostering Regional and Local Development
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GRF	Governance Reform Fund
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
LGBTQI	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
MAPS	Mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
OGP	Open Government Partnership
RBEC	UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
RRF	Results and resources framework
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SMEs	Small and medium enterprises
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPSD	United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Evaluation Brief: ICPE Georgia

Despite the many challenges it has encountered since independence, Georgia is now an upper-middle-income country, whose performance has improved on a number of development indicators thanks to wide-ranging institutional and economic reforms. The desire to become an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic space has driven reforms in many areas of public policy, including elections, decentralization and civil service reform. Georgia's sustainable development, however, remains challenged by an unequal distribution of income, unresolved conflict, as well as the unsustainable use of natural resources.

UNDP's Country Programme 2016-2020 was grounded in the concept of sustainable human and economic development "as a reflection of the degree to which people are empowered to participate in pluralistic decision-making through strong institutions, balance of power, and the rule of law, free from discrimination and with equal opportunity to contribute to, and share in, sustainable economic growth." UNDP identified four priority areas for its assistance to the country: democratic governance; jobs and livelihoods; human security and community resilience; and disaster risk reduction and environment.

Findings and conclusions

In the area of democratic governance, UNDP has contributed to improving the country's system of checks and balances by working on different accountability streams. It strengthened the role and functioning of the Parliament, enhanced the role of civil society in governance, and improved the transparency, accountability and functioning of the Government. UNDP also contributed effectively to further promoting the decentralization of government functions by supporting the approval of the Decentralization Strategy and Action Plan. UNDP has shown flexibility in the delivery of interventions, adapting its support to the country's changing needs and priorities. It has played an important role in promoting the protection

of human rights and supported the institutional strengthening of national stakeholders. UNDP's contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women achieved important changes at the institutional level. Its efforts to promote the advancement of women in politics, however, did not produce the expected results.

Limited national commitment at the top level and cultural resistance have partly affected the effectiveness of UNDP's interventions.

UNDP effectively supported the authorities' efforts to promote rural development through policy and organizational capacity development interventions and contributed to the creation of employment opportunities in rural areas. UNDP supported the establishment of a modern vocational education and training system in agriculture, addressing knowledge gaps through agricultural extension or consultation services. Initial results appear promising in terms of employment and enhanced agricultural productivity.

In the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, UNDP reinforced the capacity of civil society organizations to deliver services, responding to important health and education needs. UNDP also played an important coordination role among development partners and helped maintain dialogue between the Georgian Government and Abkhaz de facto authorities. Anecdotal evidence points to enhanced social cohesion contributing to peace and stability, although work has been constrained by the political context and the limitations placed on the country office's ability to work with de facto authorities.

UNDP substantially increased the environmental data collection and management capacities of government institutions. Collected data and information are being used to a varying degree for reporting and evidence-based decision-making. UNDP contributed to reducing greenhouse gas and hydrochlorofluorocarbon emissions by supporting

government policies and measures across various economic sectors. The results of the pilot projects will need to be scaled up in order to promote a significant change, within the framework of a national policy on energy efficiency and renewable energy. In the area of disaster risk management, UNDP contributed to enhancing flood resistance in the Rioni River Basin, enlarged the surface area covered under the protected area regime, and promoted alternative opportunities for people whose livelihoods depended on natural resources in protected areas.

Overall, UNDP has implemented a number of complementary projects, within and across thematic areas of intervention. There are some good examples of cooperation among projects that have enabled the country

office to generate synergies and efficiencies. Room for stronger collaboration exists, especially at the subnational level, where UNDP has put significant effort.

UNDP has played a leading role in the promotion and nationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), although significant gaps remain in the availability of data and use of evidence for policymaking. In areas where it has had significant engagement, UNDP supported national counterparts in establishing coordination structures and promoted the development of plans for action-oriented coordination. While some bilateral stakeholders advocated for UNDP to play a more active role in coordination, United Nations partners stressed the importance of a clear division of labour based on respective mandates.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should ensure alignment of its next country programme document (CPD) with Georgia's SDG commitments and focus on the areas identified by the mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support mission as lagging behind. In particular, UNDP should:

- a) Deepen and broaden its engagement in the area of human rights and gender equality, including in new areas such as the care economy.
- b) Deepen its engagement at the local level with a focus on addressing rural-urban disparities and invest in the human capital development of youth, strengthening the integration of its portfolios.
- c) Reinforce its engagement in the areas of green energy and sustainable cities at the policy level.

Recommendation 2. In preparing the next CPD, and in consultation with stakeholders, UNDP should develop issue-based theories of change against which it could map current and planned interventions.

Recommendation 3. With the approval of the Decentralization Strategy, UNDP should enhance its efforts to build the capacity of municipalities for the delivery of services at the local level and promote further integration of its portfolios.

Recommendation 4. In agreement with Georgian Government and Abkhaz de facto authorities, UNDP should extend the dialogue across the administrative boundary line beyond professionals to include decision-makers at the local level and communities.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation practices by adopting the following measures:

- a) Establish outcome-level indicators that reflect behaviour change.
- b) Consider expanding the population survey.
- c) Assess the effectiveness of results in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in terms of enhanced social cohesion.
- d) Carry out more thematic or outcome-level evaluations.
- e) Continue tracking the implementation of pilots beyond the end of a project's lifetime.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should develop a long-term resource mobilization strategy and minimize over-reliance on funding from the European Union.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted line that starts vertically on the left, turns horizontally to the right, and then continues horizontally. Along this line are five colored circles: an orange circle on the vertical segment, a dark blue circle on the vertical segment, a light green circle on the horizontal segment, an orange circle on the horizontal segment, a dark blue circle on the horizontal segment, and a light green circle on the horizontal segment.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.

This ICPE is the second evaluation of UNDP's work in Georgia.¹ It covered the period from 2016 to 2019,² in accordance with the evaluation's terms of reference (see Annex 1, available online). The ICPE assessed the entirety of UNDP's activities in the country, whether funded by core UNDP resources, donor funds or government funds. It also considered UNDP's contribution to the United Nations country team and assessed UNDP's role as a catalyst and convener working with other development partners, civil society and the private sector.

The ICPE was timed to feed into the preparation of the next country programme document (CPD), which will be implemented starting in 2021. Primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Georgia country office, the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC), the UNDP Executive Board and the Government of Georgia.

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process. Following the development of the terms of reference, the IEO recruited one international and one national consultant to support the

assessment. During the initial phase, a stakeholder analysis was conducted to identify all relevant stakeholders, including those that may have not worked with UNDP but had played a key role in the outcomes to which UNDP has contributed.

The ICPE addressed three key evaluation questions:³

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. What factors contributed to, or hindered, UNDP's performance and eventually the sustainability of results?

The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was analysed through an assessment of progress made towards the achievement of expected outputs, and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the intended CPD outcomes. To better understand UNDP's performance and the sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE examined the specific factors that have influenced – both positively or negatively – the country programme. UNDP's capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was considered.

The evaluation methodology adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.⁴ In line with UNDP's Gender Mainstreaming Strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming across the country programme and operations. Gender-disaggregated data were collected, where available, and assessed against programme outcomes.

The evaluation relied on information collected from different sources, which was then triangulated:

¹ The first *Assessment of Development Results: Evaluation of UNDP in Georgia* was conducted in 2010.

² The report also considered projects that had started in the first six months of 2019, without being able to assess their effectiveness.

³ The ICPEs adopt a streamlined methodology that differs from the previous *Assessments of Development Results*, which were structured according to the four standard criteria established by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

⁴ See website of the United Nations Evaluation Group: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

- A review of UNDP strategic and programme documents, project documents and monitoring reports, evaluations,⁵ research papers and other available country-related publications. The main documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 6, available online.
- An analysis of the programme portfolio and the development of theories of change, by programme area, to map the projects implemented against the goals set in the CPD. The theories of change are available in Annex 8 (online).
- The response by the country office to a pre-mission evaluation questionnaire, which was further discussed and validated during the country mission.
- In-person and phone interviews with 75 stakeholders, including UNDP staff, government representatives, UN country team representatives, development partners, civil society organizations (CSOs), academia and beneficiaries. The interviews were used to collect data and assess stakeholders' perceptions of the scope and effectiveness of programme interventions, determine factors affecting performance, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the UNDP programme. A full list of interviewees is available in Annex 5 (online).
- A two-day field visit to the Autonomous Republic of Adjara was undertaken to assess the results of selected initiatives and conduct semi-structured interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries.⁶

The draft ICPE report was quality-assured by two IEO internal reviewers, then submitted to the country office and RBEC for factual errors and comments, and finally shared with the Government and other national partners.

Evaluation limitations

The limited time and resources available to conduct the evaluation affected the team's capacity to collect primary data and consult data sources that had not already been systematized. Most of the research for the evaluation was conducted remotely, with only five days spent in the country (from 20 to 24 May 2019). This influenced the level of consultation with national stakeholders as well as the number and depth of field visits to interview beneficiaries and directly assess project results.

To address these challenges, the ICPE planned, and made extensive use of, the pre-mission evaluation questionnaire in which the country office was asked to provide evidence that responded to the evaluation questions. In addition, the team put considerable effort into planning its visit to Georgia in coordination with the country office, to ensure that key stakeholders (including representatives of Government, CSOs, donors and, to a less extent, individual project beneficiaries) were consulted, and their views heard.

1.3 Country context

Georgia is an upper-middle-income country with an absolute poverty rate of 21.9 percent.⁷ Despite the many challenges it has encountered since independence from the former Soviet Union, including armed conflict, occupied regions and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons, Georgia has managed to improve its performance on a number of development indicators by implementing wide-ranging institutional and economic reforms. Georgia's Human Development Index score increased from 0.735 in 2010 to 0.786 in 2018.⁸

After declining in 2014-2015, both the gross domestic product and the gross national income per capita (current US\$) have grown by 12 percent and

⁵ Sixteen decentralized evaluations were conducted in the period under consideration.

⁶ The ICPE team had initially planned to visit the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia; however, the trip was interrupted by the deteriorating security situation in the area. Only one of the scheduled meetings was conducted.

⁷ Georgia graduated from a lower- to upper-middle-income country in 2019-2020. Source: World Bank.

⁸ See the *Human Development Report* website: <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/GEO>.

8 percent per cent, respectively, since 2016.⁹ Equal distribution of income, however, remains a challenge. Even though the Gini index declined from 40.1 in 2010 to 36.5 in 2016,¹⁰ it is still relatively high. Income is unevenly distributed between urban and rural residents¹¹ and among various population groups. Internally displaced persons and conflict-affected populations are particularly disadvantaged.¹²

Rural areas in Georgia have rich, yet untapped, development potential. The rate of rural poverty was as high as 27.4 percent in 2016, decreasing to 23.1 percent in 2018.¹³ Agriculture remains a low-productivity and low-growth sector of the economy. Underdeveloped infrastructure and services hamper the advancement of tourism, production and entrepreneurship.

Unemployment declined from 16.9 percent in 2013 to 12.7 percent in 2018, reaching its lowest level in the last 15 years.¹⁴ Unemployment is significantly higher among youth (aged 15 to 24), reaching 30.4 percent nationwide and up to 40 percent in some regions.¹⁵ Skill mismatches and underemployment persist, however, along with a large informal sector. Georgia lacks a qualified labour force, especially in rural areas. Young people with vocational education and training have a better chance of being employed; however, only 15 percent of Georgians under age 35 hold a vocational and educational training degree.¹⁶

Georgia is striving to become an integral part of the European and Euro-Atlantic space, and this desire drives reforms in many areas of public policy. Under the auspices of the 2014 Association Agreement with the European Union (EU) – including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA), which entered into force in 2016 – Georgia

committed to align its legislation to comply with EU standards and values.

Over the years, Georgia has been working on establishing democratic institutions. Two sets of constitutional amendments (in 2013 and 2018) reduced the powers of the President and served to establish a parliamentary system of governance. The Government subsequently implemented important measures to ensure free and fair elections at national and local levels, enhance decentralization, and increase the responsiveness and openness of government institutions. As part of its reform of the public administration, the Government adopted a Law on Public Service (2015) that aims to develop a more professional and independent civil service with greater accountability and responsiveness. In recent years, Georgia has positioned itself as a regional leader in the fight against corruption and approved an Anti-corruption Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-2020. According to Transparency International, Georgia's ranking in the organization's Corruption Perceptions Index improved by four positions since 2015, up to 44 out of 180 countries in 2019. Georgia also reached the 44th position in the 2018 Global Right to Information Rating, with constant improvements registered since 2011.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the country still faces certain challenges with regards to political rights and civil liberties, perceived elite corruption, independence of the judiciary, and respect for the rule of law.¹⁸

Positive developments have taken place in the area of human rights protection after the introduction of penitentiary system reforms and other legislative and policy initiatives, including the Migration Strategy and Action Plan. Nevertheless, problems persist in protecting the rights of ethnic, religious and sexual

⁹ World Bank data.

¹⁰ See the World Bank website: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/georgia>.

¹¹ United Nations Children's Fund, Welfare Monitoring Survey 2017, p. 10.

¹² World Bank, *Social Exclusion and Inclusion in Georgia: A Country Social Analysis Overview*, April 2017.

¹³ GEOSTAT.

¹⁴ International Monetary Fund, 2019.

¹⁵ World Bank, 2018.

¹⁶ UNDP website.

¹⁷ See: <https://countryeconomy.com/government/global-right-information-rating/georgia>.

¹⁸ European Parliament, *European Implementation Assessment of the Association Agreements between the EU and Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine*, 2018; Freedom House, Country Profile, 2018.

minorities as well as people with disabilities, providing equal access to public services, and guaranteeing gender equality. Georgia has a Gender Inequality Index of 0.350, ranking 78 out of 160 countries.¹⁹

Armed conflicts in the 1990s and 2008 left Georgia with two occupied territories (the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia), lost lives, some 293,000 internally displaced persons,²⁰ and shattered confidence between divided communities. Restoring trust and addressing the most pressing needs of those affected by the crisis is vital for reconciliation and the peaceful transformation of the conflict. However, in the absence of a political solution – and with a continuously challenging relationship between Georgia and the Russian Federation due to ongoing occupation – major obstacles hamper the consolidation of peace dividends, prevent the full enjoyment of human rights, and negatively affect development.²¹

Georgia's development is also affected by the unsustainable use of natural resources and an underdeveloped institutional and legislative environment, which has contributed to the deterioration of water, air and land resources. The livelihoods of local populations have been further threatened by natural hazards (including droughts, earthquakes, floods, landslides and storms), whose frequency and magnitude have increased due to climate change.²² In recent years, the Government has taken important measures to improve its environmental performance, respond to a changing climate and prepare for disasters. These measures include the adoption of the first National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Strategy for 2017-2020, the decision to join the EU's Energy Community and increase its share of renewables, and a number of other actions in compliance with the Paris Declaration, the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement and multilateral environmental agreements.

1.4 UNDP programme in Georgia

UNDP Georgia has aligned its 2016-2020 CPD with national priorities and the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development (UNPSD) document. The CPD contributed to outcomes 1,2,5 and 6 of the 2014-2017 UNDP Strategic Plan.

The CPD was grounded in the concept of sustainable human and economic development “as a reflection of the degree to which people are empowered to participate in pluralistic decision-making through strong institutions, balance of power, and the rule of law, free from discrimination and with equal opportunity to contribute to, and share in, sustainable economic growth.”²³ The document identified four priority areas for its assistance to the country: democratic governance, jobs and livelihoods, human security and community resilience, and disaster risk reduction and environment.

Under the **democratic governance** priority area, UNDP aimed to improve the balance of power among the legislative, judiciary and executive branches, and strengthen the capacities of the Government to formulate, implement, and monitor policies in a participatory and gender-sensitive manner through public administration and civil service reforms. UNDP also supported the decentralization of government competencies and financial resources. In the area of gender and human rights, UNDP supported the implementation of the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan, the promotion of legislative amendments to ensure free legal aid to the most vulnerable, as well as the approval of laws and policies to secure women's participation in decision-making. UNDP also continued working to strengthen Georgia's integrated border management. In this priority area, UNDP mobilized US\$33.7 million (core and non-core resources) for the implementation of 15 projects.

¹⁹ Gender inequality in Georgia is higher than that recorded in countries such as Armenia (0.262) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (0.166), which present similar levels of overall human development. Source: UNDP 2018 Statistical Update.

²⁰ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2018.

²¹ In 2008, the Geneva International Discussions were launched, co-chaired by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the United Nations and the European Union.

²² In 2015, flash floods and landslides led to a major flow of mud and debris in the capital, killing 22 people.

²³ Country Programme Document 2016-2020.

Under the **jobs and livelihoods** priority area, UNDP applied an integrated rural development approach to addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities of rural populations. At the policy level, it supported the promotion of user-centred, inclusive and sustainable rural development policies and plans. At the same time, it promoted employment opportunities for the most vulnerable, through support to small and medium enterprises and cooperatives, and vocational education and training. In this priority area, UNDP mobilized \$21.8 million to implement eight projects.

Under the **human security and community resilience** priority area, UNDP supported conflict-affected communities through a two-pronged approach that leveraged synergies between meeting basic needs (health and education, but also

agricultural development) and confidence-building initiatives to strengthen community engagement across the divide. The country office has implemented 13 projects in this area with a total budget of \$21.6 million.

Under the **disaster risk reduction and environment** priority area, UNDP supported state institutions in developing and implementing national action plans and evidence-based policies for environmental protection, sustainable management of natural resources (including national parks and water resources), and DRR. UNDP's support to reducing the vulnerabilities of populations to natural, climate- and human-induced disasters and to supporting the Government in fulfilling its environmental obligations encompassed 17 projects,²⁴ with a total budget of \$21.1 million.

²⁴ This does not include two regional projects, which have not been mentioned in Atlas: Kura II and EMBLAS. It also does not include a Global Environment Facility-funded Small Grants Support project, which is implemented by the UN Office for Project Services, but for which UNDP hired staff members and supervised project implementation.



CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

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2.1 Democratic governance



By 2020, expectations of citizens of Georgia for voice, rule of law, public sector reforms, and accountability are met by stronger systems of democratic governance at all levels

Finding 1: UNDP has contributed to improving the country's system of checks and balances by working on different accountability streams (see Figure 1). It strengthened the role and functioning of the Parliament, enhanced the role of civil society in governance, and improved the transparency, accountability and functioning of the Government. UNDP also effectively contributed to further promote the decentralization of government functions by supporting the approval of the Decentralization Strategy and Action Plan. Further efforts are needed to promote gender mainstreaming in public administration reform and link the latter to ongoing public financial management reform.

Accountability in Georgia is crucial as the country has been seeking, since its independence in 1991, to build a democratic system that rests on a balance of power among the executive, legislative and judiciary. UNDP has supported this democratic transition from the earliest years and assisted in the ambitious governance reforms that followed the Rose Revolution of 2003. More recently, the country office has provided support in implementing the country's decision in 2018 to move to a full parliamentary democracy.

UNDP contributed to strengthening **political accountability** by enhancing the capacity of the Parliament through institutional reforms and streamlined law-making processes. The adoption of new parliamentary Rules of Procedure was often mentioned as the most notable result of UNDP's support in this area. UNDP helped streamline law-making processes in the Parliament and introduced new oversight mechanisms, giving the Parliament authority to scrutinize government activities and undertake thematic inquiries engaging civil society. Notably, the country office has created the conditions under which the Parliament can now summon government ministers to account for their activities, and require the Prime Minister to present annual reports on the implementation of the Government's programme.²⁵ The country office also assisted with the development of manuals and guidance to standardize the operations of parliamentary committees and promote thematic inquiries, and supported the establishment of the Parliament's research centre so it could provide support to evidence-based policymaking and oversight.²⁶ With UNDP's assistance, the Parliament adopted an action plan on the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, which contributed to both enhancing the Parliament's oversight role over the implementation of the agreement and improved efficiency by clarifying what had to be done, by whom, and when.

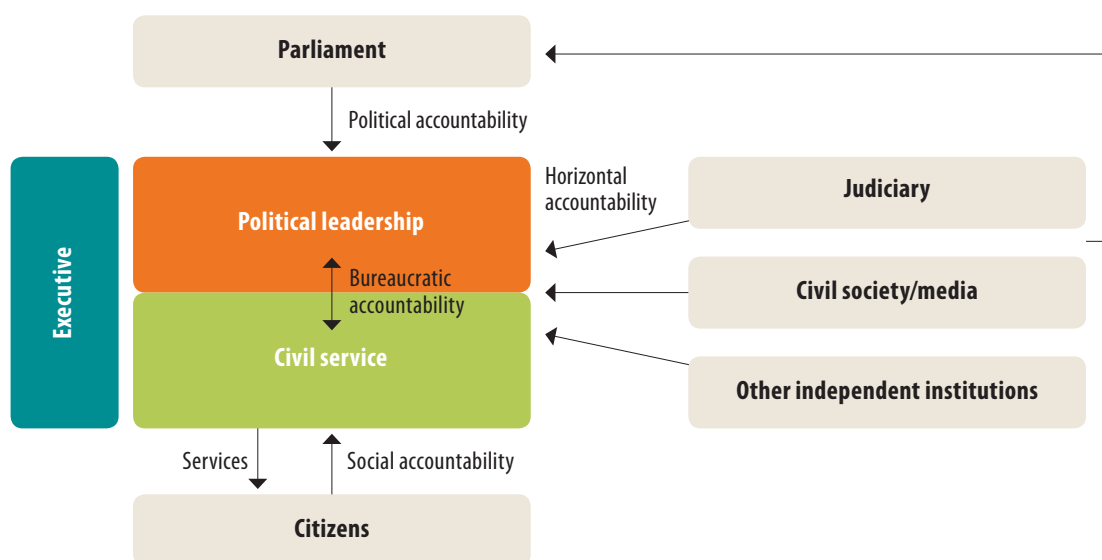
UNDP promoted **legislative openness and transparency** through the establishment of the Permanent Parliamentary Council on Open Governance, and its support to various Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiatives, including the organization of the 5th OGP Global Summit.²⁷ Starting in 2015, the Parliament introduced its first multi-year strategic action plans for parliamentary committees. According to the 2017 *Global Parliamentary Report*, the action plans facilitated a structured approach to work and improved the effectiveness and efficiency

²⁵ The Rules of Procedure set out the regulations for the work of the Parliament and its bodies, as well as its relations with the other branches of the Government and state institutions.

²⁶ Legal entities can hire researchers and receive contributions.

²⁷ Georgia joined the Open Government Partnership in 2011. In 2015, the Parliament's endorsement of the Declaration on Parliamentary Openness and the adoption of the country's first legislative openness action plan got Georgia the first OGP Government Champions Award. In 2017, Georgia ranked fifth in the Open Budget Index.

FIGURE 1. Public sector accountability in Georgia



Source: The ICPE team's visualization of key accountability streams based on the literature review

of committees' oversight performance.²⁸ The scope of the action plans was then expanded to take into account the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), thus promoting a better understanding of the link between national reforms and the SDGs.²⁹ Further, the country office promoted citizens' engagement in the work of the Parliament by allowing them to submit e-petitions, collect e-signatures for legislative proposals and comment on draft laws online. A mobile application and public information module have been created to help citizens stay informed and engaged in parliamentary activities.

UNDP promoted **horizontal accountability** by supporting independent institutions such as the judiciary, media and civil society. While work with the judiciary has focused on expanding access to justice for vulnerable and excluded persons by engaging with the Legal Aid Service and the

Georgian Bar Association (see Finding 3), support for the media and civil society has also been extensive. UNDP supported media monitoring primarily in the context of elections, as a way to increase journalistic standards, promote diversity and build the media's watchdog functions.³⁰ During the 2018 presidential election, UNDP worked with national CSOs to examine the impartiality and balance of reporting by 38 national media outlets. UNDP also facilitated a public discussion of media monitoring results through TV talk shows and web chats. The media project also contributed to improving media legislation and made broadcasters' finances more transparent. With regards to CSOs, both the UNDP's Public Administration Reform and Governance Reform Fund projects facilitated their involvement in decision-making processes to provide evidence and practical solutions that would enhance policy planning and public service delivery, including

²⁸ Within the framework of the 2017 Open Parliament Action Plan, 8 out of 15 parliamentary committees developed annual reports and action plans with the involvement of CSOs. The Parliament institutionalized the activity for all its committees, setting forth a respective provision in the new Rules of Procedure.

²⁹ UNDP and Inter-Parliamentary Union, *Global Parliamentary Report 2017*, 2017.

³⁰ Since the launch of the first media-related activities in 2010, UNDP has contributed to the strengthening of the media during seven major elections in Georgia. In the current programme cycle, UNDP supported the media monitoring of parliamentary polls (2016), local self-governance elections (2017) and the presidential elections (2018) under the Media Monitoring of the 2018 Presidential Elections project.

around environmental issues. Civil society organizations have also been involved in the Parliament Strengthening project and gender-focused activities. Despite their important role, the sustainability of CSOs remains weak, however, since they remain largely reliant on donor funding.

UNDP contributed to strengthening **bureaucratic accountability** by enhancing the capacity of the bureaucratic apparatus to deliver quality services to citizens. The Public Administration Reform project directly supported the implementation of Georgia's road map in three of its six priority areas: policy development, civil service reform and service delivery. While work on public administration reform is ongoing, a number of achievements supported by UNDP may be noted. In the area of policymaking, the Administration of the Government has developed a set of policy guidelines that provide a sound basis for effective policy development across ministries and state agencies. Two hundred and fifty civil servants of all executive public bodies have been trained in public policy analysis, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The development of an electronic system for the monitoring and evaluation of policies at the national level is also under way. In the area of civil service reform, performance appraisals have been conducted twice in 2018 and provide an important benchmark for assessing current challenges and progress over time. A serious discussion has started within the Government on the important, but still unresolved, issue of dispute resolutions within the public sector. In the area of service delivery, UNDP has provided important contributions to the Public Service Development Agency in further integrating public services and, where possible, making them available online. The establishment of the Public Service Hall in Tbilisi, which provides integrated services to thousands

of citizens, is a major achievement in which UNDP has played an important role. UNDP also partnered with the Data Exchange Agency to improve online services and their accessibility. More than 400 public services were converted into digital format and made available online,³¹ and e-governance services were introduced in 13 public service halls and 50 community centres. According to the country office, the use of e-governance platforms reportedly increased 20 times since 2012. For all these achievements, there are also challenges. For example, work in the area of policymaking should have been linked more closely to the public financial management reform that is under way with support from other international partners.³² Also, the sustainability of training for civil servants should be strengthened by ensuring that they will be effectively delivered by government structures in the future.³³ Additionally, more attention should be paid to gender equality in the process of public administration reform – this process presents a unique opportunity for establishing incentives and mechanisms that ensure more equitable opportunities and representation of women and men in public service.

UNDP contributed to enhancing **social accountability**, particularly at the local level, by promoting decentralization and supporting citizen engagement with the governance process. Through sustained engagement, UNDP promoted the development of important policy instruments that bring decision-making closer to citizens, hence strengthening the latter's ability to hold public officials accountable.³⁴ These include the 2015 Law on the Development of Mountainous Regions, the Law on Public-Private Partnerships,³⁵ and the 2020-2025 Decentralization Strategy, which was finally approved in December 2019. UNDP also enhanced

³¹ See: www.my.gov.ge.

³² In December 2019, the Government adopted new regulatory and methodological documents on policy development and coordination, which establish closer relations between policy and the financial planning process.

³³ The Administration of Georgia and the Civil Service Bureau have included a training course called Public Policy Analysis, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation into annual civil servants' professional development plans.

³⁴ Tbilisi, Bolnisi, Dusheti, Rustavi, Khoni and Tsiklauri municipalities were engaged in implementing the national OGP action plan and developed integrity strengthening strategies and action plans.

³⁵ The Public-Private Partnership Law, which came into force on 1 July 2018, provides municipalities with increased authority to engage in partnerships with the private sector through simplified procedures.

the capacities of local governments to deliver services³⁶ by strengthening their strategic planning capacities and establishing human resources management systems and performance management systems for selected services. A few stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE advocated for future work in this area to be more focused around specific sectors of interventions (such as waste management), based on the functions already delegated to municipalities or new functions that will be transferred following the approval of the Decentralization Strategy.

UNDP promoted citizens' participation in decision-making both directly through Local Action Groups and Unions of Local Active Citizens, and indirectly through regular surveys on the quality of local public services.³⁷ The survey results are mainly used by the Decentralization and Regional Local Development projects for planning purposes. Outside of UNDP, the survey informed the development by the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of policy documents, including the Decentralization Strategy and the High Mountain Development Strategy. Regular surveys represent a very valuable tool for both UNDP and the Government, and the use of the data therein should be further promoted to inform decision-making.

Finding 2: UNDP has shown flexibility in the delivery of interventions in the area of governance, adapting its support to the country's changing needs and priorities. Synergies among projects have been well exploited, although room for improvement remains.

UNDP aptly responded to the country's rapidly changing political context and frequent changes in the government agenda. Several stakeholders

interviewed for the ICPE praised the country office's flexibility, which was made possible in part due to the project design, and the willingness of donors to adjust plans to government priorities. Primarily demand-driven, the Governance Reform Fund project was able to respond in a flexible fashion to a variety of needs in the public sector through policy advice, technical support and skills development in the area of service delivery, accountability, human rights and rule of law, gender equality, and environmental governance. Many initiatives implemented under this project are worth mentioning, including support for the implementation of the SDGs, the elaboration of a national Renewable Energy Action Plan, the development of a national disaster loss and recovery system, the introduction of the Extended Producer Responsibility principle as required by the Waste Management Code, and the development of the national statistical system. The Public Administration Reform project has also flexibly and rapidly responded to evolving priorities through its 'emerging needs' and 'grant' components.³⁸

Overall, projects under the democratic governance portfolio have created a good division of labour among them, and activities have been well coordinated. While the Governance Reform Fund aimed to build the institutional capacities of various government organizations without a strict direction, the Public Administration Reform project remained more focused on the implementation of key aspects of the public administration reform road map. Cooperation between the two projects was promoted through shared staff resources, including a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) expert, the coordination of meetings, and joint initiatives worth \$0.5 million in areas covered by their respective

³⁶ The first phase of the Fostering Regional and Local Development project (2012-2017) focused on assistance to the Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure of Georgia in key reform areas. The second phase (2018- 2021) is supporting and promoting ongoing reforms, focusing on decentralization, local economic development, civic engagement and increased capacities of national and local institutions to deliver quality services at the local level. In 2018, UNDP also launched a project called Fostering Decentralization and Good Governance at the Local Level, with support from the Danish Government.

³⁷ Starting in 2013, UNDP has published, every two years, nationwide research on citizens' satisfaction with local public services delivered by municipalities and the central Government.

³⁸ The 'emerging needs' component is a discretionary tool available to the Public Administration Reform project to support specific issues connected to the larger components of the project. The project's 'grant initiatives' supported the engagement of CSOs through research and civic initiatives.

mandates.³⁹ The Public Administration Reform project has also collaborated with a project on local governance that focuses on performance appraisals for the civil service. It promotes the same methodology at the municipality level and is now seeking to enhance its cooperation with the Parliament Strengthening project.

While the degree of cooperation among projects has been improving, stronger synergies could have been achieved. As explained in Finding 13, the joint programmes on gender and human rights could have channelled more of their support through the infrastructure of other larger projects, such as Public Administration Reform, the Governance Reform Fund or those geared to strengthening parliamentary democracy, all of which have gender and human rights components. The potential for further collaboration between the Public Administration Reform and the Governance Reform Fund projects and the local governance portfolio also seems significant.

Finding 3: UNDP has played an important role in promoting the protection of human rights among vulnerable groups, embracing the principle of leaving no one behind. It supported the institutional strengthening of national stakeholders across different areas, including law enforcement oversight, access to justice, persons with disabilities, and protection of privacy. Limited national commitment at top levels and cultural resistance have partly affected the effectiveness of UNDP's interventions in this area.

Under the joint United Nations Human Rights for All project, UNDP supported the Inter-Agency Council on Human Rights and its secretariat in the development, implementation and monitoring of the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan 2016-2018 and 2018-2020, in areas prioritized by

the EU-Georgia agreement. The strategy and action plan led to the establishment in the Ministry of Interior of a department for human rights protection overseeing investigations of discrimination, hate crimes and violence against women; it also promoted the creation of a mechanism to investigate abuse by law enforcement bodies. UNDP's support to the Inter-Agency Council on Human Rights also included amendments to its regulations, the establishment of a website,⁴⁰ the development of guidelines on a human rights-based approach for government agencies, and targeted training of government officials to increase their capacity to report to international human rights treaty bodies.

UNDP contributed to increasing public awareness of the human rights strategy and its action plans and implementation, strongly advocating for the adoption of the equality chapter in the strategy. The country office conducted several human rights awareness campaigns and created a platform where prominent personalities shared messages of tolerance and anti-discrimination.⁴¹ It is also increasing its involvement in the promotion of the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people, who face daily discrimination and pervasive violence.⁴²

UNDP supported the strengthening of the Parliament's capacities in human rights monitoring and protection through systemic assistance to the Committee on Human Rights and Civil Integration and the Committee on Legal Issues. Internal regulations of both committees were amended, and strategic vision documents and two-year action plans were developed to make their work more efficient and transparent. The capacities of the Personal Data Protection Inspector's Office have also been strengthened by developing its institutional

³⁹ In partnership with the Civil Service Bureau, the projects are jointly supporting the establishment of a network of civil servants, an institutional mechanism that serves as a conduit of information and knowledge across the civil service and a catalyst for civil service reform. Also, in the context of civil service reform, the projects have helped the Civil Service Bureau in raising awareness among civil servants on the new Law on Civil Service and anti-corruption mechanisms. Another joint initiative has been the support to the Public Service Hall in improving service delivery standards and training for staff to more adequately serve persons with disabilities.

⁴⁰ See: myrights.gov.ge.

⁴¹ See: Standup4humanrights.ge.

⁴² *Report of the Independent Expert on Protection against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, UN document A/HRC/41/45/Add.1.

development plan 2017-2021, the action plan 2017-2018, sector-specific guidelines, and implementing targeted training for national and local authorities.

UNDP's work has also focused on creating a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities. UNDP assisted the Public Defender's Office's Department of the Rights of People with Disabilities in the elaboration and implementation of a strategy and action plan, and the development of guidelines on the monitoring of the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. More than 700 front-desk operators at the Public Service Hall were trained to deliver services to persons with disabilities, and 400 signs were created for the deaf to cover concepts that had not yet been part of the Georgian sign language. UNDP is now assisting the Ministry of Justice in the elaboration of the financial assessment of the Law on People with Disabilities and continues to work on adapting public buildings to ensure that people with disabilities are not discriminated against in their ability to receive services because of access issues.

In the area of access to justice, UNDP has, for some time, supported access to legal aid for the most vulnerable people. UNDP strengthened the organizational capacity of the Legal Aid Service,⁴³ including through the development of an electronic case management system, the installation of a new website (available in three languages and fully adapted to the needs of those with vision impairments), and training for its staff and lawyers. UNDP supported the establishment of a Legal Aid Providers' Network and promoted awareness-raising campaigns on legal aid as a critical component of the justice system. As a result, at least 50,000

people, especially in rural areas and small towns, have reportedly benefited.

To expand access to justice, UNDP also supported the expansion of mediation and arbitration as alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. Key activities in this area have been the drafting of the Law on Mediation (which passed in 2019), a series of publications on alternative dispute resolution,⁴⁴ and raising public awareness on these mechanisms through nationwide communication campaigns.⁴⁵ Support was also provided to organizations working in the field of arbitration to increase their institutional capacities.⁴⁶

UNDP's effectiveness in the area of human rights has, however, been hampered by limited government engagement and some cultural resistance to change. Partly thanks to UNDP's advocacy, the Inter-Agency Council on Human Rights resumed its work in April 2019 after a hiatus of three years, and despite high-profile cases of alleged violations. The mechanism that had been set up to investigate alleged torture and other human rights violations by law enforcement officials was not given full-fledged independence and a dedicated mandate, thus affecting its effectiveness, which was noted both by the EU and the Public Defender's Office.⁴⁷ Some resistance to UNDP's work in the area of LGBTQI rights was recorded during interviews with national stakeholders. The ICPE maintains that UNDP can play an important role, in partnership with other UN agencies, in further supporting Georgian authorities in operationalizing the country's coordination mechanism and upholding fundamental freedoms, to advance the country in the implementation of key reforms for the protection of human rights in line with the EU-Georgia Association Agreement agenda.

⁴³ The Legal Aid Service is a state organization that provides free legal assistance to socially vulnerable citizens who would not otherwise be able to pay for the services of an attorney. Victims of violence receive free legal services irrespective of income levels.

⁴⁴ The first *Arbitration Glossary* in Georgian, research on traditional mediation in Georgia, *Arbitration Guide for City (District) Court Judges*, and the *Arbitration Guide for Courts of Appeals Judges*.

⁴⁵ The campaigns included public events in eight cities across Georgia, training in mediation for more than 800 lawyers, high-level international conferences – Tbilisi Mediation Days (November 2016 and 2018) and Arbitration Days in Tbilisi (October 2016, 2017, and 2018) – and assistance to 10 universities to introduce academic courses in mediation.

⁴⁶ These have included the Georgian Association of Arbitrators, the Georgian International Arbitration Centre and the Arbitration Initiative Georgia.

⁴⁷ Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2018, United States Department of State and Implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement, November 2018.

Finding 4: UNDP has been involved for some time in integrated border management in Georgia. It supported the operational performance of border management agencies and promoted cooperation between Georgia and Azerbaijan.

UNDP has made significant contributions in the area of integrated border management since 2013. In the current CPD cycle, UNDP supported the relevant authorities of Georgia and Azerbaijan in securing their borders and facilitating the legal crossing of persons and goods. UNDP has strengthened the capacities of border agencies and has reportedly enabled them to more effectively tackle smuggling and trafficking as well as ease people's mobility across the border. The border management projects also contributed to improving phyto-sanitary and veterinary control standards by providing training to staff and developing the necessary infrastructure and equipment on both sides of the border. UNDP supported the renovation of infrastructure and the technological upgrading of the Red Bridge Border Crossing Point to ensure compliance with EU standards.

2.2 Jobs and livelihoods



Finding 5: Through the long-running European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development (ENPARD), UNDP effectively supported the authorities' efforts to promote rural development through policy and organizational

capacity development interventions and contributed to the creation of employment opportunities in rural areas. The project could strengthen its linkages and synergies with relevant projects in the governance area. In addition, further efforts should be promoted to assess the project's impact in terms of socio-economic development and enhanced livelihoods.

UNDP has been implementing the ENPARD programme since 2013. While the first phase (2014-2017) was focused on developing the potential of agriculture, the second and third phases (2016-2019 and 2018-2022) have revolved around the promotion of rural development at large and support to small and medium enterprises.⁴⁸

In the current CPD cycle, UNDP supported the development of the national Rural Development Strategy and Action Plan 2017-2020 in consultation with all regions, to address structural and systemic challenges that hamper rural development and promote efficient delivery of rural services. UNDP also contributed to the development of an electronic system to monitor the results achieved by the strategy. In parallel, ENPARD assisted with the formulation of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara's Rural Development Strategy and 2017-2020 Action Plan and helped develop an electronic monitoring system.

By promoting the EU 'LEADER' approach to community-led economic and social development,⁴⁹ UNDP encouraged the participation of citizens in decision-making through Unions of Local Active Citizens and Local Action Groups. It did so by contributing ideas and developing pilot projects that were then funded by the local government or business incubators. ENPARD also played a significant role in the establishment of the Georgian Rural Development Network, which serves as a virtual platform for networking and exchanging information among main rural development stakeholders, including national and local governments,

⁴⁸ The total budget for ENPARD in Georgia, covering the period of 2013-2022 is €179.5 million (I Phase – €52 million, 2014-2017; II Phase – €50 million, 2016-2019; III Phase – €77.5 million, 2018-2022).

⁴⁹ LEADER is a local development approach that has been used in the EU for 20 years to engage local actors in the design and delivery of strategies, decision-making and resource allocation for the development of their rural areas. LEADER projects are managed by Local Action Groups and involve a small rural area.

CSOs, Local Action Groups and small and medium enterprises. The project organized training and workshops on various topics (such as public policy, leadership, management, and advocacy for rural development) that benefited both the Government and civil society.

In Adjara, ENPARD supported the establishment of the agro-service centre, which is now a fully developed institution, and the establishment of agricultural cooperatives. According to programme staff, about half of the cooperatives established in Adjara since 2012 are reportedly still functioning well. In the rest of Georgia, UNDP has yet to start direct support to municipalities around sustainable rural development, with a focus on agriculture, food safety, sanitary standards and infrastructure.⁵⁰

ENPARD established synergies with other local initiatives in promoting bottom-up approaches, joint planning in target municipalities, and improvement of internal business processes. Given ENPARD's important role in supporting the emergence of civil society in rural areas (see Finding 13), the ICPE considers that its connections with interventions aimed at strengthening local governance could be further strengthened, a point also made by stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE. In addition, despite a good monitoring and evaluation system that included an assessment of training effectiveness and regular evaluations, it remains unclear how, and if, the country office has assessed the programme's impact in terms of strengthened livelihoods and socioeconomic benefits.

Finding 6: UNDP supported government efforts to make vocational and educational training more responsive to labour market needs. It supported the establishment of a modern vocational and educational training system in agriculture, introduced up-to-date learning models, and addressed knowledge gaps of farmers through agricultural extension or consultation services. Participating

colleges are now better aligned to the demands of the local labour market, teachers have been trained, and vocational and educational training sites have been refurbished. Initial results appear promising in terms of employment and enhanced agricultural productivity. The partnership with the private sector in this area can be further strengthened.

UNDP's support has been instrumental in helping the Government and the private sector address the skills mismatch in the labour market. In 2016, with funding from the EU, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Governments of Norway and Romania, UNDP began a collaboration with the Ministry of Education to reform Georgia's system of professional education.

The country office supported the development of a new Vocational and Educational Training Law⁵¹ and related sub-legal acts and by-laws. These introduced a variety of new approaches, such as work-based learning, lifelong learning, integration of general education learning outcomes into vocational and educational training programmes (IV level), and student-centred and learning outcome-oriented methods, to ensure that the education system matched the skills requested by the market. The country office also assisted with the upgrading of educational standards and curricula of vocational and educational training colleges, as well as the provision of high-quality training and extension services for farmers. Labour market-responsive employment schemes and work-based learning have been piloted in seven regions, in collaboration with the Georgian Farmers Association.⁵² The impact assessment of the SDC-funded Vocational and Educational Training project revealed that 72 percent of project graduates found employment and their income increased as a result of graduation, particularly in the beekeeping, animal health and wine-making sectors. Between 40 percent and 66 percent of farmers reported an increase in agricultural productivity. As

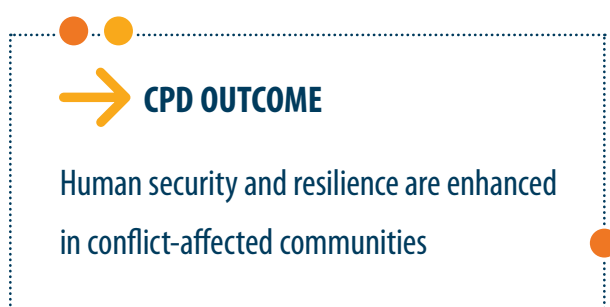
⁵⁰ Pilot initiatives will be implemented in the municipalities of Lagodekhi, Dedoplistskaro, Tetrtskaro, Borjomi, Akhalkalaki, Kazbegi, Keda and Khulo, starting at the end of 2019.

⁵¹ The Vocational and Educational Training Law also planned for the modernization of 24 public vocational and educational training colleges serving more than 10,000 students.

⁵² This experience is expected to be scaled up to the national level through the implementation of the new law.

recommended by the evaluation of the EU-funded project,⁵³ closer partnerships with the private sector can further ensure long-term sustainability of UNDP's actions in this area. The ICPE also considers that the country office could seek further synergies between vocational and educational training activities and rural development interventions under ENPARD, building on the joint assessments of vocational and educational training services gaps undertaken at the municipal level.

2.3 Human security and community resilience



Finding 7: In the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia,⁵⁴ UNDP reinforced the capacity of CSOs to deliver services and bring social change. The initiatives it supported responded to important health and education needs and contributed to the well-being of the population in conflict-affected territories. Development needs in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia remain high, but work is constrained by the political context and the limitations posed to the country office's ability to work with de facto authorities.

Many UNDP interventions in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia – including the Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism and the Civil Society Strengthening Programme – have been

managed through CSOs or designed to strengthen their functioning.⁵⁵ UNDP contributed to building their capacities as agents of change through coordination and networking events, project cycle management consultations, and training in conflict-sensitive programming. Civil society organizations reported that their institutional and professional competence increased as a result of UNDP's projects.⁵⁶ UNDP also created a civic resource centre for civil society initiatives, which was reportedly a "thriving" hub for activists and socially concerned citizens.

Through the Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism⁵⁷ and Horizons projects, UNDP contributed to improving people's livelihoods in several domains, including youth education, women's empowerment and health care. In 2018 only, about 1,900 students and teachers in 31 rural schools were provided with Internet access and information and communications technology equipment; a language learning centre was established; and two outpatient tuberculosis clinics were refurbished in line with international medical standards. Medical personnel were also trained in HIV prevention, outreach campaigns were organized, and rapid test systems delivered.

In the current programme cycle, UNDP has expanded its activities from humanitarian to more community development-oriented interventions, including agriculture and rural development as well as vocational and educational training. A network of nine small-scale markets for local farmers was established in 2016. Through the ENPARD II and III projects, a Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development was set up, and Local Action Groups have been created to develop local development strategies by district. Participatory approaches were initially regarded with suspicion by local stakeholders unused to

⁵³ *Deepening Linkages between Formal and Non-Formal Vocational and Educational Training System and the Labour Market Needs*, Project evaluation report, December 2017.

⁵⁴ South Ossetia remains off limits to all international organizations, with the exception of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁵⁵ A total of 187 initiatives were implemented in partnership with local CSOs through the COBERM project between 2010 and 2018.

⁵⁶ Final evaluation of COBERM phase III, July 2018.

⁵⁷ COBERM was initiated in May 2010 with EU funding. Two phases were implemented during 2010-2015. The third phase was launched in January 2016 for a duration of three years. According to programme documents, COBERM benefited 180,000 people. In 2017, COBERM was considered "the most efficient project" within the Georgia portfolio of the EU Instrument contributing to stability and peace.

collective planning, and were later challenged by a lack of trust among group members.⁵⁸ While praising the importance of sustained interventions over time, project reports also highlighted issues of sustainability with the institutions created, given the political context in which UNDP is working with no official relationship with de facto authorities. Interviewees advocated for the need to expand the community development portfolio in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, although they were not confident about its likelihood.

Finding 8: UNDP played an important coordination role among development partners in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia and helped maintain dialogue between the Georgian Government and Abkhaz de facto authorities.⁵⁹ It significantly enhanced contacts and people-to-people dialogue across the administrative boundary line. Anecdotal evidence points to enhanced social cohesion contributing to peace and stability, although some limitations of the current approach have surfaced.

UNDP played a critical role in the coordination of development partners in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. UNDP coordinated the discussion platform of the Abkhazia Strategic Coordination Partnership and, through the UNDP co-funded Peace and Development Adviser, supported the entire UN country team. UNDP managed common premises for United Nations resident agencies and implemented joint projects with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to enhance livelihood security and community resilience through agricultural development, health and education services.⁶⁰

Capitalizing on its impartiality and good standing, UNDP established trusted relations with key

stakeholders on both sides of the administrative boundary line. The Dialogue Coordination Mechanism that UNDP facilitated is considered the only formally established channel of communication between the Georgian Government and the Abkhazian de facto authorities. The mechanism facilitated rapid resolution of issues (such as transportation of human and animal medical supplies and equipment), which reportedly would have been challenging to solve otherwise.

Through its support to CSOs, the country office implemented 50 confidence-building initiatives designed to ease Abkhaz people out of their isolation and bridge the gap between them and Georgians, including those who were forced to leave the Abkhazia region at the time of the conflict. The Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism has proven an effective mechanism for testing new approaches to confidence-building and opening new communication channels across conflict divides.⁶¹ Georgian and Abkhazian non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worked together on environmental and gender-based violence issues. With UNDP's support, more than 1,000 Abkhaz patients received free medical assistance in Georgian clinics. UNDP also created a space for knowledge-sharing among professionals (for example, on health, water and DRR) across the line. Several interviewees, however, considered the cost of these initiatives too high (since meetings between the two parties always happened in a third, neutral territory) and suggested raising the profile of the participants to involve more local decision-makers. Some advocated for enhancing the cross-fertilization of knowledge and practices through the ENPARD and Vocational and Educational Training projects as well.

All interviewees praised UNDP's efforts to promote people-to-people contacts across the administrative

⁵⁸ Final evaluation of COBERM III, August 2018. The country office reports that, over time, appreciation for participatory local development approaches has grown and rural participants have engaged in small grant schemes.

⁵⁹ UNDP could not operate in Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia. The international Committee of the Red Cross is the only organization allowed to enter the territory.

⁶⁰ Enhancing Livelihoods and Employment Opportunities through Market-Based Agricultural Development Initiatives in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (with UNHCR), Horizons project – Strengthening Community Resilience in Abkhazia (with UNICEF), and ENPARD II and III (with FAO).

⁶¹ Seventy percent of the COBERM-funded projects involved contacts and collaboration across the administrative boundary line.

boundary line and bring assistance to the Abkhaz population, in the context of a very challenging environment. Some stakeholders were, however, unsure of the effects of UNDP's assistance on peace-building without a political solution. In the absence of reliable indicators and evaluative research on the effectiveness of confidence-building initiatives, the evidence on the results achieved by the different projects in terms of enhanced social cohesion and contribution to peace remains anecdotal.

2.4 Disaster risk reduction and the environment



Finding 9: UNDP substantially increased the environmental data collection and management capacities of government institutions. Collected data and information are being used to varying degrees for reporting and evidence-based decision-making. Data availability and use need to be further ensured and strengthened.

UNDP used a systemic approach to build the capacity of government institutions in the area of data collection, management and use. UNDP's technical assistance filled data and capacity gaps that had been identified through preliminary studies and assessments and promoted their use by the Government to inform policies.

In the climate change arena, UNDP supported the Government in fulfilling its international obligations to report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), for which a vast amount of data was needed, including on greenhouse gas emissions and nationally appropriate mitigation actions. UNDP assisted the Government in drafting an initial mercury inventory that was submitted to the Minamata Convention secretariat. An inventory of greenhouse gases and other information collected and analysed for UNFCCC reporting have been used for different purposes, including planning climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. For the three previous communication reports, UNDP hired independent experts to fulfil the task; however, the institutionalization of the process allowed the first and second bi-annual reports to the UNFCCC during the current CPD to be prepared by experts working for the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, national environmental NGOs and academics.

Much needed information was also generated through the Green Cities Initiative project, which collected data on urban mobility for the city of Batumi. Based on this information, UNDP assisted the Mayor's Office in designing an integrated urban mobility plan to reduce environmental pollution and improve the energy efficiency of transportation services. This plan was approved by the city's legislative body in 2018 and is currently under implementation.

Finally, UNDP assisted the Environmental Information and Education Centre (under the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture) to operationalize a web-based unified Environmental Information and Knowledge Management System, offering user-friendly access to data/information and the possibility of undertaking analysis. While the system was initially devised for reporting to the three Rio conventions only,⁶² it is now going to be used for accessing, monitoring and managing different sources of available environmental information

⁶² The Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UNFCCC.

by various stakeholders.⁶³ As the owner of the system, the Environmental Information and Education Centre is continuing with data entry, and it will incorporate the data generated by the hydrometeorological stations and the new project funded by the Green Climate Fund. The human and financial capacity of the ministry remains limited, however, and it continues to rely mostly on donor funds to support data collection and analysis.

Finding 10. UNDP contributed to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) by supporting government policies and measures across various economic sectors. The results of the pilot projects will need to be scaled up and replicated in order to promote a significant change, under the framework of a national policy on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

UNDP supported climate change mitigation efforts by both advocating for the incorporation of climate change considerations into the country's strategy documents⁶⁴ and facilitating the development of dedicated policy instruments. Of particular importance are the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, the national e-waste policy and regulatory framework, the updated HCFC regulations, and the Batumi City urban mobility plan.

UNDP implemented a number of projects that contributed to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, although not to a large extent. Importantly, the rehabilitation of about 4,000 hectares of degraded pastures and 300 hectares of migratory routes in the Vashlovani Protected Area in 2013-2016 resulted in offsetting the equivalent of 300,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas units. The implementation of three pilot initiatives under the

biomass production and utilization project, which demonstrated the benefits of switching from natural gas-burning to biomass-burning technologies, have so far resulted in the adoption of these technologies by only a small proportion of the population and public institutions (schools, for example). The limited uptake depended on several concomitant factors, including the wide availability of cheap firewood, the still low level of public awareness of the benefits of burning briquettes and other biomass, and the Government's plans for universal gasification. The wider adoption of these technologies also depends on the implementation of the renewable energy and energy efficiency laws and action plans.⁶⁵ In Ajara, alternative biomass-burning technologies were adopted by 55 families living in protected areas; solar water heating was also introduced, but it was a less favoured option due to its cost.

Reductions in greenhouse gas emissions are also expected from the implementation of the Green Cities Initiative in the pilot city of Batumi, where urban transport is the top source of these emissions.⁶⁶ For levels of greenhouse gases to be further reduced, it is necessary that relevant government institutions adopt and implement national strategies and regulations for sustainable urban transport. According to government sources, no clear agreement has yet been reached on what national institution will be responsible to take this initiative forward.

With regards to ozone-depleting substances, UNDP assisted the Government on the implementation of the HCFC phase-out management plan, responding to the country's obligations under the Montreal Protocol. The 2018 validation mission concluded that Georgia was in a full compliance

⁶³ UNDP recently helped to devise regulations on data access for different users and develop methodologies for improving data collection on land quality and other indicators. These methodologies and regulations will need to be approved by the Government and/or the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture.

⁶⁴ For example, the Regional Development Programme of Georgia 2018-2021, the national budgetary and financial management framework document (Basic Data and Directions for 2018-2021), the National DRR Strategy and Action Plan for 2017-2020, and the Rural Development Strategy 2017-2020.

⁶⁵ The National Renewable Energy Action Plan (2019-2020) was adopted by the Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development of Georgia in October 2019. The Renewable Energy Law was adopted by the Parliament of Georgia in December 2019.

⁶⁶ Batumi signed the Covenant of Mayors and committed itself to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by 2020. The urban mobility plan, elaborated with UNDP assistance, is under implementation.

with the phase-out schedule set by the Montreal Protocol.⁶⁷

Finding 11: UNDP played a significant role in laying the groundwork for reducing the risk of disasters and increasing the resilience of the country's population. It contributed to enhancing flood resistance in the Rioni River Basin, enlarged the surface area under the protected area regime, and promoted alternative opportunities for people whose livelihoods depended on natural resources in protected areas. Results at the national level are expected to be seen with the upscale of some interventions, including the enlargement of protected area coverage and the building of national capacities to address climate change.

UNDP contributed to improving the resilience of highly exposed regions of Georgia to hydrometeorological threats by developing the adaptive capacities of the Government and the population. The DRR capacity assessment, conducted together with the UN agencies at the end of the previous programme cycle, helped inform the development of the first National Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy for 2017-2020.⁶⁸ In the current CPD, UNDP strengthened human and technological capabilities of government institutions, including through the upgrading and modernization of the hydrometeorological observation and monitoring network for the Department of Hydrometeorology under the National Environmental Agency.⁶⁹ Numerous research studies were used to develop a flood zoning policy, flood-resilient building codes and a Flood Forecasting and Early Warning System. The latter continues functioning, providing useful information for planning DRR measures. Hazard maps are used by relevant municipalities for making risk-informed spatial planning and infrastructure development decisions.

UNDP also assisted the six involved municipalities in protecting riverbanks in 10 high-risk areas of the Rioni River Basin, making 4,000 people living in the area and 800 hectares of agricultural land more resilient. According to the project evaluation, UNDP played a transformative and catalytic role in the way that the country is approaching flood and flash flood management practices. Since completion of the work, no major flooding has been reported. The evaluation, however, expressed concern about the financial and institutional sustainability of the project results, as well as the need for replication and scaling up. The activities in this area are going to be significantly scaled up with the new \$70 million Green Climate Fund/SDC project that will cover all the country's major river basins, create a nationwide risk-informed early warning system and build infrastructure to enhance protection from a broad range of key climate-induced hazards.

The resilience of populations to climate change and natural disasters also increased due to the promotion of natural resource management practices. UNDP supported expanded coverage of protected areas in Ajara, which increased by 40 percent during 2016-2018. However, this was 15 percent smaller than initially planned, following a political decision on the matter.⁷⁰ A five-year initiative is now working to promote the financial sustainability of 12 protected areas. UNDP also assisted a small number of farmers living around the Vashlovani Protected Area to adopt improved pasture management practices and rehabilitate some infrastructure and degraded pastures, which adversely impact land productivity and can cause mudflows and landslides. To overcome the initial resistance of local populations whose livelihoods depend on natural resources, UNDP promoted the development of agricultural cooperatives and eco-tourism. The local population

⁶⁷ Source: A&E Environmental Consultants Ltd., *Verification of the Objectives and Goals Reached within the HCFC Phase-Out Management Plan (HPMP) Stage-I Tranche II in Georgia (2013-2017)*, Final report, 2018.

⁶⁸ The Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative is a global partnership that provides countries with capacity development services to help them reduce climate and disaster risk. This initiative was managed by the UNDP regional office, with the participation of UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and the World Food Programme.

⁶⁹ UNDP helped the department install 5 meteorological stations, 20 meteorological posts and 10 hydrological posts in selected places that were connected to the system.

⁷⁰ Source: *Results-Oriented Annual Report 2018*.

in the Ajara region was also involved in protected-area monitoring and governance activities.

2.5 Overall country programme implementation

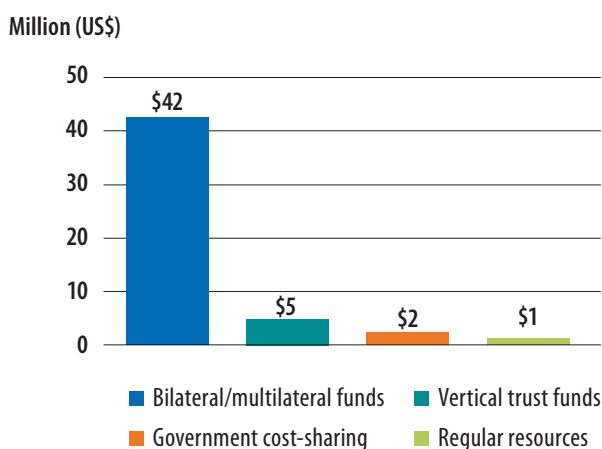
Finding 12: UNDP has performed remarkably in terms of resource mobilization, building a strong funding basis. The office has attracted funding from both traditional and new donors, including the Green Climate Fund, but still relies significantly on EU funding. Cost-sharing with national actors is the most sustainable path towards diversification.

UNDP's programme in Georgia strongly depends on external (bilateral, multilateral and vertical trust fund) resources (see Figure 2). In the period under consideration, core resources represented only 2 percent of the budget. While core resources were halved compared to the previous programme cycle (from \$4.8 million to \$2.3 million), resources mobilized by UNDP from donors rose by \$20.5 million (27 percent). In the current CPD, the country office was able to mobilize \$103 million (including a grant of \$27 million from the Green Climate Fund for a seven-year project on climate change adaptation that was approved in March 2018),⁷¹ and received

new funding from the Good Governance Fund, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish International Development Agency and the Government of Turkey.

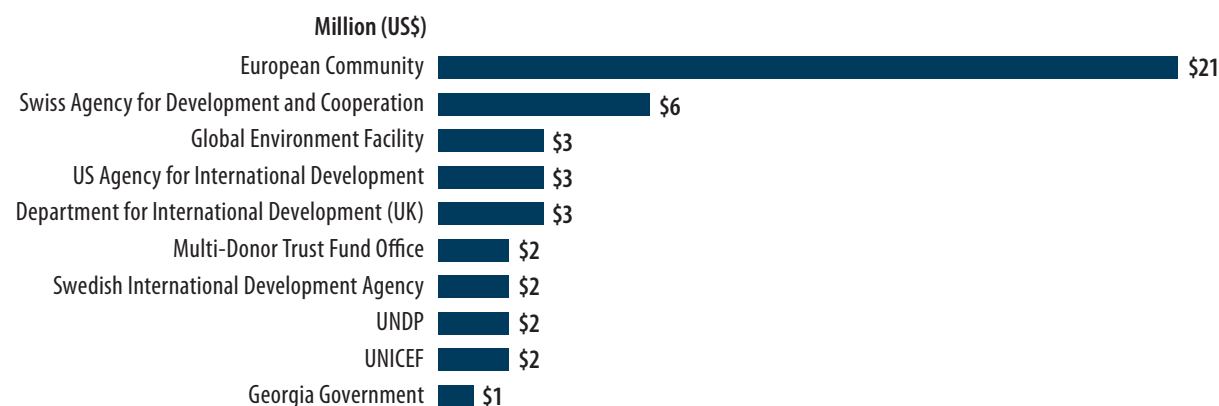
The country office has a diversified funding base, distributed across clusters and projects and underpinned by strong partnerships with development partners, although it is still reliant on the EU as its main donor. In 2016-2018, the EU remained the

FIGURE 2. Total expenditure by category, 2016-2018



Source: ICPE's analysis of data extracted from Atlas

FIGURE 3. Top 10 donors, 2016-2018 expenditures



Source: ICPE's analysis of data extracted from Atlas

⁷¹ Green Climate Fund total investment for the Scaling Up Multi-Hazard Early Warning System and the Use of Climate Information in Georgia project is \$70.3 million, 55 percent of which is parallel funding by national institutions (Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture, Ministry of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Ministry of Internal Affairs, City of Tbilisi, and Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation). As of September 2019, 8.4 percent of funds had been disbursed.

programme's main donor, contributing 42 percent of non-core funding,⁷² followed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (see Figure 3). Both the EU and the SDC have increased their contributions to UNDP.⁷³

Given Georgia's upper-middle-income status, external funding is bound to trend downwards. Hence, the country office will be able to achieve diversification mostly by more proactively pursuing cost-sharing opportunities with local and central government bodies, public institutions and the private sector. Some interviewees indicated that opportunities for government cost-sharing may be limited until Georgia receives budget support from the EU, and sees more opportunities coming from local institutions, for example, on climate finance. The ICPE team does not, however, view budget support and cost-sharing as mutually exclusive, since in other countries national Governments provided ample cost-sharing while taking loans from international financial institutions. In addition, the Green Climate Fund project, to which the Government already committed \$38 million to cover infrastructure and staff costs, has proved that it is possible to mobilize national contributions to complement UNDP's activities.

Finding 13: UNDP has implemented a number of complementary projects, within and across thematic areas of intervention. There are some good examples of cooperation among projects that have enabled the country office to generate synergies and efficiencies. Room for stronger collaboration exists, especially at the subnational level, where UNDP has put significant effort.

UNDP has been implementing projects with shared objectives that provide opportunities for efficiencies through coordination or integration of activities. In the area of democratic governance, UNDP worked to strengthen the system of checks and balances in the country's governance system and supported key

aspects of public sector accountability by working on different streams. As indicated in Finding 2, some of these initiatives have been well coordinated at the programme level or by respective project teams. With its focus on environmental governance, the Green Climate Fund project represented a good example of intersectoral coordination, supporting other initiatives in the DRR and environment portfolio. In the jobs and livelihoods portfolio, vocational and educational training activities were well integrated with interventions aimed to increase employment and job creation through placement of trainees in vocational and educational training in private sector enterprises to gain hands-on work experience. In Ajara, ENPARD and the environmental portfolio projects worked together to support agri-cooperatives. Under the DRR and environment portfolio, many projects worked together to complement and build on each other's results. For example, the second UNFCCC biannual reporting project tested methodologies and software for certain data entry and analysis, complementing the work done under the Global Environment Monitoring project. Again, the results generated through the Biomass project were replicated in Adjara under the Protected Area project.

While project cooperation has been improving, there is room for stronger synergies within, and across, portfolios. The potential is greater in the governance portfolio, which has many projects that are interconnected in direct or indirect ways. For example, the joint programmes with UN agencies on gender and human rights could have channelled some of their support through the infrastructure of other larger projects, such as Public Administration Reform, the Governance Reform Fund or Parliamentary Strengthening, which also have a gender and human rights component. Room for further synergies between central and local governance initiatives also exist. Overall, when implementing multiple projects, some of which are demand-driven, such as the Governance Reform

⁷² Source: Pre-mission visit questionnaire.

⁷³ Though the EU's percentage has decreased slightly compared to the previous cycle, in absolute terms its contribution increased by \$5 million. Source: Pre-mission visit questionnaire.

Fund, it is important to monitor and assess, over time, whether the implementation of the various initiatives is contributing to the achievement of expected outcomes, to ensure coherence and identify any gaps left to fill.

The potential for further integration and efficiencies is also large at the subnational level. UNDP projects regularly shared information through joint meetings and events, including the Strategic Partnership on Regional and Local Development and Local Self-Governance. Good examples of synergy among project activities were found in the area of municipal assessments, local strategic planning, and gender analyses – among others. Many national stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE, however, were not necessarily aware of UNDP projects in which they had not been actively involved and could not speak to joint initiatives. International stakeholders also advocated for a more concerted, strategic and action-oriented partnership at the local level that goes beyond information exchange.⁷⁴ In particular, the ICPE noted room for stronger synergies between local economic development and the local governance/decentralization portfolio,⁷⁵ ENPARD and other projects in the area of natural resource management,⁷⁶ as well as among projects implemented in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia.

The main coordination challenges at the subnational level are external to UNDP. Some of these – such as the lack of a clear strategic and legal framework for local governance and development⁷⁷ and the absence of mechanisms for fiscal decentralization – should be solved with the approval of the Decentralization Strategy and Action Plan. Still, some stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE

observed that “depth is easier than breadth in Georgia” with the political architecture and the lack of agreement on decentralization, making collaboration across line ministries and institutions challenging. Given the broad scope of its interventions, UNDP could do more to facilitate the coordination of development actors at the subnational level and support the leadership role of local governments in development coordination.

Finding 14: In most cases, the results of UNDP interventions appear to be sustainable, meaning that their effects will be maintained beyond UNDP’s support. However, when it comes to the implementation of laws and strategies that have been supported by the country office, sustainability is less certain. UNDP has put in place some measures to mitigate this risk, which should be made more consistent across projects.

The support UNDP provided to develop the capacity of national governmental and non-governmental organizations was important from a sustainability perspective, since these institutions develop their capacities through hands-on experience. Across portfolios, UNDP has extensively involved government institutions and CSOs in the execution of project activities, instead of relying on individual experts.⁷⁸ The way reporting to the UNFCCC is currently managed by national institutions and CSOs is a good example.

UNDP has promoted the sustainability of its results by working with established structures within the country’s existing institutional framework. UNDP’s support for the establishment of the Legal Aid Service case management system is a case in point,

⁷⁴ A review of the portfolio’s project documents revealed that no strong linkages among projects had been identified at the design stage.

⁷⁵ As the evaluation of the Fostering Regional and Local Development project recommended, “UNDP should apply the economic development lens to all the support it provides to the decentralization vision and regulatory work, regional and local institutional capacity-building.”

⁷⁶ ENPARD’s project team is currently exploring the use of resources and expertise from the energy and environment portfolio for implementing sustainable management plans of forests and protected areas, facilitation of access to alternative energy sources and other activities.

⁷⁷ Georgia has multiple strategies related to the local level that require harmonization and alignment. Examples of such strategies are the Rural Development Strategy, the State Strategy for Mountainous Areas, the Decentralization Strategy, the Regional Development Strategies, and the Agriculture Strategy.

⁷⁸ Projects that have had a significant involvement of national organizations include the Governance Reform Fund, Public Administration Reform, Parliamentary Strengthening, Media Monitoring, Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism, Climate Adaptation in the Rioni River Basin, Protected Areas and all work on climate-change policies and reporting.

as the system has been fully adopted and enabled the organization to manage its workload more efficiently. The institutionalization of the work-based learning approach is another positive example of sustainability that ensures that the skills supplied by vocational and educational training institutions are used in the marketplace.

The sustainability of UNDP interventions is challenged by the lack of policy implementation. Stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation recognized that years of reforms and amendments in legislation and policies have led to only small improvements in the Government's capability to implement. Under the DRR and environment portfolio, the ICPE took note of quite a few cases when the adoption of action plans or other documents needed for the implementation of policies (regulations and management plans, for example) was delayed by frequent government changes, lack of political will, and difficulties in identifying responsible institutions.⁷⁹

Piloting for demonstration has not been firmly linked to replication and scale-up. While there have been successful examples of institutionalization of pilot initiatives (for example, work-based learning in agriculture and rural development practices through ENPARD), in other cases replication was not as effective. The municipal gender-sensitive budgeting that has been piloted since 2012, for example, has not been adopted by municipalities outside the project's reach and was not incorporated into subsequent national plans on gender equality, despite a formal agreement to do so in 2014-2016 and the recommendations on programme budgeting by the Minister of Finance. The envisaged scale-up of work undertaken under the Biomass project could not be fully implemented due to a turnover, and change in the priorities, of public officials who opted for the integration of the biomass strategy under the National Renewable Energy Action Plan, with important cuts on its original scope.

In recognition of the challenges in implementation, a number of UNDP interventions have extended beyond policy development to include capacity-building for implementation. At a broader level, UNDP has supported the Administration of Georgia in strengthening the policymaking process across the Government by developing guidelines that require line ministries to be cognizant of implementation. The Administration of Georgia is also in the process of developing a database to track the implementation of strategies and programmes, which will create incentives for ministries to pay greater attention to the challenge of implementation. Both the development of specific action plans and the estimation and identification of required financial resources provided good incentives for implementation and should have been further used. Good practices, however, have not been consistently applied.

Some UNDP interventions – primarily within the Governance Reform Fund and Public Administration Reform projects as well as the DRR and environment portfolio, to a certain extent – have helped various government departments strengthen human resources and establish financing mechanisms as key prerequisites for implementation. The global Biodiversity Finance Initiative project, for example, managed a 20-fold increase in financing from the Ministry of Finance to the Biodiversity Department of the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture. The parallel funding required by the new Green Climate Fund project may serve as a good mechanism to ensure the proper allocation of necessary resources.

Finding 15: UNDP has demonstrated good use of data and evidence in project management, especially in larger projects. The allocation of dedicated resources for monitoring and evaluation enhanced the quality of results frameworks and promoted results-based management at the project level. There is, however, a need for better articulation and

⁷⁹ In the case of the national pasture management policy, no structure was willing to assume responsibility. In the case of disaster damages and loss-calculation methodology, the development was initiated by the State Security and Crisis Management Council under the Prime Minister's Office, which later was abolished and some of its functions transferred to the Emergency Management Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The latter, however, considers that this may not fall under its sole responsibility as it requires inter-ministerial work. The methodology is likely to be approved by the National Security Council, which was re-established in April 2019 under the Prime Minister's Office.

measurement of programme-level results, particularly at the outcome level.

UNDP has invested project resources to cover its M&E function. In 2018, it introduced a dedicated M&E position, which provided full-time support to staff and has been involved in the design of project results and resources frameworks (RRFs).⁸⁰ The country office also had seven M&E specialists that focused on one or two projects,⁸¹ allowing cost efficiency and good coverage of the function. Over the years, the country office generated a good deal of knowledge and data that had not been systematized. At the time of the evaluation, the country office was considering hiring a data specialist to set up a platform that would consolidate all of the datasets generated by surveys and research.

UNDP has made efforts to use evidence to inform project design and management. The inclusion of log-frames within Letters of Agreement and Responsible Party Agreements to structure cooperation with implementing partners around evidence-based results has been a positive practice that has served the country office well. Project documents – especially those of larger projects such as Public Administration Reform, Governance Reform Fund and ENPARD – are in general well designed and contain adequate RRFs with meaningful indicators and targets that provide good guidance for activity planning, implementation and monitoring. Other projects, however, including those funded by the GEF, often set overly ambitious targets that would require longer than the project duration for their achievements. This applied mainly to those projects that aimed to promote the adoption of policy documents and upscaling of activities within the project lifetime. Other areas

for improvement across projects include the use of gender-disaggregated data, as well as the assessment of the quality (and not just the quantity) of support provided, particularly in the area of training, through surveys and systematic interviews with beneficiaries. Another area that would benefit from better use of evidence is the assessment of the performance of structures that UNDP has promoted, including in the period following the withdrawal of direct support. No system exists to track the performance of pilots over time, including lessons they generated and the extent to which they were replicated/scaled up outside of targeted areas. The perception survey on the quality of local public services that UNDP carries out every two years could have been further used to assess the effectiveness of UNDP's work, including in its jobs and livelihoods portfolio.

UNDP has put considerable effort into evaluating the effectiveness of its work. Since 2016, UNDP has commissioned 16 project evaluations⁸² and 8 more are expected by the end of the cycle.⁸³ All the projects with a budget larger than \$3 million have been evaluated, except for the USAID-funded Horizons project in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, which is planned for 2021. However, the quality of decentralized evaluations – which are mostly managed by project staff – is not up to standard. Out of eight evaluations for which the IEO provided quality assurance, five were considered 'moderately unsatisfactory' and three 'moderately satisfactory'.⁸⁴ Interviewees confirmed the need to enhance the M&E capacities of project managers, particularly around the design of indicators.

The assessment of results has, however, mostly stopped at the project level, since the country office

⁸⁰ The post is fully funded through Direct Project Costs (DPC). In 2016-2019, DPC grew from \$200,000 to \$550,000, and enabled it to cover a quarter of office management costs. The 2017 audit considered that the country office had good finance monitoring and cost recovery practices.

⁸¹ Public Administration Reform and Governance Reform Fund; Decentralization and Good Governance and Fostering Regional and Local Development 2; Vocational and Educational Training; ENPARD; Abkhazia Horizons, and the Green Climate Fund/Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation project on Multi-Hazard Early Warning.

⁸² Three in the area of democratic governance, four in the area of jobs and livelihoods, one in the area of human security and community resilience, and eight in the area of disaster risk reduction and environment.

⁸³ Four in the area of democratic governance, one in the area of jobs and livelihoods, and three in the area of disaster risk reduction and environment. The evaluation of Strengthening the System of Parliamentary Democracy and the evaluation of the Dialogue Coordination Mechanism phase II have been cancelled.

⁸⁴ See UNDP's Evaluation Resource Centre: erc.undp.org.

has not established a more effective monitoring system with baseline and aggregated data across projects that would enable more adequate reporting at the programme level. The country office has not conducted any thematic or outcome evaluations, which would be valuable particularly in the area of democratic governance, where different projects are contributing to public administration reforms through demand-driven interventions. The CPD as currently formulated does not provide a clear and comprehensive picture of the main results to be achieved by the country office. This is particularly the case at the outcome level, where, in line with corporate guidance, the results and indicators are currently taken from the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development. In the area of human security and community resilience, especially, the results framework lacks a clear baseline and indicators to assess the effects of confidence-building initiatives on social cohesion and peace. While quantification of results is always challenging in conflict-affected areas, participatory approaches to the development of qualitative indicators could have been further utilized.

Finding 16: In areas where it has had significant engagement, UNDP supported national counterparts in establishing coordination structures and promoted the development of plans for action-oriented coordination. While some bilateral stakeholders advocated for UNDP to play a more active role in coordination, United Nations partners stressed the importance of a clear division of labour, based on respective mandates.

By virtue of the broadly encompassing nature of its programme, UNDP has an inherent comparative advantage in the coordination of development assistance. The country office played an important role in establishing a few donor coordination structures, including the Ambassadorial Working Group on Democratic Governance, the Technical Working Group on Elections, the Forum

on Strategic Partnership on Regional and Local Development and Local Self-Governance, and the Public Administration Reform Working Group, all co-chaired or actively supported by UNDP. UNDP also played a key coordinating role in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia: Its role in facilitating the entry and operations of other development partners was widely recognized during ICPE interviews with stakeholders. The creation of the Georgia Rural Development Network and the Council in Ajara, under the ENPARD project umbrella, facilitated information-sharing among national stakeholders as well as representatives of local municipalities.

UNDP's coordination proved particularly effective when accompanied by a clear commitment from the Government and close relationships among development partners. In the areas of public administration reform, legal aid, human rights, and vocational and educational training, UNDP contributed to the development of plans, which interviewees considered good practices for more action-oriented coordination. The areas of local development, decentralization and gender equality were instead said to require more effective coordination.

Some development partners saw UNDP as well-positioned to play a more prominent role in coordination, serving as an intermediary between development partners and government institutions in areas where it has been long engaged (such as public administration reform, vocational and educational training, climate change adaptation, and local development). Partners expected UNDP to play a more active role as 'integrator' in supporting the Government in the implementation and coordination of the SDGs.

UNDP actively participated in joint UN working and thematic groups⁸⁵ and implemented a high number of joint programmes in Georgia (on gender equality, human rights, and access to justice), including

⁸⁵ For example, the United Nations Partnership for Sustainable Development result groups, the Gender Theme Group (with UNDP co-chairing), Communications Group, Joint Team on HIV/AIDS, and the Operations Management Team. UNDP has also been part of joint consultative platforms established by UN agencies, such as the Abkhazia Strategic Partnership, Joint Consultative Forum, and the Humanitarian Coordination Group.

in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia (on education, vocational and educational training, and rural development). Stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE reported that joint activities have reduced duplication and resulted in savings. Joint programming was said to work better when there was a clear division of labour among the agencies, although that sometimes turned joint programming into 'parallel programming with information-sharing'. Interviewees also expressed concern about the competition for funding, which created some frustration in the relationships among agencies. When considering entering new areas of work, UNDP needs to consider how to tap into the expertise of UN resident and non-resident agencies alike.

Finding 17: UNDP has played a leading role in the promotion and nationalization of the SDGs. It supported the integration of the SDGs into planning tools and information management systems. Significant gaps remain, however, in the availability of data and use of evidence for policymaking. The involvement of CSOs and the private sector in behaviour change initiatives for the achievement of the SDGs has not yet been fully tapped.

As part of the UN country team, UNDP has played a leading role in the promotion of the SDGs, helping Georgia to become one of the first countries to nationalize the SDGs.⁸⁶ UNDP supported the establishment of an inter-ministerial SDG Council and four working groups,⁸⁷ and promoted the development of the national SDG framework that includes 93 targets and 200 indicators. UNDP assisted authorities with the preparation of the first Voluntary National Review report for the high-level political forum of 2016, and led the inter-agency mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support (MAPS) mission, which assessed the extent to which SDG targets have been reflected in national and sectoral plans and

strategies, as well as the degree to which national priority goals have been adequately funded.⁸⁸ With the support of UNDP, the Administration of Georgia integrated the SDGs into the 'Government Rule of Elaboration, Monitoring and Evaluation of Policy Documents', and spelled out the link between the SDGs and national policies in the SDG Toolkit. In the context of the Governance Reform Fund project, the country office also supported the Parliament in embracing the SDGs, through the elaboration of a Strategy of the Parliament of Georgia on Supporting and Monitoring the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

That said, based on an assessment of the Public Administration Reform project, significant gaps remain in the availability of disaggregated data and evidence for policymaking as well as for reporting and communicating for results. UNDP has supported the development of an SDG Electronic Management System, which will strengthen the government's SDG coordination and monitoring functions, capturing information about the achievement of all targets. The monitoring of national policies will likely create an incentive for better implementation.

The potential of CSOs and the private sector to positively affect people's behaviours through dedicated interventions in support of specific SDGs has not been fully leveraged. CSOs have been involved in awareness-raising initiatives, such as SDG Festivals, and in the establishment of national SDG mechanisms to ensure transparency. With few exceptions, UNDP's support for the SDGs has not yet trickled down to the local level.⁸⁹ The implementation of the Decentralization Strategy represents an important opportunity for UNDP to support the Government in integrating the SDGs into the local government planning agenda.

⁸⁶ *Resident Coordinator's Annual Report, 2017.*

⁸⁷ The four SDG working groups are: Democratic Governance, Economic Development, Sustainable Energy & Environment Protection, and Social Inclusion.

⁸⁸ Findings were generally positive. National strategies were found to cover 93 percent of SDG targets that Georgia has adopted as national priorities. The Association Agreement was found to cover 63 percent of all targets. Considerable gaps were observed in relation to Goals 5, 10, 16 and 17.

⁸⁹ In 2019, UNDP supported the Administration of Georgia in the elaboration of the SDG's Localization Plan (under review). The country office is planning a series of SDG training workshops for local municipalities

Finding 18: UNDP's contribution to gender equality and the empowerment of women mostly occurred through the Joint UN Programme for Gender Equality, which achieved important changes at the institutional level for gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment. Its efforts to promote the advancement of women in politics, however, did not produce the expected results, although some improvement has been registered. The country office also supported targeted interventions to enhance women's economic empowerment and began important work to promote behaviour change in the area of gender-based violence, albeit in a very limited fashion and separate from other partners' work in this area. UNDP is well positioned to continue its collaboration with other UN agencies to further advance women's rights and gender equality but needs to reinforce its capacity.

Since 2012, UNDP has committed to work on the political empowerment of women in Georgia.⁹⁰ In partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UNDP supported the establishment and functioning of the Inter-Agency Commission on Gender Equality, Ending Violence Against Women and Domestic Violence. UNDP provided extensive support to the Parliament's Gender Equality Council and conducted a review of gender inequality in legislation and policy.⁹¹ With UNDP's support, the Government adopted the Gender Equality National Action Plan 2018-2020 as well as the gender equality chapter of the National Human Rights Strategy and Action Plan. As a result of joint advocacy and support, the Constitution was amended to reflect equal rights and opportunities for men and women, with a new clause requiring the State to introduce special measures to ensure meaningful gender equality and reduce inequalities. At the subnational level, UNDP

continued to support women elected to local councils through the Forum of Women Councillors and its task force, which had been established in the first phase of the programme (2011-2014). In partnership with the Gender Equality Council, it collaborated with the Tbilisi municipality, among others, in the development of a gender equality action plan and gender-responsive budget and promoted the inclusion of critical problems identified by Women Initiative Groups in local budgeting.

Despite sustained advocacy, UNDP's efforts to enhance women's participation in politics and decision-making fell short of its target. Encountering resistance from political parties, the Parliament ultimately did not pass the quota law, which would have guaranteed 30 percent of parliamentary seats to women.⁹² Instead, the Parliament adopted a financial incentive rule whereby additional funds are available for parties that increase the number of women in electoral lists to at least 30 percent. Some stakeholders considered this to be of limited effectiveness in overcoming gender bias in politics.⁹³

Through the Joint UN Programme for Gender Equality, UNDP has supported women's economic empowerment and facilitated their participation in the job market, although its involvement was considered more limited and/or less visible than in the political arena. Through vocational and educational training centres in two target areas, UNDP offered women training courses in both agricultural and non-agricultural professions, with a 68 percent employment rate for participants, according to project data. UNDP also supported the work of the Association of Women Farmers – which it helped establish in 2013 and which became a nationwide organization in 2015 – along with agricultural cooperatives. The programme's support to Women Initiative Groups and Women Community Centres resulted in the

⁹⁰ The second phase of the Joint UN Programme for Gender Equality was launched in 2015 and will continue through 2020.

⁹¹ Nine fields of Georgia's legislation and policy were analysed for their compliance to the principles of gender equality. The review recommended policy and legislative changes to help stop sexual harassment and violence against women, effectively fight discrimination, increase women's participation in government, and economically empower women, among other reforms.

⁹² The proportion of women in Georgia's Parliament was 16 percent in 2016.

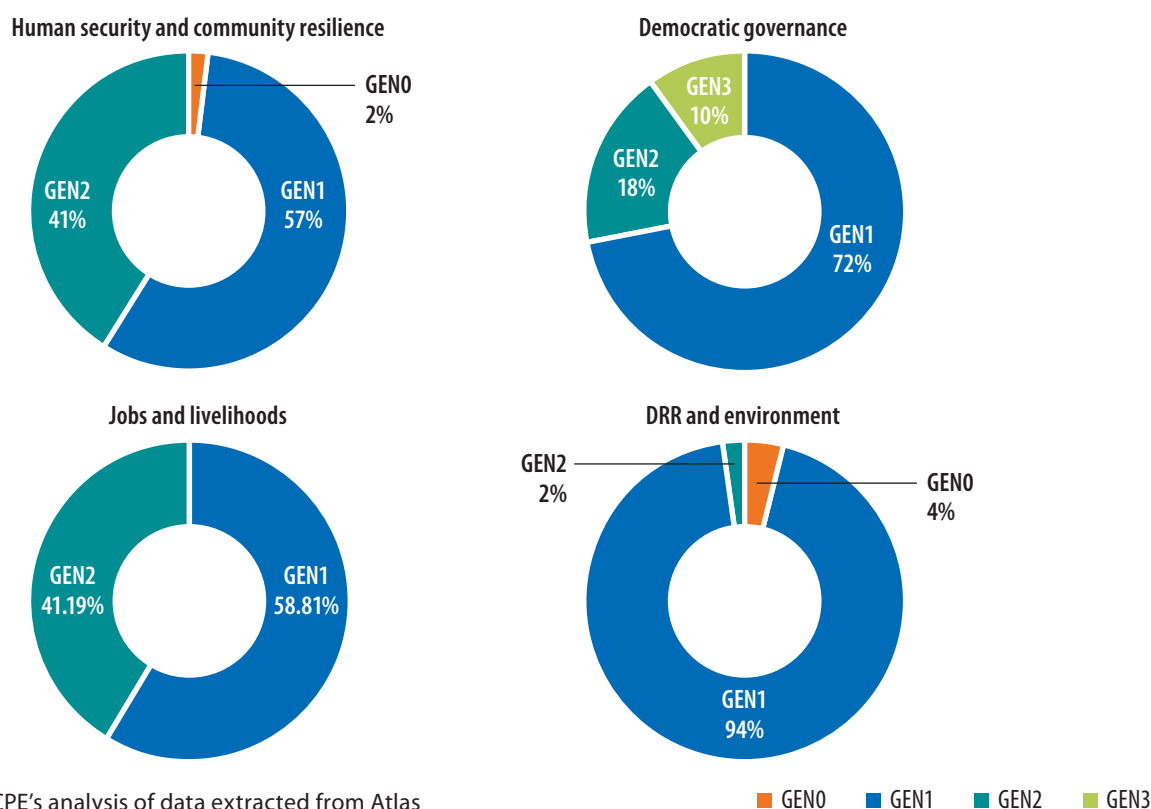
⁹³ According to the report *Gender Equality in Georgia: Barriers and Recommendations* (Parliament of Georgia, US Agency for International Development, East-West Management Institute and UNDP, 2018), as of January 2018, none of the nine governors and the five mayors of self-governing cities is a woman, and only one among 59 mayors of local self-governing communities is a woman.

submission of more than one hundred proposals to local governments, half of which have been funded.⁹⁴ Importantly, in the last quarter of 2019, UNDP planned to begin working in the care economy field.

In partnership with UN Women, the UN country team's Gender Theme Group of South Africa and the Behavioural Insights Team, UNDP carried out a behavioural study through social media on attitudes towards gender-based violence and the reasons behind bystander behaviours. A second phase of the project will expand to reach out to Public Service Hall customers and regional community centres to enhance awareness and improve assistance to survivors. Interventions in this area have been limited and mostly propelled by funding received through the Innovation Facility. If continued, better cooperation should be established with UNFPA and other partners working on violence against women.

UNDP's involvement in gender issues has, however, occurred mostly through the dedicated joint programme. The country office has not developed a gender equality strategy and action plan, and gender analysis has most often occurred at the project level. According to Georgia's *Results-Oriented Annual Reports*, the gender marker has improved over time in all areas except DRR and the environment. However, the analysis of data undertaken for this ICPE in Atlas showed that two thirds of the 2016-2018 project expenditures were not expected to significantly contribute to gender equality (marked as GEN0 and GEN1).⁹⁵ There is room for more gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted interventions both within the jobs and livelihood portfolio as well as in the work undertaken in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia. Only 2 percent of the projects in the area of DRR and environment have been marked as GEN2 (see Figure 4).

FIGURE 4. Expenditure by gender marker and thematic area, Georgia 2016-2018



Source: ICPE's analysis of data extracted from Atlas

⁹⁴ Joint UN Programme for Gender Equality, 2018 Monitoring Report.

⁹⁵ UNDP, *Tracking Gender-Related Investments and Expenditures in Atlas*, 2016.



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NATIONAL OWNERSHIP
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3.1 Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: UNDP's programme was highly relevant and strategically positioned, targeting key national priorities and reforms, including those stemming from the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. UNDP remains a trustworthy and respected strategic partner for both the Government and the international community.** UNDP is one of Georgia's leading development partners; it enjoys high visibility and a positive reputation among communities, government institutions and international organizations. The Government is appreciative of UNDP's assistance, praising the quality of its technical work and the organization's flexibility in adapting its assistance to changing needs. The entry into force of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement in 2016 provided a strong reference framework against which to define UNDP's support to the national Government's reform efforts, in order to align Georgia's legislation to that of the EU and gradually integrate the country into the EU internal market. UNDP accompanied the Government in the implementation of reforms in key areas such as decentralization, public administration reform, rule of law, human rights, rural development and energy. The Association Agreement enabled UNDP to deepen its partnership with the EU and resulted in increased funding, which now constitutes the relative majority of UNDP resources.
- **Conclusion 2: Programme interventions have covered a wide range of topics, with a significant focus on the policy level but also demonstrations on the ground. Key results derived from a sustained engagement over time.** UNDP's programme interventions have been wide ranging and well balanced across various areas. While the governance portfolio has retained a leading role in the programme, additional resources allocated to private sector development and the establishment of a multi-hazard warning system enhanced the relative weight of the jobs and livelihoods portfolio as well as the DDR and environment portfolio. UNDP promoted important changes at the policy level, but also supported practical interventions, with demonstration effects for replication. Many projects have been of long duration and have given UNDP the opportunity to build relationships and deepen its engagement with key ministries.
- **Conclusion 3: UNDP has been a partner with Georgia in important governance reforms and contributed to strengthening the country's parliamentary democracy. UNDP adopted a flexible demand-driven approach to its work, which allowed it to respond to the changing priorities of the central administration and line ministries. Going forward, it is important to assess the coherence of the interventions in this area and identify remaining needs, while thinking in terms of sustainability.** UNDP's programme has been strategically positioned in the domain of democratic governance particularly, in alignment with national reforms and the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. Georgia now enjoys a stronger system of checks and balances, and UNDP has been a crucial partner in the democratization process. Since significant resources have been invested in the reform of public administration for enhanced capacity and accountability, it is important that UNDP takes stock of the overall progress achieved in this area and identifies any gap in implementation to achieve agreed goals. This is particularly relevant given the multiplicity of parallel interventions and the demand-driven nature of some projects, which enhance the risk of a less strategic approach to needs. The relationship with various national government departments is strong, and UNDP contributed to their institutional capacity development. As time progresses, it is important that UNDP continues to monitor the effectiveness of its work and assesses the sustainability of the capacities and structures it has put in place.
- **Conclusion 4: UNDP supported the development of rural areas where poverty rates are higher, facilitating harmonized efforts among different stakeholders and promoting the involvement of citizens in decision-making. The approved Decentralization Strategy provides an important opportunity for UNDP to strengthen**

synergies between its governance and economic development portfolios. To further promote employment and reduce poverty, UNDP needs to work more with the private sector. Through ENPARD, UNDP contributed to developing the capacities of national institutions to address rural poverty, with interventions focused on – but not limited to – agricultural development. By working through Local Action Groups and Unions of Local Active Citizens, UNDP ensured more direct participation of citizens in decision-making, to reflect their priorities. However, with some exceptions, interventions in the area of jobs and livelihoods have run in parallel with the support that UNDP provided to local governance, and synergies between the two areas of work have not been fully exploited. The creation of citizens' groups is something that future local governance interventions should build on. The involvement of the private sector in stimulating growth and reducing poverty has also been limited so far, and it should be enhanced both in the area of employment and vocational and educational training, where UNDP can act as catalyst for partnerships between private and public institutions.

- **Conclusion 5: As national institutions become progressively stronger, national development needs appear to be converging around inequality, with a focus on women, youth and persons with disabilities – following the principle of leaving no one behind.** While UNDP will continue to support the progressive strengthening of Georgia's national institutions, the focus of its work in the next cycle in response to national needs appears to be converging around issues of inequality that are hampering the full development and enjoyment of human rights for vulnerable populations, as observed in the 2019 MAPS mission report. Through joint programmes on human rights, access to justice and gender equality, UNDP provided institutional support to the promotion of equality and achieved important results. Some of the results, however, could not be achieved since they encountered resistance to change, including by national institutions. Others remained at the institutional level and have not yet benefited the

local population. Persistent human rights and gender inequalities, particularly in the area of women's economic empowerment, justify a continued and stronger engagement in these areas, where UNDP can play a key role in partnership with other UN country team members.

- **Conclusion 6: UNDP has been the main provider of international assistance to vulnerable populations in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, and met important education, health and livelihood needs. The Coordination Platform has maintained dialogue between the Georgian Government and de facto Abkhaz authorities, but the situation remains volatile, and work in the area is still very much affected by the lack of a political solution. Future efforts need to enlarge the support base for dialogue and promote an integrated approach to community-based development. UNDP also needs to put more effort into proving the results of its work in terms of enhanced social cohesion and peacebuilding.** UNDP has operated in a volatile environment, where no political solution to the occupation of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia had been reached and therefore no institutional relationship with de facto authorities was possible. UNDP's role was important both as a service provider to vulnerable populations and for its engagement with authorities and professionals in dialogue across the administrative boundary line, which – notwithstanding a technical focus – was political in nature. In the context of the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, with its deteriorating human rights situation and many unmet needs, UNDP can play a bigger role in promoting more integrated approaches to sustainable development, facilitating dialogue between decision-makers and enlarging its support base. Moreover, UNDP needs to put more effort into demonstrating the collective results of its confidence-building work. Given many partners' lack of access to the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, more effective reporting and communications – always following the principle of 'do no harm', given the political sensitivities involved – will provide significant value added to what UNDP is already doing on the ground.

- **Conclusion 7: UNDP has emerged as the country's leading development partner in the area of climate change and disaster risk reduction, particularly around data collection for evidence-based policymaking. UNDP's support produced good results that require further scale-up and integration into national government policies and plans, to ensure the sustainability of the results.** UNDP has provided valuable support in the area of DRR and climate change by both working on data collection and analysis and promoting pilot interventions on the ground to reduce the risk of natural and human-induced hazards. Importantly, UNDP has worked at the local level to promote conservation, sustainable natural resource management, energy efficiency and green transport. Some of the work carried out on a pilot basis has not, however, been scaled up, and the link with national policies has not been fully made, affecting the sustainability of the interventions. Through the significant investment that UNDP managed to secure from the Green Climate Fund, the country office now has an opportunity to scale up its work on early warning and climate information. The country office will need to consider similar

follow-up interventions in other areas, including sustainable cities, to ensure that national capacities are fully developed, and interventions are integrated into policies and strategies.

- **Conclusion 8: UNDP has established some good practices in the area of monitoring and evaluation, including the use of perception surveys to collect feedback from the population on the quality of service delivery. However, it remains difficult to understand what results have been collectively achieved by multiple projects, and where gaps remain in relation to expected outcomes.** The country office has shown that it attaches importance to M&E by using project resources to establish a dedicated (albeit small) M&E function and undertaking a large number of project evaluations. Not unlike other country offices, UNDP in Georgia did not have a solid framework to assess results at outcome and impact levels, with most indicators pitched at the output level or being at too high a level to allow a meaningful analysis of attribution and contribution. Outcome and thematic-level evaluations would have provided a cost-efficient measure to assess aggregate results.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.



UNDP should ensure alignment of its next CPD with Georgia's SDG commitments and focus on the areas identified by the MAPS mission as lagging behind. In particular, UNDP should:

- a) **Deepen and broaden its engagement in the area of human rights and gender equality, including in new areas such as the care economy.** UNDP should continue to advocate for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and support the State Inspector's Service (SIS) in its role to investigate and prosecute human rights violations by law enforcement and security offices. In the area of gender equality and the empowerment of women, given the interrelated nature of inequalities that affect the capacity of women to fully enjoy their rights, UNDP should continue working in close cooperation with other UN country team members, and through a closer engagement with the executive branch of the government, on policy and programmatic interventions that would both promote positive discrimination and tackle behaviour change. To continue working effectively in this area, the country office should strengthen its capacities by establishing a dedicated gender team.
- b) **Deepen its engagement at the local level with a focus on addressing rural-urban disparities and invest in the human capital development of youth, strengthening the integration of its portfolios.** UNDP should deepen its engagement in rural areas to address the poverty divide and the negative demographic dynamics that are affecting the socioeconomic development of the country, promoting education and jobs that are in line with current and future market demands. Taking advantage of ENPARD's size and comprehensiveness, UNDP should consider how to strengthen linkages with activities in the area of natural resource management to promote green jobs.
- c) **Reinforce its engagement in the areas of green energy and sustainable cities at the policy level.** UNDP should formalize good practices and lessons learned from its different pilot initiatives in the area of energy and environment and ensure their integration into national policies and strategies. The country office should promote dialogue among different stakeholders, including at the local level and in the private sector, around regulations and incentives.

In all these areas, UNDP should work in close coordination with the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office and define joint or coordinated interventions based on its areas of comparative and collaborative advantage. UNDP should also continue spearheading efforts to strengthen data availability to inform evidence-based decision-making.

**Management
Response:**
Agreed





This recommendation is noted with appreciation, given that it aligns completely with country office planning for the coming 2021-2025 period and with UNDP's assessment of country needs and priorities. The country office will ensure that the CPD is developed with a focus on "leaving no one behind" and boosting country efforts to achieve the SDGs. The CPD will build on the MAPS findings to address issues identified as particularly core to the country's SDG agenda. UNDP Georgia will work with partners and donors to deepen and broaden its engagement in human rights and gender equality, with a focus on the care economy; on unlocking the potential of Georgia's rural areas and its young people; and on building a greener economy and society. Building on its UN-wide role as 'SDG integrator', UNDP Georgia will promote greater cooperation across sectors and regions to ensure that development solutions build synergies.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
1a/1. Support elaboration of National Human Rights Strategy 2021-2030 that will cover all the major human rights priorities in the country.	December 2020	UNDP/Human rights project	Initiated	
1a/2. Strengthen the capacity of SIS investigators in investigation standards; assist the SIS in establishing an international partnership with international human rights bodies.	December 2020	UNDP/Human rights project	Initiated	
1a/3. Conduct survey for exploring public perceptions of gender roles to inform programming and tackle behaviour change.	May 2020	UNDP/Gender project	Initiated	
1a/4. Conduct needs assessment (policy study) for supporting the development of the care economy and developing new programmatic activities based on its findings (subject to resource mobilization).	December 2020	UNDP/Gender project	Initiated	


Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

1a/5. Establish and lead an ad hoc UN country team coordination group on the care economy.	December 2020	UNDP/Gender project	Initiated	
1b. Youth development will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue across all portfolios, for example by coordinating skills training with local and rural development, and disability inclusion with local governance programming. Youth development will also remain one of the key drivers of UNDP's innovation agenda.	December 2021	Democratic governance portfolio	Initiated	
1c. The country office will continue advocacy efforts to promote green energy solutions at the policy level, including identifying gaps in Georgia's climate/energy-related legislation and providing technical support for harmonization with the EU acquis communautaire. UNDP will maintain policy-level support and build its interventions on the lessons learned and experiences from earlier interventions, such as sustainable urban transport/green cities and biomass production and utilization as renewable energy sources.	December 2021	Environment portfolio	Initiated	

Recommendation 2. 	In preparing the next CPD, and in consultation with stakeholders, UNDP should develop issue-based theories of change against which it could map current and planned interventions. In relation to issues UNDP considers important to tackle, UNDP should develop – in consultation with national and international stakeholders – theories of change that identify its expected contribution vis-à-vis that of other partners. A systemic mapping of initiatives against expected results would reveal opportunities for synergies not only among projects and activities implemented by UNDP, but also with those of other donors operating in the respective areas.
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Management Response: Agreed 	For the next CPD cycle (2021-2025), UNDP will develop theories of change in line with national challenges and priorities identified during preparation of the new UN country strategy, as well as the SDG accelerators proposed by the MAPS findings, and coordinate its efforts with the Government, United Nations organizations, the donor community, the private sector, civil society and local communities.
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Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
2.1. Theories of change will be elaborated in developing the CPD for 2021-2025, mapping possible strategies for addressing development problems in complementarity with other development partners in the field.	December 2020	UNDP Programme Unit	Not initiated	

Recommendation 3. 	With the approval of the Decentralization Strategy, UNDP should enhance its efforts to build the capacity of municipalities for the delivery of services at the local level and promote further integration of its portfolios. Since municipalities will have enhanced functions and responsibilities as a result of the approval of the Decentralization Strategy, UNDP should continue to build their capacity around the delivery of specific services, based on a theory of change approach linking service delivery to enhanced socioeconomic benefits for rural and vulnerable populations. UNDP should reinforce the cooperation between its governance and local economic development portfolios, particularly through ENPARD and its support to civil society in rural areas.
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Management**Response:****Agreed**

The recommendation is accepted and is already a country office priority. Even before the legal framework for decentralization had been put formally in place, UNDP had already shifted its focus to field implementation and monitoring of core elements of the Decentralization Strategy, with a particular emphasis on local economic development. Efforts to enhance cross portfolio synergies among the projects working in the regions – ENPARD, Fostering Regional and Local Development (FRLD), Decentralization and Good Governance (DGG), Vocational and Educational Training, etc. – will intensify over the coming period and are welcomed by both government partners and the donor community.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
3.1. Establish pilot performance management system in 23 municipalities to improve delivery of street cleaning and waste management services; promote the system nationwide.	October 2021	DGG FRDL 2/ Democratic governance	Initiated	
3.2. Develop capacities of local self-governments to carry out economic initiatives and facilitate local economic development as a whole.	December 2021	FRLD 2/ Democratic governance	Initiated	
3.3. Implement matching grant programme for rural non-farm entrepreneurs under ENPARD to stimulate local economy diversification by providing funding to non-agricultural businesses, facilitate job creation in rural areas and increase the income of beneficiary small and medium enterprises.	December 2022	ENPARD	Initiated	
3.4. Establish joint planning mechanism between FRLD and ENPARD to streamline local and rural development policy support and coordinate activities for civil engagement.	December 2022	FRLD/ENPARD	Initiated	

Recommendation 4.



In agreement with the Georgian Government and Abkhaz de facto authorities, UNDP should extend the dialogue across the administrative boundary line beyond professionals to include decision-makers at the local level and communities to promote technical solutions for sustainable development. In the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia, UNDP should consider any opportunity to develop and implement integrated area-based programmes, including community-based infrastructure works.

Management Response:

Agreed



This has already been UNDP's approach for quite some time. UNDP projects in Abkhazia and for Abkhazia have been promoting and facilitating dialogue across the administrative boundary line for years, involving various stakeholders, including local decision-makers and local communities. Under the EU-funded flagship Confidence Building Early Response Mechanism (COBERM) project, UNDP Georgia had an opportunity on various occasions to support sub-projects with a track 1.5 component: decision-makers from Georgian, Abkhaz and South Ossetian sides, in their individual capacities, would engage in dialogue and constructive discussions on topics of mutual concern. UNDP Georgia is also already working towards greater integration of its programmes in Abkhazia, trying to complement them with each other and to create synergies with initiatives of other UN agencies. Five of six projects under the crisis prevention and recovery (CPR) portfolio are Abkhazia-based. The country office acknowledges the importance of area-based projects, but also considers it significant and useful to maintain a strong cross-administrative boundary line component in its programmatic interventions in/for Abkhazia; the eventual goal is to promote an enabling environment for reconciliation and lasting peace across the boundary.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
4.1. In the current circumstances, the political environment does not allow facilitation of a full-fledged dialogue process on sustainable development between the decision-makers across the conflict divide. However, UNDP Georgia will continue to explore opportunities to support and promote dialogue between decision-makers in their	December 2022	UNDP/CPR portfolio	Initiated	

Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

individual capacities in the format of track 1.5 through supporting initiatives from this component, and invoking the SDGs wherever possible as a persuasive and potentially unifying shared outlook.				
4.2. UNDP Georgia will continue exploring initiatives in support of improved access to social infrastructure for conflict-affected communities (community-based infrastructure works).	December 2022	UNDP/CPR portfolio	Initiated	

Recommendation 5.



UNDP should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation practices by adopting the following measures:

- a) Based on theories of change developed for the new CPD, **establish outcome-level indicators that reflect behaviour change** that originated in one or more project interventions. These indicators should be pitched at a level where the contribution is easier to determine than by using UNPSD indicators.
- b) **Consider expanding the population survey** to cover the effectiveness and impact of UNDP's initiatives related to governance and improvement of service delivery at large, to assess needs and inform future planning in these areas.
- c) Establish a baseline and explore the use of qualitative indicators and perception surveys to **assess the effectiveness of results in the Autonomous Republic of Abkhazia in terms of enhanced social cohesion.**
- d) **Carry out more thematic or outcome-level evaluations**, which are more cost-efficient and provide better evidence of aggregate results achieved by UNDP in its key areas of intervention.
- e) **Continue tracking the implementation of pilots beyond the end of a project's lifetime** – which is typically too short to allow for a definitive assessment of success/effectiveness.

**Management
Response:**
Agreed





The country office is keen to build an even stronger results-based planning, monitoring and reporting system. All recommendations are noted and accepted, except for points 5d and 5b. Regarding 5d: Experience with the previous CPD cycle proved the redundancy of outcome-level evaluations, especially that the entire country office programme will undergo evaluation, plus outcome-level results will be evaluated under the UN development assistance framework's (UNDAF's) final (and possibly mid-term) evaluations. Regarding 5b: The country office does not find it appropriate to mix measurement of the efficiency of public services with the appraisal of UNDP's impact. However, it does see the value of using surveys and other more innovative tools to measure behaviour change stimulated by its programmes. For Abkhazia, these tools need to be applied with extreme caution owing to local sensitivities and the positioning of the UNDP programme.

Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
5.a. The country office will strive to establish outcome-level indicators reflecting behaviour change in its new CPD, subject to availability of respective sources of verification (possible ideas include measuring behaviour change of civil servants across all public institutions upon implementation of new civil service reform and behaviour change reflected in public perceptions of gender roles).	December 2020	Programme Unit	Initiated	

Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

<p>5.c. Despite attempts of UNDP and other agencies, it has been difficult to conduct full-fledged surveys in Abkhazia; the local stakeholders would suspect a political agenda behind those surveys and the international actors on the ground were usually deprived of that opportunity. However, UNDP Georgia is going to include qualitative indicators in its programmes as much as possible; if full-fledged surveys are still impossible, the sources of verification for the country office shall include results of focus groups and interviews with community stakeholders; on-site monitoring assessments; and external reports and end-of-project evaluation reports.</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>CPR portfolio</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	
<p>5.e. In principle, the country office is eager to track pilots beyond the project cycle. However, the issue is subject to funding constraints. Follow-up is feasible and will be implemented for scale-up projects dealing with the same subject as pilot initiatives.</p>	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>Programme Unit, Innovations specialist</p>	<p>Initiated</p>	

<div>Recommendation 6.</div> <div></div>	UNDP should develop a long-term resource mobilization strategy and minimize over-reliance on EU funding. The strategy should ideally be coordinated with a UN country team resource mobilization strategy and recognize cost-sharing with national actors (government institutions and private sector) as the most sustainable path towards diversification.			
<div>Management Response:</div> <div>Agreed</div> <div></div>	The recommendation is noted. Donor funding is already quite well diversified, and continuation of this effort is a country office priority. UNDP Georgia will collaborate with other UN agencies and the donor community in adopting a strategy that prioritizes coordination and maximizes competencies.			
Key Action(s)	Time-frame (due date)	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status (initiated, completed or no due date)	Comments
6.1. Consider the recommendation when preparing the resource mobilization plan for the new programming cycle 2021-2025 in coordination with the UN country team resource mobilization strategy.	31 December 2020	Country office management, Programme Unit	Not initiated	

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre's database.

Annexes



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the IEO at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12273>

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Country at a glance

Annex 3. Country office at a glance

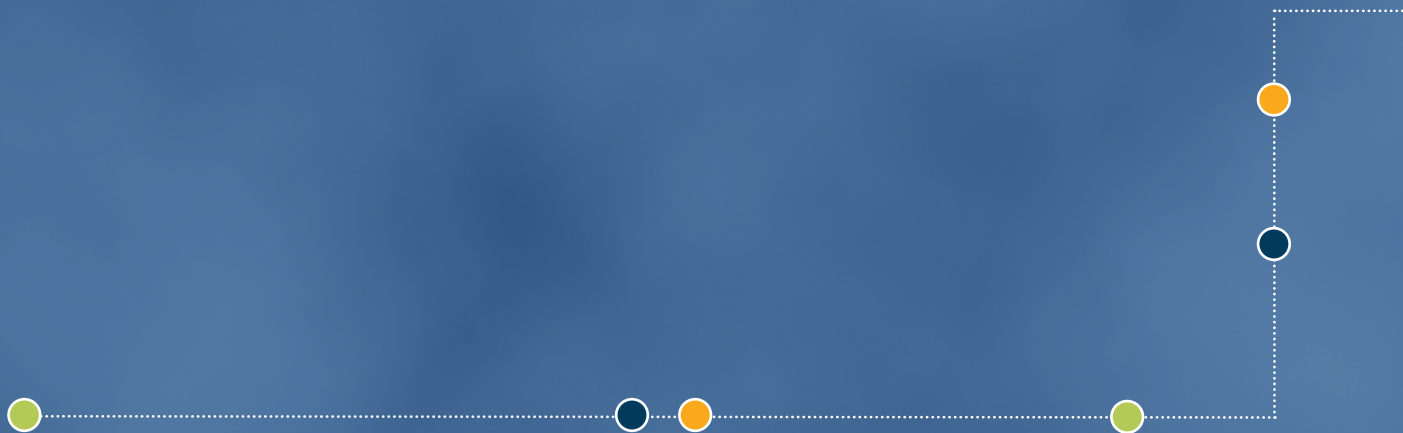
Annex 4. List of projects for in-depth review

Annex 5. People consulted

Annex 6. Documents consulted

Annex 7. Summary of CPD indicators and status as reported by country office

Annex 8. Theories of change by programme area



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