



INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION TURKMENISTAN



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and multilateral development partners.

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Independent Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) country programme in Turkmenistan. This is the first country-level assessment of UNDP interventions in Turkmenistan by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP. This evaluation covers the programme period 2016 to mid-2019. It has been carried out in collaboration with the Government of Turkmenistan, UNDP Turkmenistan country office, and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNDP has operated in Turkmenistan for over 20 years. In that time, the programme has been shaped by the country's development priorities and challenges. The current programme (2016-2020), which is under review, responds to the priorities identified in the National Programme for Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan (2011-2030) and its supporting medium-term strategies for rural and socio-economic development. It focuses on four key areas that are aligned with the global and regional sustainable development agenda priorities, reinforcing the links between managing natural resources, economic development and human development.

The evaluation found that the UNDP has played an important role in driving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Agenda 2030, resulting in the integration of the SDGs in domestic plans and policies as well as supporting the Voluntary National Review process. UNDP played a significant role in strengthening the Government's response to tuberculosis, with catalytic effects on the quality and access to treatment and social integration of patients and their families. UNDP also has made valuable contributions to establishing the human rights policy

and institutional framework, laying the foundations for furthering human rights work.

UNDP has also made notable contributions to the improvement of the policy environment and regulatory frameworks related to sustainable energy, environmental sustainability and resilience. Its multipronged strategy to strengthen institutional and technical capacities combined with policy advice, advocacy and demonstration pilots has led to important progress in climate change adaptation and mitigation and promoting sustainable energy solutions. Now, there is a need to focus on upscaling and the institutionalization of results to ensure sustainability.

UNDP's programme in Turkmenistan has been relevant to national priorities and it has successfully positioned itself as a reliable and credible provider of development services and can be expected to remain a preferred provider for the foreseeable future.

I would like to thank the Government of Turkmenistan, various national stakeholders and colleagues at the UNDP Turkmenistan country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States who graciously provided their time, information and support to this evaluation. I have every confidence that the findings, conclusions and recommendations provided herein will help to strengthen the formulation of UNDP's next country programme strategy in Turkmenistan.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director
Independent Evaluation Office

Contents

Acronyms and Abbreviations	vii
Evaluation Brief: ICPE Turkmenistan	1
CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation	4
1.2. Evaluation methodology	4
1.3. Evaluation considerations	6
1.4. Country context	6
1.5. National development planning architecture	8
1.6. Turkmenistan's positioning in the region and key development partners	9
1.7. UNDP programme strategy in Turkmenistan	9
CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS	14
2.1. Overall programme implementation	15
2.2. Participatory governance and basic services	21
2.3. Sustainable energy, environmental sustainability and resilience	26
2.4. Data, planning and policymaking	31
CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	33
3.1. Conclusions	34
3.2. Recommendations and management response	37
ANNEXES	45
FIGURES	
Figure 1. Evolution of expenditure by thematic area	10
Figure 2. UNDP Turkmenistan – key contributors	11
Figure 3. UNDP Turkmenistan – reconstructed theory of change	12-13
Figure 4. Expenditure by gender marker	20
BOX	
Box 1. Evaluation questions	4
TABLE	
Table 1. Country programme outcomes and resources	10

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
ARR	Assistant Resident Representative
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CERD	Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CO	Country office
CP	Country programme
CPD	Country programme document
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CSO	Civil society organization
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GF	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GHG	Greenhouse gas
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFI	International Finance Institution
MDR-TB	Multiple-drug-resistant tuberculosis
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NEPAAM	National Economic Programme of Action for Adaptation and Mitigation
NHRAP	National Human Rights Action Plan
NSCC	National Strategy on Climate Change
PWD	Persons with disability
RIA	Rapid integrated assessment
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
RR	Resident Representative
SBFEA	State Bank of Foreign Economic Affairs
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TB	Tuberculosis
UMIC	Upper-middle-income country
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
VNR	Voluntary National Report
WHO	World Health Organization

Evaluation Brief: Turkmenistan

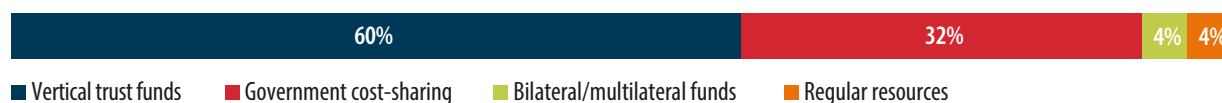
The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been operating in Turkmenistan for over 20 years, during which its programme has been shaped by the country's development priorities and challenges. The current programme under review (2016-2020) responds to the priorities identified in the National Programme for Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan (2011-2030) and its supporting medium-term strategies for rural and

socio-economic development. The programme focuses on four key areas that are aligned with the global and regional sustainable development agenda priorities, reinforcing the links between managing natural resources, economic development and human development. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation of Turkmenistan in 2019.

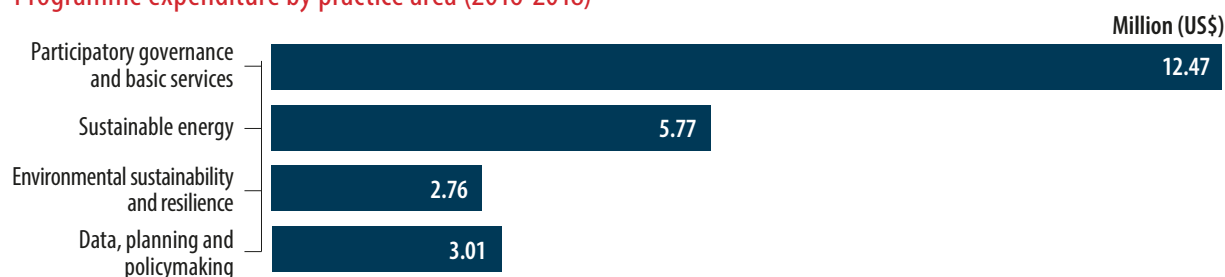
Total programme expenditure (2016-2018)

US\$24,012,653

Funding sources, 2016-2018



Programme expenditure by practice area (2016-2018)



Key findings and conclusions

UNDP has played an important role in supporting the Government in implementing its national development plans and strategies and established itself as a strong, reliable, valued and trusted development partner in Turkmenistan. UNDP's strategic position is complemented by its lean and committed country office team, with a high level of expertise and good relations with the government counterparts, which support efficient implementation and raise its credibility.

The demand-driven nature of UNDP's work – while addressing the country needs – has to some extent contributed to the fragmentation of interventions, reducing their potential for scaling-up or replication to bring about system-level changes. The broad nature of the UNDP country programme has allowed for more flexibility in response to demands. However, it has also led to a fragmentation across some parts of the country programme with an accumulation of somewhat incoherent small-sized projects, leading to limited catalytic effects within a large set of reforms it aspires to influence.

UNDP has played a leading role in promoting Agenda 2030 and supporting the Government in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into domestic plans and policies. However, faster progress is needed to establish an evidence base with reliable statistics for the SDGs and related policies. It is early to assess the extent to which all measures and outputs will lead to the desired outcome, as the systematic costing of SDG implementation and monitoring still needs to take place.

UNDP has made valuable contributions in establishing the policy and institutional framework laying the foundations for furthering its human rights work. More effort is required to meet respective treaty body recommendations, particularly from the perspective of strengthening participatory governance and access to rights. UNDP's continuous investment in this area will ensure UN principles and core values are consistently promoted and protected to benefit the country and its citizens.

UNDP has played a vital role in strengthening the Government's response to tuberculosis (TB),

with catalytic effects on quality and access to treatment and social integration of patients and their families. Further and consistent effort, however, is needed in the area of persons with disability and social service provisions.

UNDP's multipronged strategy to strengthen institutional and technical capacities combined with policy advice, advocacy and demonstration pilots has led to important progress in climate change adaptation and mitigation and promoting sustainable energy solutions. Now, UNDP must focus on and facilitate knowledge transfer of successful green technologies to upscale and institutionalize results for sustainability.

UNDP's country programme portfolio has a weak gender dimension, with limited efforts to mainstream gender in pursuit of transformative effects on women. The establishment of the Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan is a positive step and should help integrate the gender dimension, properly address the structural causes of inequality and apply a rights-based approach across the country programme.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1. Guided by a strong theory of change, UNDP should consolidate its country programme portfolio through the integration of themes and strengthen the focus and depth of interventions in a limited number of thematic areas to ensure stronger outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 2. UNDP should continue its coordination role in driving the SDGs and Agenda 2030 in Turkmenistan and use its strategic position to strongly advocate for the inclusion and contribution of civil society, private sector and other development partners in the fulfilment of the SDGs.

RECOMMENDATION 3. UNDP should capitalize on good partnership and collaboration with the Government in the area of human rights to advocate for and

support implementation of its international obligations (Universal Periodic Review, ratified international conventions and treaties).

RECOMMENDATION 4. UNDP should evaluate the effective models of social service provision from the perspective of their scalability and focus on their promotion, replication and institutionalization.

RECOMMENDATION 5. UNDP should continue supporting the Government in its response to TB as it encounters challenges emerging from the new forms of the disease.

RECOMMENDATION 6. Building on achievements, UNDP should deepen its engagement with the Government in areas

of climate change adaptation and mitigation, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable energy solutions with a strong focus on knowledge-sharing, outreach and replication to promote upscaling and institutionalization. To facilitate the implementation of policies, UNDP should continue to support building local capacities, explore innovative financing models involving the private sector and non-traditional donors, and ensure that government ownership is strong in the areas supported by UNDP.

RECOMMENDATION 7. UNDP should integrate gender dimensions into all its work and utilize its strategic position and relationship with the Government to advocate for and address the structural causes of women's rights and inequality.

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: a yellow one at the top of the vertical segment, a blue one below it, a light green one at the start of the horizontal segment, a yellow one further along, a blue one next, and a light green one at the end.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1. Purpose, objective 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.¹

This is the first country-level evaluation of UNDP's work in Turkmenistan and is an integral part of the cluster evaluation of UNDP country programmes in 10 countries and one territory of Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (ECIS), each of which goes to the UNDP Executive Board in 2020 for the approval of their new country programme document (CPD).

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

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 evaluation covers the period from 2016 to mid-2019 of the current country programme cycle (2016-2020). The scope of the ICPE includes the entirety of UNDP's activities in the country and therefore covers interventions funded by all sources, including core UNDP resources and donor and government funds. It also includes any projects and activities from the previous programme cycle that either continued or concluded in the current one. The ICPE pays particular attention to the ECIS subregional and regional development context within which the UNDP country programme has operated (Annex 1, available online).

The ICPE is guided by three main evaluation questions (Box 1). It presents findings, conclusions and recommendations which will serve as an input to the formulation of UNDP's new CPD for 2021-2025.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Turkmenistan country office (CO), the Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (RBEC), the UNDP Executive Board, and the Government of Turkmenistan.

1.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards,² ensuring that all steps adhere to ethical and professional standards of evaluation practice.

The evaluation adopted a theory-based approach.³ An abridged theory of change was developed at the inception stage based on the desk review to explain causality and change, including underlying assumptions. This was refined as the evaluation progressed, based on discussions with stakeholders during the country mission on the progress of UNDP towards the country programme outcomes (Figure 3). Choices about the methods and strategy for the evaluation were grounded in the theory of change and its assumptions. An evaluation matrix was developed identifying the sub-questions, sources of information and evaluative evidence for each of the three evaluation questions (Annex 2, available online). Qualitative methods were used for data collection and analysis in line with the nature of the evidence, and to facilitate triangulation of findings.

Documentation review: The evaluation team undertook an extensive review of documents. This included, among others, background documents on the regional, subregional and national context, documents from international partners and other UN agencies; project and programme documents such as work plans and progress reports; monitoring

¹ <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>

² <http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>

³ Theory-based evaluations are usually based on a theory of change and/or results framework that seeks to explain causality and changes, including underlying assumptions.

and self-assessment reports such as the yearly UNDP Results Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs), strategy notes and project and programme evaluations conducted by the country office⁴ and the regional bureau, including quality assurance and audit reports.

Portfolio analysis: Based on the analysis of the country portfolio, the team selected 37 percent of all CO projects representing a cross-section of UNDP's work in the country for in-depth review and analysis (Annex 4, available online). It also used the analysis to refine and elaborate the evaluation matrix. Purposive sampling was used based on a number of criteria, including programme coverage (projects covering the various thematic and cross-cutting areas such as gender and human rights); financial expenditure (a representative mix of both large and smaller projects); maturity (covering both completed and active projects); gender marker⁵ (mix of projects from GEN 0-3) and implementation modality (both national and direct implementation).

Stakeholder analysis: The desk review and the portfolio analysis were used to undertake a stakeholder analysis to identify all relevant UNDP partners, including those that may not have worked with UNDP but play a key role in the outcomes to which UNDP contributes. The analysis was used to identify key informants for interviews during the main data collection phase, and to examine any potential partnerships that could improve UNDP's contribution to the country.

Pre-mission questionnaire: Prior to the country mission, a questionnaire was administered to the UNDP country office as a self-assessment and reflection tool and to gather evidence of results. This evidence was very valuable in providing an additional source of information on the UNDP country programme, its effectiveness and sustainability, allowing triangulation of data with that collected during the country field visit and from the secondary data/documentation review.

The preliminary findings of the desk review (which was conducted according to the evaluation matrix, available online) were validated in the field phase, and used to identify gaps in data and any important issues requiring subsequent follow-up.

Country missions and key informant interviews: A country mission for data collection was undertaken from 6 to 10 May 2019 to gather evidence and validate findings. A multistakeholder approach was followed and 61 stakeholder interviews were conducted with government representatives, civil society organizations, private sector representatives, UN agencies, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors, and beneficiaries of the programme. Field visits were undertaken to the Centre for Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases, TB and AIDS, Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan, Ashgabat and Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for Sustainable Water Resources Management project sites in Geokdepe *etrap*⁶ in Ahal province for discussions with the beneficiaries.

Triangulation: All information and data collected from multiple sources were triangulated to ensure their validity. The evaluation matrix guided how each of the questions was addressed and the organization of the available evidence by key evaluation question. This facilitated the analysis and supported the evaluation team in drawing well-substantiated conclusions and recommendations.

Evaluation quality assurance: Quality assurance for the evaluation was provided by two IEO internal reviewers to ensure a sound and robust evaluation methodology and analysis of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. Following the peer reviews, the draft ICPE report was shared with the country office and the RBEC, and finally with the Government and other national partners in Turkmenistan.

⁴ The CO completed two decentralized evaluations during the review period. One was rated satisfactory and the other moderately satisfactory by the IEO quality assurance mechanism.

⁵ UNDP adopted a Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017 as the strategic guidance to UNDP COs and business units to mainstream gender, through specific measures to address gender inequalities and gender (and sex) disaggregated data and indicators. Gender markers were introduced as a tool to rate gender mainstreaming and equality at the project level on a scale from zero to three, with a recommendation for country offices to allocate 15 percent of expenditure towards gender mainstreaming.

⁶ The districts of Turkmenistan – *etraps* – are territorial entities below the regions/provinces.

1.3. Evaluation considerations

The ICPE is part of a cluster evaluation of UNDP country programmes in 10 countries and one territory in Europe and the CIS, which is being piloted by the IEO to ensure 100 percent ICPE coverage of countries going to the Executive Board with their new CPD. The pilot aims to increase the country coverage in a reduced time-frame allowing for efficiency gains while maintaining the ICPE quality and methodological rigour. To ensure this, the evaluation design front-loaded the bulk of the research and analysis and used the country mission to validate the emerging findings. Most of the research for the evaluation was conducted remotely, with only five working days spent in the country to interview key stakeholders as well as visit project sites to meet the beneficiaries to assess the effectiveness of programme interventions.

The evaluation design posed challenges related to the coverage of stakeholders and number and depth of field visits. To offset the challenges, the evaluation team, in consultation with the CO, carefully planned the field mission to ensure a statistically sound coverage of the CO portfolio and stakeholders. To address the volume of stakeholder meetings, the team members commissioned parallel meetings and, where possible, held focus group discussions. Field visits were confined to project sites near the CO so that the team members could return the same day. This may have some influence on the level of consultations during the field visits to collect primary data and consult data sources. The limited time-frame in the country also affected the quality of CO debriefing at the end of the mission, which ended up being a wrap-up meeting with discussions on next steps and follow-up.

1.4. Country context

Turkmenistan is an upper-middle-income country (UMIC) with a population of 5.8 million and gross domestic product (GDP) per capita of US\$7,065 in 2018.⁷ Its human development index at 0.706 (2018) positions the country in the high human development category and ranks it 108th out of 189 countries and territories.⁸ Its economy is dependent on oil and gas resources (valued to be the world's fourth largest, making about 10 percent of global reserves) and cotton. In addition, the country is rich in sulphur, iodine, salt, bentonite clays, limestone, gypsum, and cement.⁹ China is the largest export market, especially for gas. While the country has achieved remarkable socio-economic progress over the recent decades, a number of development challenges remain.

Socio-economic context: Despite its economic achievements, Turkmenistan's development context faces a variety of socio-economic challenges common to the countries in transition to market economies. According to the latest International Monetary Fund conclusions, these include a slowing pace of GDP growth with 6.2 percent in 2018,¹⁰ an increase in public external debt equivalent to 25.4 percent of its GDP in 2018 (from 21.8 percent in 2015)¹¹ on account of borrowings to finance large investment projects,¹² as well as foreign exchange restrictions.¹³ Accumulations of revenues in the state budget are slow and the expenditures are prioritized to cover salaries, pensions and social allowances.¹⁴ Since 2019, natural gas, electricity and water subsidies have been partially removed after being in place for a quarter-century.

In 2016, Turkmenistan adopted a Law on Employment which entitles orphans, single parents, large families,

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkmenistan/overview>

⁸ UNDP Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update.

⁹ The World Bank, 'Country Snapshot: Turkmenistan', October 2018.

¹⁰ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/87549149201113248/mpo-tkm.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

people with disabilities (PWD), and victims of human trafficking and domestic violence to state support.¹⁵ It defines unemployment and stipulates the rights to employment and social protection in case of unemployment. Despite this protection, portions of the employed population remain self-employed. Further steps are needed to ensure all employed people enjoy the protection benefits.

The Government has made significant progress towards the adoption of measures to implement the 2030 Agenda. The President's decree on the implementation mechanism for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) clarifying the roles of the central authorities, the establishment of the SDG Training and Methodological Centre, the empowered State Committee on Statistics (Turkmenstat), and the President's Programme for Socio-economic Development (2018-2024 and 2019-2025) with an SDG chapter are key steps in this direction. The socio-economic programme provides key policy directions within sectors such as agriculture and water management, climate change and disaster risk reduction, trade and small and medium enterprise (SME) development, banking, public administration development and digital transformation. As part of the reform process, the Government has established or reorganized a number of institutions, such as the Ombudsperson's Office, Ministry of Finance and Economy and the Civil Service Academy. All these form the expanded pool of actors in the reform processes within the key policy areas.

According to data from 2014, the total expenditure on health was 2.1 percent of the country's GDP.¹⁶ The last available data on education expenditures are from 2013 and reported 3 percent of GDP.¹⁷ As per the National Education Profile, gender parity almost exists in gross enrolment rates: 88 percent of

women are enrolled in primary education, compared to 89 percent of men.¹⁸ With 74 percent for both men and women, gender parity is achieved at the gross enrolment rates for the upper secondary education. Gender parity for the literacy rates of young females and males is also almost achieved, at 99.9 percent and 99.77 percent respectively.¹⁹

Governance and human rights: Turkmenistan is party to nine core human rights treaties.²⁰ The country is undertaking efforts to fulfil international human rights standards as prescribed by the adopted international documents, yet challenges to full integration persist. The country's decision-making process remains centralized, which contributes to political stability but somewhat slows the pace of reforms.²¹

On gender equality, Turkmenistan has taken proactive steps through policies and legislation (notably the Law on the State Guarantees for the Equal Rights and Equal Opportunities for Men and Women, adopted in 2015, and the National Action Plan for Gender Equality 2015-2020) to strengthen mechanisms and actions to change and eradicate gender stereotypes and guarantee equality in all spheres of life. Women are taking a more proactive role in politics, representing 24.8 percent of Members of Parliament, and more than 20 percent of the People's Councils. The Speaker of Parliament is also a woman. According to government statistics, 43 percent of the economically active population in 2017 were women.²² Legislation also guarantees the right to education for all, boys and girls, ensuring equal opportunities to choose their field of study, including in higher education. There is no specific law on domestic violence or violence against women. This area is covered by the criminal law which prohibits violence in any form.

¹⁵ Government of Turkmenistan and UN Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020, Progress Report, 2016-2017.

¹⁶ World Health Organization, Turkmenistan.

¹⁷ European Commission, 'Overview of the Higher Education: Turkmenistan', February 2017.

¹⁸ National Education Profile 2018 Update.

¹⁹ Trading Economics: <https://tradingeconomics.com/turkmenistan/labor-force-total-wb-data.html>.

²⁰ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=180&Lang=EN

²¹ Hans Holzhacker and Dana Skakova, 'Turkmenistan Diagnostics', European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, 2019, p.15.

²² Government of Turkmenistan, 'The Fifth periodic report of Turkmenistan on its implementation of the provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women', 2018.

Environment and climate change: Most of the territory of Turkmenistan is desert with few mountain ecosystems and limited water resources, making it vulnerable to climate change and environmental shocks. Droughts and high temperatures are two limiting factors for water development, agriculture and forestry. Hydrocarbons make up 90 percent of total exports, and income from natural gas accounts for 15-25 percent of GDP and about half of the state budget.²³ As a consequence, any volatility of energy prices or fluctuations of demand directly affects the economy.

Considering the threats of climate change, efficient and effective use of natural and agricultural resources, protecting the environment and increasing its value remains one of the Government's priority directions.²⁴ The National Strategy on Climate Change (NSCC 2012, revised in September 2019) covers both low-emission and climate-resilient development. In 2016, Turkmenistan ratified the Paris Agreement and made a voluntary commitment to reduce greenhouse gases (GHG). The Third National Communication of Turkmenistan under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) determines priority areas for adaptation and mitigation of climate change to bring down the growth rate of GHG emissions to less than the GDP growth rate, reduction of carbon and energy intensities of GDP and zero growth in emissions by 2030.²⁵

While the Government of Turkmenistan has adopted a plan for a full transition to the market economy, the subsidies on energy prices, especially natural gas, have slowed reforms.²⁶ The subsidies were gradually cut, culminating in the Presidential decree abolishing the free provision of electricity, gas and drinking water from 1 January 2019. This has induced changes, including a genuine desire to pursue energy efficiency and renewable energy sources.

However, irrigation subsidies make the current water system unsustainable and complicate private sector investment in the absence of conducive financial mechanisms and economic instruments. The Government initiated tariff reforms with the adoption of the new Water Code in 2016, but the progress should be accelerated.²⁷ In recent years, the Government has recognized the need to diversify the agricultural sector and ease the enforcement of cotton and wheat production in the country.²⁸ The recent Programme of Water Management Development (2018-2030) has created the possibility for private entrepreneurs to take land under a 99-year lease, and many entrepreneurs are beginning to take advantage of this opportunity.²⁹

1.5. National development planning architecture

In response to socio-economic challenges, the Government of Turkmenistan has adopted a range of policies spearheaded by the National Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the Socio-Economic Development for 2018-2024, approved at the Elders Council session on 10 October 2017. The National Programme states a number of objectives, including nurturing SMEs and creating conditions for the emergence of private farmers as primary guarantors of food security. The programme was updated in 2019 for 2019-2025 to include measures for reorganizing the industrial and service sectors towards the production of high-value-added goods and privatization. The National Programme for Banking Sector Development up to 2030 was adopted as well as the Strategy of Economic, Political and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan for the period up to 2020. Also, a State Programme on Support of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship for 2018-2024 has been approved as well as a Law on Free

²³ United Nations Development Group/World Bank/United Nations in Turkmenistan, 'Support for Agenda 2030 in Turkmenistan: A Roadmap for Acceleration, and Policy Support to Achieving Sustainable Development Goals', 2018, p.7.

²⁴ National Programme of Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan – 2011-2030.

²⁵ EU/ZOI, 2018: <https://zoinet.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/CC-Turkmenistan-FINAL.pdf>.

²⁶ See, for example, IEA, 'Enabling Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Technologies Opportunities in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, Central Asia, Southern and Eastern Mediterranean', p.15.

²⁷ See <http://bit.ly/2rWE0gX> p.2.

²⁸ Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (MAPS), p.25.

²⁹ <http://cci.gov.tm/index.php/en/news-en/turkmenistan-news/5073-programme-of-water-management-development-in-2018-2030-is-to-be-elaborated-in-turkmenistan>

Economic Zones. The Government of Turkmenistan also developed a State Programme on Energy Saving for 2018-2024, the NSCC 2012 (revised in September 2019), and a National Programme of Support and Development of Tourism in Turkmenistan in 2011-2020. To conform with its international human rights obligations, the National Human Rights Action Plan 2016-2020 (NHRAP) was developed and approved by the President on 15 January 2016. These policies represent the foundations of UNDP's work in the country.

1.6. Turkmenistan's positioning in the region and key development partners

Turkmenistan upholds its traditional policy of permanent neutrality, denoting that its army never undertakes any military operations and has not been involved in multilateral training exercises or regional (or global) military-political blocs. Positive neutrality allows Turkmenistan to engage with multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and to take an active role in the Istanbul Process. The country has not yet joined the World Trade Organization (WTO). Turkmenistan has active bilateral intergovernmental commissions with over 40 countries. The collaboration concentrates on cultural events with greater potential for economic, trade and investment cooperation.

The Turkmen Government is a signatory to major United Nations conventions³⁰ and takes an active role in periodic reviews and reporting to international treaty bodies. The country participates in Central

Asian bodies such as the International Fund for the Aral Sea and its subsidiaries, the Interstate Committee for Sustainable Development and the Interstate Committee for Water Coordination. Due to its UMIC status, Turkmenistan faces extremely limited international donor presence. According to data collected within this evaluation, the main development partners active in the country include the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund, or GF), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Adaptation Fund, along with bilateral donors such as the United Kingdom, Germany, Finland, Japan and USAID, and international financial institutions (IFIs) all of which have limited coverage. China has the potential to emerge as a new donor in the country.

1.7. UNDP programme strategy in Turkmenistan

Within the complex governance and socio-economic context, the UNDP country programme for Turkmenistan (2016-2020) is closely aligned with the national development priorities laid out in the 2011-2030 National Programme for Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan, its supporting medium-term strategies for rural and socio-economic development and the 2016-2020 United Nations Development Partnership Framework (UNDPF). It focuses on four key areas aligned with the global and regional sustainable development agenda priorities, reinforcing the links between managing natural resources, economic development and human development.³¹ (Table 1)

³⁰ https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?CountryID=180&Lang=EN

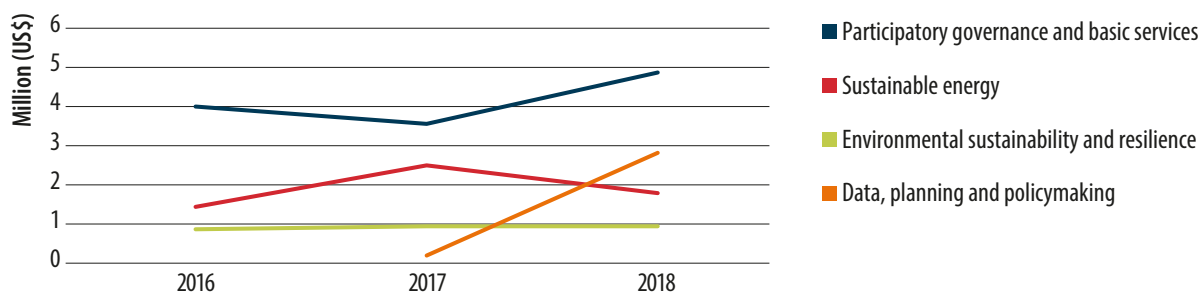
³¹ UNDP, CPD, p.4.

TABLE 1: Country programme outcomes and resources (2016-2018)

Theme	Country programme outcome		Budget US\$	Expenditure US\$
Sustainable energy	Outcome 43	The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are aligned to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through promoting sustainable practices on energy efficiency, the use of renewables, urban development and waste management.	6,193,405	5,772,252
Environmental sustainability	Outcome 44	The national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are responsive to climate change issues by promoting climate resilience, adaptation, climate risk management and disaster risk reduction measures at sector and community levels.	2,979,341	2,760,255
Participatory governance and basic services	Outcome 45	State institutions implement and monitor laws, national programmes, and strategies, in a participatory manner in line with the country's human rights commitments.	14,488,357	12,468,049
Data, planning and policymaking	Outcome 46	Quality disaggregated data, aligned with international standards, is available to policymakers, legislators, and the interested public to monitor the major goals of national programmes, the post-2015 SDGs and the Partnership Framework for Development, and to formulate new national strategies and programmes.	3,328,605	3,012,097
Total			26,989,708	24,012,653

The UNDP country programme portfolio includes a total of 38 projects under implementation within the current CPD (some of which started during the previous country programme), under the four outcomes. Projects are generally small, with more than half under \$500,000, three over \$3 million, and the rest in between. Projects are implemented by direct implementation modality

(16) and national implementation modality (18), with participatory governance and basic services receiving the highest share of funding, followed by sustainable energy and environmental sustainability. The data, planning and policymaking portfolio received the lowest share, which has been growing since activities started under this outcome (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: Evolution of expenditure by thematic area, 2016-2018

Source: UNDP Executive Snapshot, Oct 2019

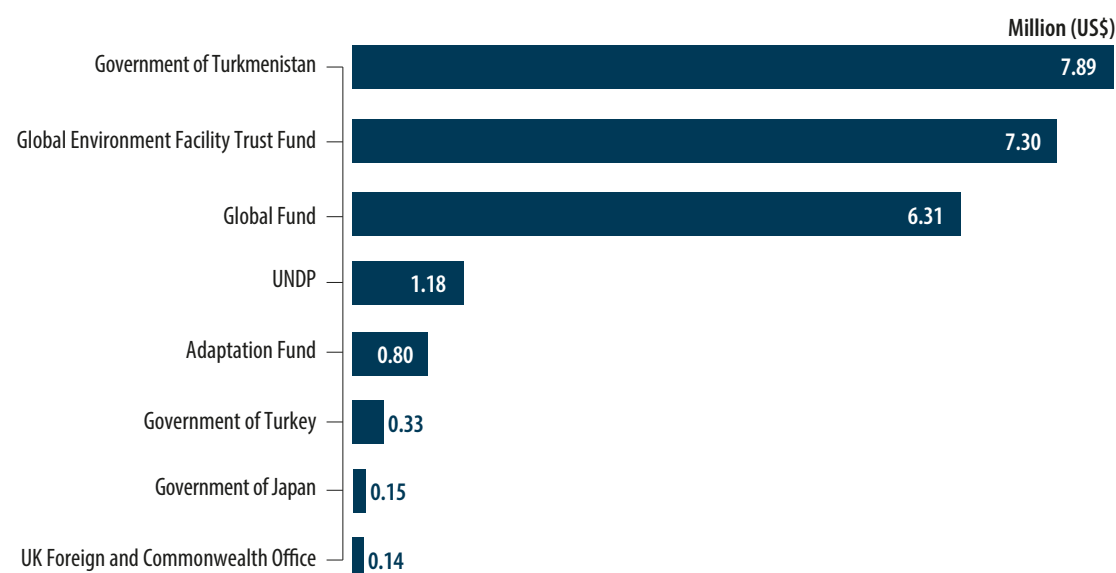
UNDP's work on participatory governance in the country covers a broad range of thematic areas. Projects in health focus mainly on diagnostics and treatment of TB and HIV testing and procurement of medical equipment, lab reagents and medicines. Work on social inclusion, employment and service provision focuses on PWD and empowering service providers, including civil society organizations (CSOs), to increase capacities for different modalities of service provision. On human rights, UNDP has supported capacities around the development of the National Human Rights Action Plan and its implementation as well as through assistance in establishing the Ombudsperson's Office and promoting access to rights and services. UNDP's data, planning and policymaking projects focused mainly on supporting the nationalization of the SDGs and the financing and implementation of Agenda 2030.

In the area of energy and environment, UNDP projects focused on enhancing energy efficiency in all sectors of the economy and on the introduction of renewable energy systems and sustainable urbanization. Work on climate change adaptation focused on improving water-use efficiency, sustainable use and

management of land and scarce water resources, and knowledge-sharing through advisory and training services. With regard to disaster risk reduction (DRR), UNDP projects focused on seismic risk assessment. UNDP in partnership with the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) assisted the Government in preparing a new draft strategy on DRR aligned with the Sendai Framework, which fed into the State Programme for Emergency Situations and Civic Defence. Most of these projects combined capacity-building, policy advice, and administrative and financial support.

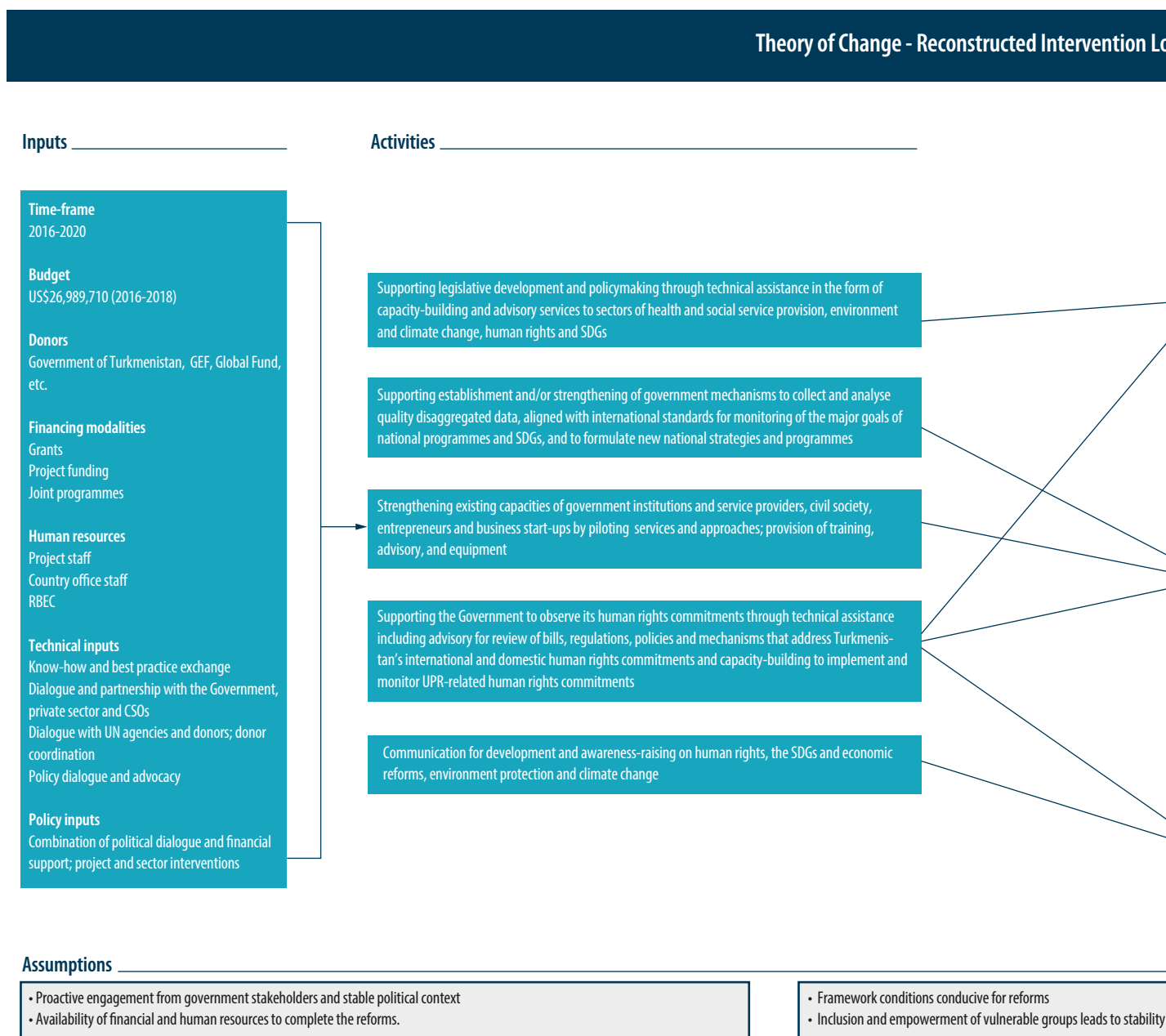
There has been a noticeable difference in donor support from the previous CPD (2010-2015). Support from the Global Fund decreased significantly due to the transition of GF activities to government funding. Additionally, the European Union (EU) significantly reduced its bilateral development cooperation with Turkmenistan due to its UMIC status. However, government cost-sharing and vertical funds from the GEF increased, as well as total financing from other donors. In the current CPD cycle, the Government of Turkmenistan is the largest contributor to the country programme, followed by the GEF and the Global Fund (Figure 2).

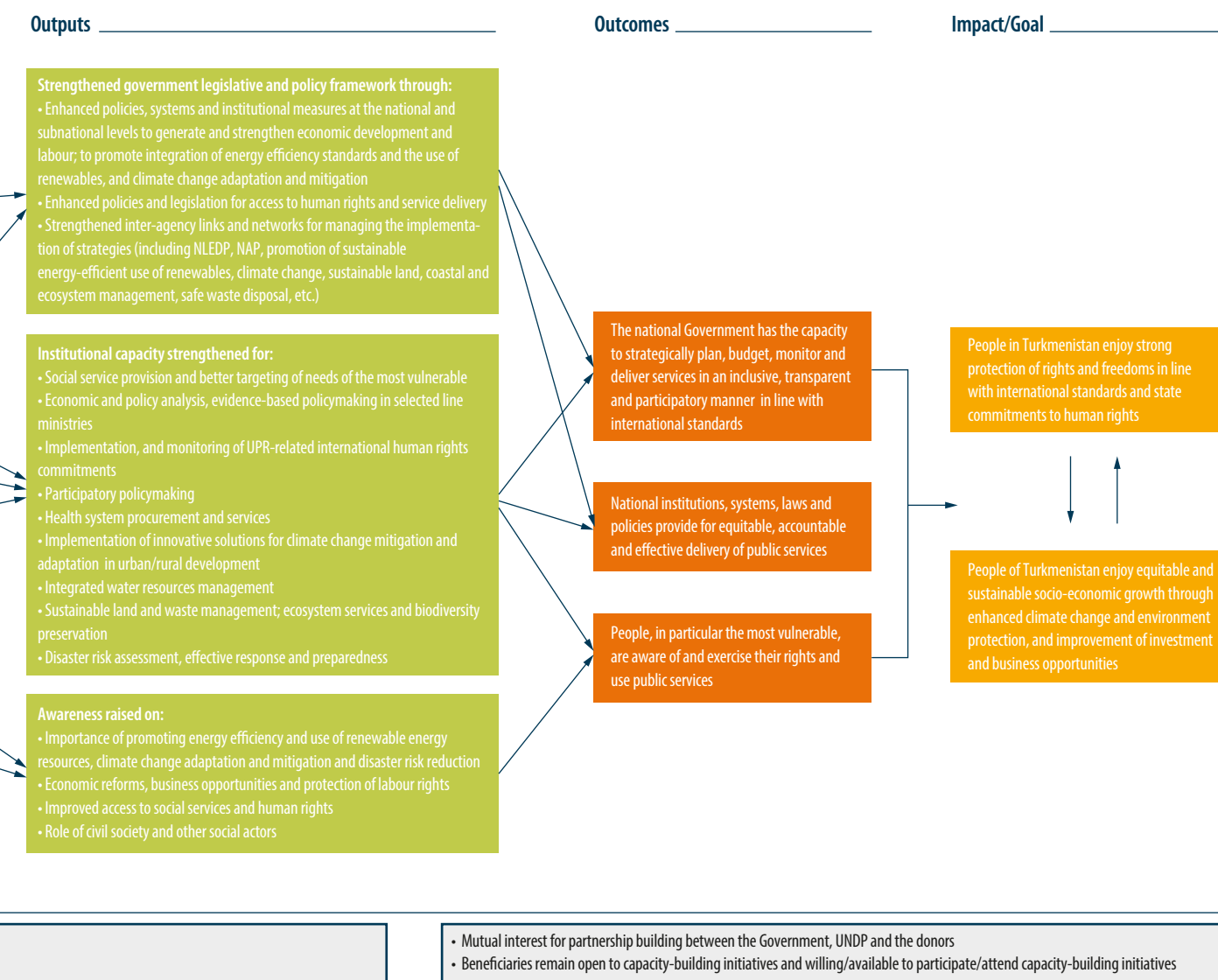
FIGURE 2: UNDP Turkmenistan – key contributors (2016-2018)



Source: UNDP Executive Snapshot, October 2019

FIGURE 3: UNDP Turkmenistan – reconstructed theory of change







CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS

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

This chapter outlines the evaluation's findings in terms of UNDP's effectiveness in achieving its objectives (as stated in the CPD) for each programme outcome and cross-cutting area. It also describes the main factors that influenced UNDP's performance and contributions to results. The assessment is based on an analysis of the reported project and programme achievements and their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and consequently the overall outcome objectives.

2.1. Overall programme implementation

Finding 1: UNDP's programme in Turkmenistan is relevant to national priorities as defined in government policy documents and to contextual challenges. UNDP successfully cooperated with the Government of Turkmenistan, positioning itself as a reliable and credible provider of development services, which is reflected in increased government financing of the UNDP programme. Overall, a faster pace of reforms in certain sectors will further support the achievement and sustainability of results.

Despite its UMIC status, Turkmenistan, like similar countries, faces a number of development challenges towards the fulfilment of its national development priorities and the SDGs. UNDP has been an important and neutral actor and supporter of the Government's efforts to address persisting challenges and tackle priorities set out in official strategic documents,³² many of which have been developed with UNDP's support. UNDP's expertise, global network and access to various international resources are regarded as its key assets and comparative advantages. Within each intervention area, UNDP has invested efforts to respond to priorities and provide quality technical expertise, international exposure and best practices. This has been done to help the Government, other donors and international organizations to overcome barriers and fulfil developmental priorities set out in the President's Programme for Socio-economic Development 2018-2022 and other relevant sector

strategies.³³ UNDP has implemented a range of relevant interventions across various sectors, including environment and climate change; economy and international trade; health and social services; reforms of the public sector; human rights; and fulfilment of the SDGs. UNDP's engagement has been relevant to the Government's vision to take a stronger stance in international relations, particularly with regard to its status of 'neutrality', which has been its overarching long-term policy direction.

Across all sectors, UNDP provides technical assistance (capacity-building, mentoring, advisory, analytical work and advocacy) and policy support to the Government to enhance its internal work processes, and to support evidence-based policy and legislative drafting and assisting in better targeting of services. UNDP also tackles issues of participation, albeit with lesser success, mainly through advocacy and mapping of civil society actors, given the developing nature of their sector in the country.

UNDP focuses on improving service delivery and coverage of social and health services. These areas show further space for improvement in line with the country's UMIC status. Health service support responds to the needs of those living with multiple drug-resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) – who make up 24 percent of all TB cases – for adequate medical and psycho-social care.

Within the economic diversification portfolio, UNDP's support is still in an initial phase, assisting the Government with developing economic, trade, banking, statistics and labour issues. This is seen as the foundation for economic diversification by relevant UNDP and government stakeholders interviewed during the ICPE.

The Government perceives UNDP's role in promoting and guiding national energy efficiency programmes, climate change (adaptation in particular), sustainable and environmentally friendly urban and rural

³² For example: National Programme of the President of Turkmenistan on the Socio-economic Development for 2018-2024, National Human Rights Action Plan, National Programme for Banking Sector Development up to 2030, SME Development Programme, 2018-2024, National Programme for Prevention and Control of Tuberculosis in Turkmenistan in 2016-2020, Strategy of Economic, Political and Cultural Development of Turkmenistan for the period of up to 2020 and sector national programmes, such as the National Programme for Improvement of Social and Living Conditions of the Rural Population for the period up to 2020.

³³ As of 1 February 2019, the President's Programme for Socio-economic Development 2019-2025 has replaced the 2018-2025 Programme.

development as particularly important, given the lack of or minimal presence of other traditional development partners, donors and IFIs in the country.

The Government's co-financing of UNDP programmes in the country is high, amounting to \$12.6 million during 2016-2018. Stakeholder interviews confirm the Government's interest in increasing financial contributions to UNDP for technical assistance. The Government's increased interest in financing, as noted in interviews with government stakeholders, is due to the recognition of UNDP's role as a long-term, trusted partner with international experience and networks. These are of critical importance for Turkmenistan because of its neutrality status and regional position. Also, the Government recognizes UNDP can provide services across different sectors in response to national needs.

An increase in government funding to the country programme portfolio has benefits and challenges. Such funding ensures better targeting and responsiveness of technical assistance to the needs of beneficiary institutions and partners. Conversely, acquiring government funding is a long process which can delay projects. Such delays, at the onset and during the implementation of projects, can create difficulties for UNDP to plan adequately. Many projects and initiatives were discontinued due to the Government's changing priorities (e.g. support for Supreme Court or Ombudsperson's Office). Planning for UNDP's ongoing work and pipeline projects is tied to government budget planning timelines. Stakeholder interviews pointed to shortcomings in UNDP's planning and timely submission of proposals to the Government to ensure that projects are included in annual budgets.

Another challenge is a disparity between focus. For example, the Government may have priorities that UNDP cannot attend to at the time of reforms. UNDP analyses and considers these challenges to ensure realistic expectations and result prospects are integrated into programmes and interventions. However, in some instances, such as with the banking sector or digital economy, UNDP takes an opportunistic approach by embarking into these areas, even though they have not traditionally formed UNDP's main service lines.

Dependence on government funding makes it more challenging for UNDP to work on the fulfilment of human rights standards, considering the lack of opportunities for significant resource mobilization in the area. UNDP could have done more to advocate for civil society engagement and access to human rights and freedoms within the scope of initiatives implemented under the country programme by leveraging its position as a trusted partner of the Government.

Overall, the pace of reforms in social protection, human rights, environment, climate change and other areas has affected the level of achievements in the respective sectors. An additional hurdle was the scarcity of government funds for some development projects. This was also compounded by the sector's capacity to transform models or piloted approaches into policies, legislation and government approaches or mechanism.

Finding 2: Within the country programme implementation period, UNDP worked on a wide range of sectors, areas and issues, which has directly affected the depth, strategic focus and coherence of interventions and the sustainability of institutions and structures it helped establish. While the projects apply the theory of change approach and use results chains, the country programme theory of change and definition of causal linkages between activities, outputs and desired outcomes of support call for further elaboration. At times, it is found too thinly spread and resources are overstretched across a range of projects, requiring greater synergies, cross-project and portfolio collaboration and corporate-level reflection on the achievement of CPD outcomes.

UNDP's support to the governance and economic portfolio is largely demand driven, which enhances the relevance of its interventions to the Government's priorities and challenges, but at the same time may lead to fragmentation of support, limiting, to a certain extent, their catalytic effects. The synergy is much better in the case of health, energy and environment projects, which despite their large number show clear opportunities for interlinkages. Within each thematic area, UNDP has invested its best efforts to respond to government priorities and provide support. In

certain cases, this support happens mostly in silos, with less than desired level of investment in seeking synergies with other support interventions and thematic areas. Here, too, the situation is better for the energy and environmental projects, given the natural linkages with livelihoods and basic services. While projects apply the theory of change approach and use results chains, the country programme calls for a more elaborate theory of change or analysis of how different interventions lead to desired outcomes and contribute to the overall impact of UNDP assistance. Outcome definitions in the CPD are sufficiently general to accommodate any additional set of interventions requested by the Government, but there is a need to establish clear linkages between chosen programme strategies/activities and intended results. Causal assumptions behind the links between activities and the levels of results (outputs, immediate and intermediate outcomes and impacts) need to be presented. Indicators in the results matrix vary in quality and level of measurement, some outcome-level indicators being clearly output-level indicators. Each indicator has baselines and targets, though these are often ambiguous and difficult to understand.

The demand-driven nature of the UNDP CO requires constant readiness of the country team to respond to the Government's demands for technical assistance by investing in expertise, exchange of practices and know-how and capacity-building. The numerous requests for technical assistance – many of which are challenged by a lack of guaranteed resources – may fall within the broad priorities of UNDP and its CPD objectives. At times, however, the small size and the high number of these requests, along with the lack of resources, reduces their potential for scaling up or replication to bring about system-level changes. The current country programme portfolio of projects and activities presents evidence of such fragmentation, with multiple small-scale, one-off interventions being implemented, particularly in the governance and services portfolio. The situation is slightly better in the energy and environment portfolios, where

most initiatives are funded by vertical funds (GEF). However, there are more opportunities for exchange and cross-portfolio integration between different thematic areas and projects than those being utilized.

Fragmentation has had implications for staff resources as well. In some areas, such as the health portfolio, small teams manage large resources with evidence of resource efficiency. The governance team is overstretched as it tries to respond to multiple, often short-notice, requests by the Government. The energy and environment portfolio team faces the challenge of managing a portfolio of large and demanding GEF-funded projects and difficulties in recruiting qualified consultants inside, or outside the country. With this growth, staffing levels across portfolios need to be respectively adjusted to the extent possible.

Monitoring and reporting are conducted under routine UNDP procedures, spanning from activity-level monitoring at the project level to CO-level results reports (ROAR). UNDP also conducts evaluations, but predominantly at the project level. UNDP reports provide ample elaboration of activities (training, studies, events) and an overview of outputs (e.g. drafted normative acts, modelled or supported mechanisms) but very rarely do they offer insights into outcomes (transformative effects) of interventions across the country programme. Further, the reports have very limited or no analysis of risks and presentation of mitigation strategies. Variations are noted with the Global Fund and GEF-funded projects, which have stringent monitoring and evaluation requirements. This is beneficial to understand the contributions, albeit within limits of the quality of the results and resources framework. Another area for improvement is the introduction of post-project/sector sustainability monitoring and the investment of greater efforts in raising awareness or sharing of the lessons learned, as noted in several evaluation reports.³⁴ This is related to the overall improvement of a learning approach and understanding of the contributions, contextual and other limitations, risks and mitigation strategies.

³⁴ See, for example, UNDP Turkmenistan, 'Terminal Evaluation of UNDP/Adaptation Fund project on addressing climate change risks to farming systems in Turkmenistan at national and community level', 2017, p.6; UNDP Turkmenistan, 'Full-sized UNDP-GEF project Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy for Sustainable Water Management in Turkmenistan', 2018, p.51.

Finding 3: Together with the other UN agencies active in Turkmenistan, UNDP coordinated efforts in areas such as health, DRR and human rights that create good ground for enhanced efforts towards joint programming. Given the shrinking donor base in the country, cooperation between UN agencies is increasingly relevant, particularly due to the Government's sharper focus on the SDGs, which encompasses mandates of other UN agencies.

UNDP has made modest efforts to coordinate responses with other UN agencies in areas such as TB, health, DRR, climate change and industrial safety. For instance, under projects funded by the Global Fund and the Ministry of Health of Turkmenistan, UNDP collaborates with the World Health Organization (WHO) on the Stop TB Partnership and the Global Drug Facility to improve TB service delivery and strengthen health systems. UNDP also collaborated with the Challenge TB project implemented by the WHO country office. Challenge TB complemented the Global Fund's TB grant by filling in the technical assistance and training gaps.

UNDP supported the development of the National DRR Strategy draft with special emphasis on those most vulnerable to disasters (women, children, and PWD) in cooperation with UNICEF. In other instances, the UN Environment Programme and UNDP supported the implementation of the Montreal Protocol and now cooperate on preparing the 4th National Communication. UNDP and the UN Industrial Development Organization cooperated under the framework of the hydrochlorofluorocarbons phase-out, while UNDP and the UN Economic Commission for Europe supported enhancing the capacity for assessing industrial safety and developing a national action plan for the implementation of and accession to the Industrial Accidents Convention. UNDP also coordinated the revision of the NSCC with inputs from UN agencies and other development partners. The revised strategy was adopted in September 2019.

UNDP engaged with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (both non-resident agencies), UNICEF and

others to support ratification and preparation by the Government of national reports to the Committees on the Convention on Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), as well as the review process of Turkmenistan by the UN Committee against Torture and Committee on Elimination of Racial Discrimination. As a result of technical assistance, Turkmenistan accepted and submitted its national report on the implementation of the 2nd cycle Universal Periodic Review (UPR) recommendations.

A Joint Programme on Gender Equality that was developed by the UN Country Team in 2016, the joint UNDP-UNICEF-UN Population Fund (UNFPA) initiative on Youth Situation Analysis, and the joint programme on Social Service Delivery (submitted for the UN SDG Fund) were the only systemic efforts to invest in joint programmes. The project on gender equality was not implemented due to a lack of funds. The joint project on Social Services submitted to the SDG Fund was developed by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator's Office. The project focuses on improving the social service provision system and is a logical continuation of UNDP efforts. The joint project was approved by the SDG Fund in late 2019. Besides, UN agencies assisted the Government in developing the First Voluntary National Review of SDG implementation. The process was participatory, engaging the Government and UN, and was implemented within the scope of the UNDP-Ministry of Finance project on the SDG platform.

UNDP's efforts to foster joint initiatives with other UN agencies require further strengthening. This is because of a stronger focus on the SDGs and fulfilment of international obligations by the Government, limited donor base in the country and increasing demands from the Government to provide expertise in relevant areas across sectors, many of which encompass mandates of other UN agencies.

Finding 4: UNDP has facilitated South-South exchanges for partners across the country programme portfolio at regional and global levels. However, barring a few exceptions, these exchanges are one-time isolated events benefiting the participating individuals

with limited potential to institutionalize learning and facilitate long-term institutional partnerships.

Across the country programme interventions, there have been several opportunities for Turkmen partners to engage in regional or global events and exchanges with UNDP's facilitation, as Turkmenistan does not have many opportunities to benefit from South-South exchanges. Donors confirm that regional projects by UNDP and other donors (e.g. in the water sector, prevention of violent extremism (PVE) or issues of regional importance) are commonly how Turkmenistan participates in and learns from the regional and global initiatives.

Despite the challenges, UNDP has facilitated South-South cooperation through exchanges of best practices in the form of training, regional conferences and workshops, study tours, and exchange of knowledge, tools and technical know-how. Examples include study tours to Croatia for interventions supporting the establishment of the Ombudsperson's Office; a visit to Denmark for information on energy efficiency projects; and international conferences, roundtables and workshops (within the support interventions for the State Bank of Foreign Economic Affairs (SBEFA) and within the human rights and governance portfolio). Within the sustainable energy and environment portfolio, Turkmen specialists benefited from the exchange of experience and learning on innovative water-saving/measuring tools, water disinfection techniques suitable for the stored water in *sardobs* (concrete-lined, covered water reservoirs built into the ground); innovations related to pasture management and management of water distribution (with satellite technologies) in Kazakhstan and Israel. Regional projects, such as the PVE initiative, also offer space for exchange and mutual learning in the region and cross-fertilization of practices and approaches.

However, with a few exceptions (e.g. the partnership with Uzbek producers to strengthen the capacity of the local farmers to use laser land levelling), these events and exchanges are mostly one-off events. They benefit the participating individuals, but many have not brought institutional change. In certain areas, like water and climate change adaptation, some practices were improved, but again without significant institutional changes, in part due to a rather rigid system of government control over institutional reforms. There is a need to use these exchanges effectively to foster long-term institutional partnerships.

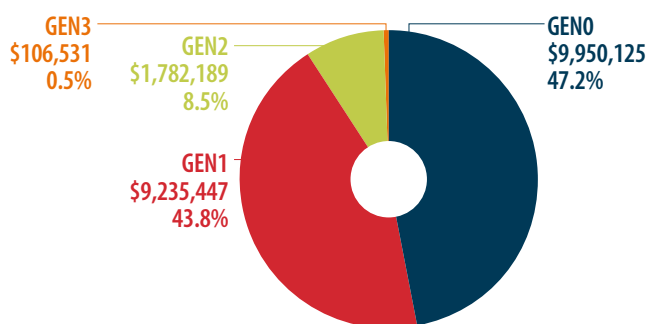
Finding 5: There is limited evidence of gender mainstreaming across CO projects and programmes. Recent efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming by the adoption of a Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan are moves in a positive direction.

UNDP adopted its second Gender Equality Strategy 2014-2017³⁵ as strategic guidance to UNDP country offices and business units to mainstream gender, and to address gender inequalities and gender (and sex) disaggregated data and indicators through specific measures. Gender markers were introduced as a tool to rate gender mainstreaming and equality at the project level in line with a recommendation for country offices to allocate at least 15 percent of expenditure towards gender mainstreaming.

UNDP's CPD marginally mainstreams gender in the narrative and the results matrix, with no gender-related outputs and indicators, or financial allocations. Until the end of 2018, the country office had 53 percent of projects with GEN0 gender marker ratings, while 38 percent of the projects had GEN1 ratings. Less than 10 percent of the expenditures are committed to outputs where gender equality is included as a significant objective (GEN2) or where gender equality is the main objective (GEN3) (Figure 4).

³⁵ <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment/gender-equality-strategy-2014-2017.html>

FIGURE 4: Expenditure by gender marker (2016-2018)



Source: UNDP ATLAS, February 2019

In 2018, the country office formed a Gender Equality Focal Group of representatives from the three programme portfolios and the operations team, chaired by the Deputy Resident Representative. The group developed a Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan and initiated a review of gender markers of the existing and planned projects. The review was conducted as per a checklist developed by the focal group. This is seen by the evaluation team as a step in the right direction, resulting in reconsideration of gender equality markers for some of the projects. However, it is too early to assess the actual results and potential for change that can materialize from this initiative.

Gender mainstreaming across the programme and its portfolio of projects is mainly confined to gender-disaggregated data (e.g. gender disaggregation of training and activity participants) and general notions of promotion of gender equality and rights. There is no deeper analysis of the gender dimension of outcomes, the potential impact of activities, or presentation of transformative effects of interventions on women and men. The lack of full programme theory also prevents understanding of the overall achievements, assumptions and limitations of ensuing vulnerabilities of both genders.

Some projects do have a deeper focus on gender mainstreaming, though not systematically and with varying levels of success. The human rights project, for example, aimed at building the capacity of state institutions to promote and protect human rights including gender equality, in line with the UPR and CEDAW obligations. The project strongly focused on

integrating gender aspects and rights for the state delegation to the Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights in October 2018. Another example is the labour project, which attempts to include gender sensitivity and mainstreaming concepts in reviewing the legislation on labour, inclusive employment, labour safety and social protection. Special effort was made to review the laws from a gender perspective with proposals for amendments on social protection. Additionally, the livelihoods and water governance initiatives integrated gender through water-use mechanisms at the local level but also through ensuring that UNDP assistance reached out to women across target areas.

Despite proactive steps by the Government through policies and legislation, gender mainstreaming remains a complex issue in the country. This is illustrated by the joint project on gender prepared by UN agencies, which could not get financial support. However, this should not discourage UNDP from focusing on the promotion of gender rights. On the contrary, UNDP should leverage its strategic position and relationship with the Government to advocate for and mainstream gender even more strongly to enhance women's rights.

Finding 6: Turkmenistan's UMIC status and the limited landscape of donors and development partners including the IFIs in the country presents a challenge for UNDP to diversify its resource portfolio.

Since the country transitioned to the UMIC category, the country office has seen a reduction in core funding and donor resources. Bilateral donors are either not present or phasing out their projects. At the time

of the evaluation, the main international financial institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Asian Development Bank were either not present or had a minimal presence in the country. Donors who were present had very limited outreach to the Government and had limited funds for development cooperation and support. This presents a challenge for the country office to diversify its resource portfolio. Although there has been a slight increase in GEF funds, overall the country office has seen a significant decline in vertical funds owing to the reduction of the Global Fund and the EU's bilateral development cooperation because of the country's transition to UMIC status. UNDP therefore increasingly relies on government funding for its programming. UNDP has worked proactively with the Government and more recently with UN agencies to identify resource mobilization opportunities as discussed in Findings 1 and 3. In addition, the country office has approached non-traditional donors such as Japan, China, and EU member states as well as global funds and instruments. At the time of the evaluation, the EU was reconsidering opening a delegation in Ashgabat, which will present the country office with an opportunity to renew its development cooperation with the EU.

UNDP remains the leading development partner in the country. Government and donor interlocutors confirm the Government's interest in increasing its support to UNDP as the country moves to implement its SDG commitments. Development partners see UNDP as a bridge between the international development community and the Government because of the Government's trust in UNDP.

2.2. Participatory governance and basic services

Outcome 45: State institutions implement and monitor laws, national programmes, and strategies, in a participatory manner in line with the country's human rights commitments.

Finding 7: UNDP achieved mixed results within the participatory governance and basic services portfolio. UNDP support brought sustainable results in strengthening the response to TB in the country. The foundations for future enhancement of human rights were laid by the establishment of the Ombudsperson's Office and the human rights policy framework. Limited results were achieved in participatory governance outcomes with regard to access and protection of rights, particularly for the most vulnerable. There is an ongoing need for investment in this area to ensure the implementation of adopted legislative and strategic frameworks and to ensure sustainability.

Outcome 45 has a wide range of initiatives in different sectors ranging from health, social inclusion, labour and employment, human rights, support to state and independent bodies, etc., including those whose implementation was extended from the previous country programme. UNDP focuses on core government functions, assisting in strengthening capacities of state institutions to implement and monitor laws, national programmes and strategies, and to improve services and programmes in line with human rights commitments. The effectiveness of these interventions as contributors to the outcome is mixed due to the broad area of engagement and a variety of small projects and interventions.

It can be concluded that Government ownership of the interventions, coupled with the availability of resources to follow through or scale up are decisive factors in ensuring long-term effectiveness of achieved outputs. Support to the health sector happened within a conducive operating environment, with the Government's full support to the health care interventions, as well as continued access to sufficient external and internal resources. Consequently, most visible achievements materialized in this portfolio towards health system improvements and reinforced health services in response to TB. These contributions have brought tangible changes to the people affected by TB, in particular, through better integration in society and improved livelihood opportunities. Less visible are the impacts on PWD or other marginalized groups tackled by interventions, due to fragmented engagement with government partners or directly with CSOs representing rights of PWD or other right holders.

Support to strengthen the human rights framework in the country has had some positive results with the adoption of human rights plans and strategies. However, there are limited outcomes thus far in terms of the system-wide application of these strategies and mechanisms that allow access and protection of rights, particularly of the most vulnerable. Support to independent bodies like the Ombudsperson's Office and the judiciary show output-level results as well, but these institutions need ongoing support to ensure that they monitor and protect rights.

The outcome statement emphasizes participatory governance. The achievement of this outcome requires greater focus and results in support of participatory law/policymaking, monitoring of laws, and national programmes and strategies. This is one of the weaknesses of UNDP's work under this outcome. While UNDP works closely with the Government and state institutions or directly with final beneficiaries, it needs to invest more in engaging with civil society and other non-state actors in a systemic manner. UNDP should more effectively leverage its strategic position to strongly advocate for widening the space for participation or empowerment of civil society as an independent sector.

The sustainability prospects of the results achieved in this outcome are mixed. For example, the health system interventions to prevent TB have led to improved material, human resource capacity and approaches. This will be maintained by the health departments, as confirmed by relevant stakeholders. However, psycho-social and backstopping support by civil society, the Red Crescent Society in particular, which depends on external financing needs to be continued by the Government once the Global Fund resources expire.

The main factors contributing to stronger sustainability of these efforts are long-term structural support and financial investment in building mechanisms and services for TB patients. Ensuring that testing and services are available regionally and locally would enable patients to continue normal lives and income-generation activities to the extent possible. The fact that the ministry is participating financially increases the chances of maintaining medication

inflow. However, sustainability prospects for investment in social inclusion are very low, as services by the Red Crescent Society are project driven and may stop once external financing expires. UNDP's investment in social service development is at an initial stage and will disappear if funds are not available.

Finding 8: UNDP's work on human rights and governance has resulted in positive outputs, particularly within the complex framework for human rights work, and call for sustained systematic efforts to ensure transformative effects.

UNDP's work on governance and human rights was challenged by the context and a lack of funding, which has been minimal during the current CPD. UNDP provided ongoing support and technical assistance to the Government to be more visible in the international human rights arena in line with its neutrality status. The main areas of assistance included supporting the State in its core roles of protecting and promoting human rights; ratifying international treaties; strengthening the legislative and policy framework; and improving reporting capacities. Support focused on the judiciary (access to justice and human rights) and independent bodies (for monitoring and reporting on human rights), awareness-raising to promote human rights and clarifying each institution's role in the implementation of human rights. Support was also offered in mainstreaming human rights into other related activities (e.g. health, social inclusion, labour) through policy advice, communication and advocacy; training and organization of mock sessions of international treaty bodies committee meetings; review and recommendations to the existing legislative and policy frameworks; and assistance in establishing and strengthening human-rights-related institutions and mechanisms.

UNDP's work in this area laid the foundations for protection and access to rights through the establishment of the Ombudsperson's Office and adoption of the National Human Rights Policy framework and NHRAP 2016-2020. It has also enhanced cooperation with international and UN human rights mechanisms, particularly through ratification and reporting on the implementation of international

treaties. Besides, support to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection of Population resulted in the adoption of the Programme for Improvement of Employment of Young Professionals and the accompanying Action Plan (2018-2020) based on the review and analysis of the laws and regulations relating to inclusive employment, labour safety and social protection from the perspective of Turkmenistan's commitments to human rights and UN Conventions, including CEDAW. As noted in Finding 3, UNDP also engaged with other UN agencies to support ratification and preparation of national reports to the CEDAW, CESC and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD), among others.

The establishment of the Ombudsperson's Office has been one of the main achievements within this outcome during the current CPD. UNDP's advocacy of a provision in the new Constitution enshrining the Ombudsperson as an independent entity was taken on board by the Government and operationalized through the establishment of the office. This young office requires steadfast support from the Government and international development partners to gain greater experience and intensify its efforts and reach for the sake of better protection of human rights in the country.

Support to the Supreme Court included analysis of legislation on free legal aid and its compatibility with human rights law; development of training packages for judges and lawyers as well as an assessment of needs to modernize court processes. (Modelling showed improvement in court processes in one district court). Despite yielding some positive results in capacity development of the Supreme Court in rule of law and access to justice, the project has ceased, primarily due to lack of resources.

Outcomes of UNDP support in the area of human rights have yet to emerge, as the outputs are still fragile. UNDP should take advantage of its positioning in the country as well as the established human rights values to engage in greater advocacy for the implementation of the human rights policies and instruments in the country.

This is also closely related to UNDP's commitment to enhancing participatory decision and policymaking. UNDP's investment in enhancing participation

concentrated on research and civil society mapping exercises, which can be seen as an initial step in establishing an evidence base for developing project ideas in this field. In 2016, UNDP conducted a mapping of public associations operating in Turkmenistan, which revealed 118 civil society organizations across the country. Building on this, UNDP created a database of CSOs and a website to access them. This website (<https://ngo-turkmenistan.org/>) is now administered by one of the NGOs. Further efforts are also noted towards encouraging CSO participation in the voluntary national report (VNR) and other SDG-related activities. The country invests efforts to engage with CSOs despite the funding restrictions and the absence of a formally structured project. The UN Joint Programme on Social Services integrates CSO engagement and promotion of social contracting, which presents an opportunity for structured CO engagement with civil society.

The sustainability prospects of human rights achievements are mixed and depend on a number of factors, most important of which is political commitment and buy-in for investment in human rights standards. Thus far, Turkmenistan has done a lot to integrate international commitments into domestic policies and legislation, but it still faces challenges in implementing human rights standards. UNDP's interventions have helped enhance the policy framework and mechanisms in response to UPR recommendations, which are sustainable. However, the extent to which they will truly make a difference in the way in which human rights issues are tackled remains to be seen.

Finding 9: UNDP, in partnership with the Government and the Global Fund, has significantly contributed to enhancing the country's response to TB and HIV.

UNDP in partnership with the Government and with the financial support of the Global Fund has made a significant contribution to the overall response to diagnostics and treatment of TB and MDR-TB in the country. The partnership between the Government, UNDP as the principal recipient and the Global Fund has been ongoing since 2010, through the provision of new-generation drugs, patient support services, capacity development for medical staff and monitoring.

The main focus has been on TB, although emphasis was also directed towards HIV in the initial years of the GF implementation. From 2018, the programme expanded to include safe blood, hepatitis and non-communicable diseases. Support resulted in increased access to free and quality diagnostics and treatment services for people at risk of or having TB, HIV or hepatitis C across the country, including the prison sector. Diagnostics of TB has improved significantly, particularly at the molecular level, which assists early detection and treatment, helping patients recover faster and integrate back into society. Early diagnostics also improves understanding of the spread of the disease through more accurate figures on MDR-TB, which currently stands at 24 percent of all new TB cases in Turkmenistan. This evidence base has helped the Government, UNDP and donors prioritize the issue.

The Government has increasingly taken over responsibility (and investing funds) to improve services for TB patients, particularly during the current programme cycle. The unique feature of the programme is that besides standard treatment of TB, Turkmenistan has been addressing the challenges of MDR-TB and extremely drug-resistant TB (XDR-TB), for which a very specific approach and drugs are needed. The programme (implemented through various projects within the CP portfolio) has invested in the treatment of persons with TB and MDR-TB with new-generation medicines, rapid molecular testing for drug-resistant tuberculosis and ambulatory treatment. UNDP added value by applying for the donation provided by the Global Drug Facility that allows the countries to receive the second-line TB medicine 'Bedaquiline' free. According to UNDP reports, the actual cost of the medicine is \$400 for six months of treatment, which means that the opportunity to get the medicines free saved \$800,000 for 2,000 MDR-TB patients enrolled in treatment in 2019-2020 with government funding.³⁶ This is important in terms of cost-efficiency of applied modality for purchase and adds value to UNDP's intervention.

UNDP documentation shows that every year about 600 MDR-TB patients enrolled in treatment, totalling more than 2,000 to date (including the prison sector). The number of XDR-TB patients on treatment increased from 20 in 2017 to 67 in 2018 and is expected to reach 100 in 2019. Every year, on average 1,000 patients (31 percent women) are on support, and more than 10,000 home visits and 170 educational sessions are conducted, including in remote areas.³⁷ About 13,000 molecular tests³⁸ with Xpert technology (known as Xpert MTB/RIF assay) are conducted among the population every year, using equipment purchased through the programme centrally and in two regional laboratories. Site observation of the infectious disease hospital and laboratory during the evaluation showed that the Turkmen state medical facilities for diagnostics and treatment are very advanced as a result of investments from the Government, UNDP and the Global Fund.

UNDP supports the National TB Programme to prepare for the gradual exit from GF support to full domestic funding by 2021. The Government has signed a new funding agreement of \$11.25 million for medicines. In addition, the Government is requesting further support to address non-communicable diseases, which would include procurement, revision of regulation, and capacity-building based on positive cooperation with UNDP, as confirmed by key informants. The Government and UNDP recognize that the fight against TB encounters new challenges from new forms of the disease, resistance to existing drugs demanding new regime methods, and protocols to fight TB, which present a challenge in the short to medium term.

Finding 10: Support to social inclusion of PWD is relevant to Government priorities and the needs of PWD. This support, however, has been marginal, fragmented and with limited outcomes thus far.

³⁶ ROAR 2018, p. 23.

³⁷ Ibid, p.22.

³⁸ Xpert MTB/RIF assay is a major breakthrough in TB care and control. The table-top device can dramatically cut the time it takes to provide an accurate diagnosis of TB and rifampicin resistance for many patients – from up to three months to less than two hours. Source: https://www.who.int/tb/features_archive/xpert_rapid_tb_test/en/.

There are more than 10,000 PWD in Turkmenistan,³⁹ of which 76 percent are employed, but mostly in low-paying jobs. Particularly excluded are women with disabilities who face greater obstacles for engaging in social life or employment. Hence, support to these groups is important to raise developmental opportunities for PWD in line with international standards and particularly the CRPD and the Optional Protocol. Turkmenistan signed the CRPD in 2008 and ratified its Optional Protocol in 2010. Turkmenistan's legal framework stipulates protection of rights of PWD in line with the Convention, guaranteeing equal access to health, education, and social welfare. Its Social Security Code and the Law on Education are in line with international obligations which recognize the need for employment of PWD (quotas for hiring vulnerable groups of the population which includes PWD, single mothers and others).

Three out of four UNDP projects within this outcome focused directly on PWD within the framework of the National Action Plan for the creation of conditions and opportunities for the implementation of the rights in the employment of PWD (2017-2020). This was done by providing additional vocational training possibilities for PWD. Projects began with the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of Textile Industry to develop training materials and ensure employment for selected PWD. The partnership resulted in the adoption of the developed curriculum at the Textile College. According to UNDP records, in 2017, there were almost 10 vocational schools around the country that accepted PWD into inclusive groups for various professions. Other interventions include a leadership project for PWD, job fairs and initiatives to help women PWD enhance their awareness and knowledge of management and leadership skills. However, all these initiatives are small scale, mostly pilots, and lack interconnection or elaborated theory of change with an analysis of scalability of piloted models.

The ICPE found evidence that the projects succeeded in testing models and approaches to vocational education, engaging with 128 PWD (1.8 percent of

the total PWD population as per official statistics) in professional development or vocational training. Investment to improve the Government's capacity to address PWD employment resulted in the availability of new approaches to and methodologies for vocational education and raised the issues PWD face in seeking employment and integration into society. These projects, training and pilots were one-off activities that brought positive results for the PWD, but there has been no catalytic effect on society due to lack of funding and further uptake. In the evaluation team's view, this is a result of fragmented support and the lack of a clear portfolio of interventions and strategy to support PWD empowerment and policymaking. UNDP has done some CRPD and human rights advocacy, but invested no policy leverage to ensure the modelling would be scaled up into a full-fledged government response.

The leadership project engaged with around 55 potential women leaders with disabilities from different regions on topics such as democracy and democratic institutions; modern socio-economic trends of development; computer literacy; and gender and women leadership. There was also a grant scheme for small projects (mainly on advocacy and small local initiatives). The project created an information hotline for women with disability on health and community services, social protection and employment. Project reports show better awareness of women leaders with disability rights. The project created an opportunity for women to contact government institutions and engage in activities within their family, community or wider society to promote the rights of PWD. The ICPE did not find conclusive evidence on the outcomes of this support. However, it did find that the initiative was not replicated across the country or furthered by UNDP or development partners. This means the results remained with those 55 women with no catalytic effect for women with disability across the country. As noted above, this intervention was not part of the larger plan or programme intervention, nor was there a strong follow-up advocacy campaign to promote the results.

³⁹ <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15798&LangID=E>; <https://www.eurasia.undp.org/content/rbec/en/home/blog/2018/people-with-disabilities-want-a-chance-to-shine--not-your-pity.html>.

UNDP's contribution to the reform of the system for social service delivery has been minimal in the first three years of the country programme. A 2018 rapid integrated assessment (RIA) of social services provided important analysis of social service provisions and recommendations on ways to improve the quality of social services recognized in the National Programme of Turkmenistan on socio-economic development for the period 2011-2030.⁴⁰ The assessment's recommendations were discussed at the CSOs forum held in December 2018 to promote dialogue with the Government on social service delivery through social contracting. As a result of this assessment, UN agencies, in partnership with the Government, prepared a concept note (later a full project document), which has been approved by the SDG Global Fund. The note focuses on improving the system of social protection through the introduction of inclusive quality community-based social services and promoting the recommendations of the assessment. This project is expected to bring important investment into the system of social services and accelerate progress towards this outcome, as well as illustrate UNDP's contribution therein.

2.3. Sustainable energy, environmental sustainability and resilience

Outcome 43: By 2020, the national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are aligned to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through promoting sustainable practices on energy efficiency, the use of renewables, urban development and waste management.

Outcome 44: By 2020, the national policy, legislative and institutional frameworks are responsive to climate change issues by promoting climate resilience, adaptation, climate risk management and disaster risk reduction measures at sector and community levels.

Finding 11: UNDP has made notable contributions in improving the policy environment and regulatory frameworks related to sustainable energy, environmental sustainability and resilience. The slow adoption of draft policies and laws in certain cases has limited the institutionalization, upscaling and replicability of the respective pilot initiatives.

UNDP has made a notable contribution in the country's ratification of the Paris Agreement, which calls on the Government of Turkmenistan to implement climate commitments, by advocating for energy efficiency and improved water and land management practices. These are reflected in the NSCC, originally drafted and adopted with UNDP support in 2012 and then revised and adopted in September 2019 (also with UNDP support). UNDP brought the expertise of qualified experts from academia, the public (including the Government) and private sectors and experience from other countries. UNDP also offered support to the Government in drafting several new laws (e.g. Water Code and the Law on Land Cadastre) and new construction norms for buildings to make them climate-proof and eligible for energy-saving provisions under the President's Programme for Socio-economic Development.

The NSCC was being revised at the time of the ICPE in consultation with a group of experts (including representatives from the Government, UNFCCC focal point, legal experts from the public organization 'Tebigy Kuvvat', the Standing Committee on Environmental Issues of Mejlis and academia) supported by UNDP (on adaptation) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) (on mitigation). The purpose of the revision was to integrate climate change issues into the national socio-economic development programmes and to align it with international documents such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2015). The revision also took into account new findings from the Fifth Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report. The revised version of the NSCC, adopted in September 2019, also defines the monitoring mechanism that tracks implementation and financing of mitigation and adaptation measures at the national level.

⁴⁰ National Programme of Turkmenistan on Socio-economic Development for the period 2011-2030/5.

In other cases, UNDP supported the Government in developing the draft National Economic Programme of Action for Adaptation and Mitigation (NEPAAM); the draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan integrating new aspects of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) strategic plan, such as mainstreaming and anchoring the implementation of the plan into national development frameworks, valuing ecosystem services and promoting ecosystem-based adaptation and resilience; and the draft of the National Forestry Programme developed in 2017. However, these have not yet been adopted.

Given the country's geophysical vulnerability, policy support in the mitigation of climatic risks and improved resilience remains a critical area of support in Turkmenistan, which was also identified as an acceleration area by the UNDP-led Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission in 2017. It confirms the potential multiplier benefits of effective policy-level support in the country in these areas along with the need to secure a stronger buy-in and commitment by the Government for plans to adopt these documents (laws, policies) prior to commencing work on the draft policies. In some cases (e.g. NEPAAM), the Government decided not to adopt this draft as a formal document, opting instead to work on the National Adaptation Plan. The fact that these laws have not been adopted significantly limits the opportunities for the institutionalization of respective pilot innovations, their upscaling and replicability.

Finding 12: UNDP's support to climate change adaptation in agriculture has led to improvements in the policy environment, built capacity and promoted innovative solutions through demonstration pilots. The Government now invests in climate change adaptation with increased engagement from the private sector. Establishment of effective mechanisms for extension and outreach is required to scale up and replicate lessons across the country.

UNDP has supported the development and adoption of several key legal documents related to sustainable land and water management, such as: (a) the Water Code (2016), which includes significant changes such

as community-based water management, creation of water user groups, and introduction of progressive water tariffs; (b) the Law on Land Cadastre (2017), which targets a more efficient use of land resources, greater food and water security and community resilience; and (c) the Law on Pastures (2015), which establishes legal, economic and organizational grounds for sustainable management of pastures and regulates relations to improve their ecological, economic and resource potential. The newly adopted revised NSCC stipulates the development of a national plan to implement the Paris Agreement and is expected to build on the NEPAAM draft and perform the function of the country's Nationally Determined Contribution.

Innovative pilots were developed and implemented in a number of projects that promote climate change adaptation such as methods to improve natural pastures; use of drip irrigation, sprinklers, rotary and linear water systems for increasing water efficiency; introduction of laser levelling of irrigated lands to increase crop yields; and multilevel cluster mapping to enable decisions for climate-smart sustainable agriculture solutions. Initial results in a green polygon pilot in Geokdepe, a 145-ha research and demonstration platform for water-saving irrigation and sustainable land management in agriculture launched in June 2018, indicated a potential 40 percent yield surplus (depending on the crop) with nearly 50 percent water savings in a year. A continuous measurement over three years should validate these findings. These findings are already planned to be reflected in the Government's norms related to irrigation of salinized lands.

Most of the funding on climate actions in Turkmenistan comes from the state budget, while the GEF and the Adaptation Fund support the majority of UNDP's climate change programme portfolio. The Government is investing in the upgrade of pumping stations and the lining of canal systems and associated infrastructure to collect drainage water for irrigation following natural purification. More recently, large-scale investments have been made in high-efficiency irrigation technologies, including (subsoil) drip irrigation systems, mobile sprinklers

and wastewater capture and reuse, with a further pledge of over \$4 billion towards these priorities.⁴¹

Overall, despite the purchase of large-scale machinery, agriculture remains capital- and labour intensive with low productivity owing to the ongoing reforms related to water sector management and land ownership and management. This has started changing with the increase in the number of private entrepreneurs acquiring land under a 99-year lease. This creates an opportunity to leverage private-sector financing, which is particularly important to ensure long-term, sustainable improvements in productive capacities.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection uses various means to communicate new knowledge among rural residents. For example, it interacts with the agronomists and water-sector professionals at local levels by email and annual gatherings. However, it does not have an extension service for raising awareness and training farmers systematically. This poses a challenge to the widespread dissemination of the innovative piloted initiative learning, a need that is growing due to the rapid growth in private entrepreneurs taking long-term lease of land. UNDP is piloting two local agricultural knowledge centres to serve as conduits and prototypes for extension services. Here, residents can share knowledge on the most effective adaptation measures and a climate-smart information system on effective and resource-efficient day-to-day management of agricultural and livestock practices leading to increased climate-resilient livelihoods. However, the programme is still in an early stage and will require persistent efforts from UNDP as well as systemic support from the Government to spread and institutionalize.

Finding 13: UNDP has made important contributions to climate change mitigation and GHG reduction through energy saving in the construction sector and improving irrigation efficiency. Further progress requires overarching legislation on energy efficiency and renewable energy, and the gradual reduction of subsidies in the energy sector.

Several large-scale demonstration initiatives have effectively reduced GHG emissions in the country and are now aimed for incorporation at the policy level to upscale the impact nationwide. UNDP contributed to the adoption of regulations and standards related to energy efficiency through four new building codes, which have been adopted and are in use.

A major mitigation milestone is expected in the water pump sector, whose audit, carried out with UNDP support, showed the potential for saving 50 percent of energy. The Government, with its own resources, has replaced over 600 old inefficient pumps since 2016. Further progress, however, requires overarching laws on energy efficiency and renewable energy, that will systematize these efforts and place them under a comprehensive framework. The legislation should: (a) mandate similar measures in related sectors (e.g. water drainage network, wastewater treatment, reuse and desalination); and (b) introduce incentives for using renewable energy (e.g. in water points). UNDP is working with the Government to address this gap, supporting the drafting of these laws (which had just commenced at the time of the ICPE).

Despite successes in the promotion of energy efficiency, there have been limited efforts to boost renewable energy in the residential sector, except for a pilot project in Karakum where three villages with over 1,000 residents with off-grid power systems are to benefit from the installation of renewable/solar energy applications for pumping and purifying water.

In related efforts, UNDP has approached new areas of sustainable urbanization like transport, waste management and public energy-efficient lighting. This is supported with technical assistance, institutional and policy support, piloting measures and the promotion of behavioural change. This umbrella initiative, if successful, could lead to deeper levels of engagement with the Government in reducing the negative impacts of urban growth in Turkmenistan, while also advancing socio-economic development goals. This could prove overly ambitious, given the scope (several sectors at once) and may face challenges in policy adoption and implementation.

⁴¹ UNDP Turkmenistan, 'Terminal Evaluation of UNDP/Adaptation Fund project on addressing climate change risks to farming systems in Turkmenistan at national and community level', 2017, p.14.

Energy subsidies, reduced recently, still affected results by creating disincentives in the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Following several unsuccessful attempts to advocate for the adoption of the laws on renewable energy and energy efficiency, only now has there emerged genuine commitment and a plan. In this environment, UNDP's achievements in establishing the new residential building codes are impressive. With the reduced subsidies, UNDP and the Government see a window of opportunity for reforms in this area with sustainability prospects related to mitigation measures. This vision is supported by the Government, which is now genuinely committed to adopting laws on energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Finding 14: UNDP's efforts in biodiversity conservation and DRR have been limited despite being critical in addressing climate change.

Despite the Government's recent intensive conservation efforts, carried out with the support of such agencies as UNDP and GIZ, many species of flora and fauna have disappeared or are in decline.⁴² The biodiversity is under threat from climate change and the country lacks a comprehensive state biodiversity monitoring system. Turkmenistan has also not acceded to key international conventions on biodiversity, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The country has a draft National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, but this had not been adopted at the time of the ICPE.

Despite the need, UNDP is engaged in only one – regional – biodiversity initiative, which addresses the country's obligations under the CBD as per the Convention's Strategic Plan 2011-2020. The plan aims to integrate its CBD obligations into its national development and sectoral planning frameworks through a renewed and participative 'biodiversity planning' and strategizing process. As part of

the regional biodiversity initiative, Turkmenistan compiled and submitted its sixth national report to the CBD. Within this project, the goals and objectives of the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2023 were updated and the Government was urged to adopt the recommendations.

Prone to disasters, Turkmenistan requires systemic support from development partners to strengthen its DRR system. The country lacks hazard maps and methodologies for seismic risk analysis and forecasting tools with real-time data exchange systems. With earthquakes posing a great risk as a high-impact (albeit lower probability) event,⁴³ improvements are important and timely. In recent years, there has been some progress with UNDP and Japan International Cooperation Agency contributions. Through its solo initiative, UNDP is working with the State Institute of Seismology and Atmospheric Physics under the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan to strengthen the capacity to assess seismic risks, as well as to respond to earthquakes and prevent associated emergencies. The focus of the project is Ashgabat, the most seismically active zone of the country, with government plans for replication across the country. The initiative aims to develop and implement a strategic approach to forecasting and assessing seismic hazards and risks. The expectation is that other ministries and agencies (especially the Ministry of Defence) working in seismic-risk assessment, construction, education and training and emergency response and risk reduction will benefit as well. While the initiative is still in the initial stage (six months), a number of important partnerships have already been established.⁴⁴ Clearly, this will contribute significantly to the implementation of the State Programme on Seismic Risk Reduction in Turkmenistan (2019).

Funding DRR efforts has been a challenge for UNDP in Central Asian countries, with the exception of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. The expected signing of the memorandum of understanding between the UN and

⁴² <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/default.shtml?country=tm>

⁴³ World Bank/GFDRR (2017): Turkmenistan Disaster Risk Profile: <https://www.preventionweb.net/publications/view/54460>.

⁴⁴ With leading research centres on seismic risk such as Research Institute of Aerospace Monitoring, National Centre of Digital Economy in Lomonosov Moscow State University, Institute of Physics of the Earth of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geoecology, Central Asian Institute for Applied Geosciences, Russian Research Institute of Civil Defence and Emergency Situations, German Research Centre for Geosciences (GeoForschungsZentrum), Global Earthquake Model, etc. Source: Government of Turkmenistan and United Nations, 'Partnership Framework for Development 2016-2020: Progress Report', March 2019, p.31.

the Government of Turkmenistan and designation of the body in charge of Sendai Framework implementation should facilitate investments to address the weak institutional capacities in DRR. UNDP should consider its strategy and role in these areas.

Finding 15: UNDP has invested significant efforts in strengthening the capacity of institutions to coordinate and manage the implementation of the NSCC. The effectiveness of the efforts will be further strengthened by systematic capacity development plans, the consolidation of activities and stronger institutional, regulatory and monitoring mechanisms in the country to track the implementation and financing of the NSCC.

UNDP has invested significant efforts towards strengthening institutions at various levels to support the implementation of the NSCC. Examples include: (a) support to the Ministry of Construction and the Ministry of Energy's development and adoption of new building codes, coupled with training in energy audits and energy efficiency; (b) staff training for the Ministry of Agriculture and Water Economy and the State Institute of Water Management Design in testing new irrigation techniques; (c) assistance to farmer and livestock associations in *etraps* and *velayats*⁴⁵ on community climate vulnerability assessments; (d) improving planning and practices on irrigation water management and developing participatory gender-sensitive adaptation plans (with drafts ready for four pilots locations); and (e) engaging staff and Ph.D. students from institutions like the Agricultural University in training and pilots.

Interlocutors confirmed that these initiatives have led to improved capacity and clarified the roles of various institutions in relation to coordinating and managing the implementation of the NSCC. Further progress requires consolidation of initiatives and reform efforts. In addition, future change requires the adoption of key laws and state programmes, especially on energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as access to quality data and extensive outreach efforts.

The absence of a monitoring system to track climate change actions and indicators further constrains the

implementation of the NSCC. The State Commission to Guarantee the Implementation of Commitments of Turkmenistan is responsible for monitoring climate change effects and responses. However, there is no operational structure to coordinate and monitor the adaptation and mitigation measures and indicators. The national statistics system does not collect GHG emission data or even include indicators that are necessary to produce a GHG inventory, creating a major gap. While the Government, as part of the state environmental policy, monitors the protection and rational use of natural resources (water, land and forest resources), it needs to be further systematized. This affects the opportunities for many UNDP-led projects to design monitoring frameworks in line with the national system.

2.4. Data, planning and policymaking

Outcome 46: Quality disaggregated data, aligned with international standards, is available to policymakers, legislators, and the interested public to monitor the major goals of national programmes, the post-2015 SDGs and the Partnership Framework for Development, and to formulate new national strategies and programmes.

The availability of quality and reliable data is critical with direct linkage to policy planning and implementation. There have been numerous efforts in Turkmenistan to strengthen the availability of data, particularly disaggregated figures on poverty, disparities and inequalities. Yet, much remains to be done. In 2013, the Government established an Inter-Agency Council on Statistics and conducted the census, but the data has not been presented. Only a limited number of aggregate indicators and data are publicly available, which creates difficulties in establishing development priorities, especially concerning vulnerable and 'left behind' populations and the need to support evidence-based policymaking.

⁴⁵ The districts of Turkmenistan – *etraps* – are territorial entities below the regions (*velayet*).

In response to the need for improving the reliability and availability of data for evidence-based policymaking, UNDP committed to contributing to the outcome through support to: (a) institutional review of Turkmenstat and the implementation of a plan to bring the statistical system in conformity with international standards as a mechanism to ensure that the policymakers, the public and international organizations have access to data; and (b) the development of the interim (2017–2021) national socio-economic plan and to establish a corresponding system of monitoring so that the Government can demonstrate progress to the people, integrate the SDGs and report on the country's progress globally.

Data was also accentuated as part of the first VNR of the SDGs supported by UNDP, which includes a statistical annex making the respective data as disaggregated as possible and available to the wider public.

Finding 16: UNDP CO has played a key role in driving the SDGs and Agenda 2030, resulting in the integration of the SDGs to domestic plans and policies as well as VNR. Support for improving statistical systems and capacity needs to continue to enhance availability and access of data to the public.

Within the framework of the UN in Turkmenistan, UNDP has led the promotion and integration of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 priorities into government policies and plans. The underlying foundation of UNDP's work within this outcome has been to address the Agenda 2030 call for the availability of quality disaggregated data from national statistical systems aligned with global definitions.

To this end, UNDP's efforts were focused on providing policy advice and technical assistance to the Government in adapting the SDGs to the country context. UNDP also assisted the Government in developing institutional capacities to better manage, disseminate and use data feeding into SDG monitoring. The SDGs and the Agenda 2030 can help create stronger links and streamline the work on human development through investments in measures to address social inclusion and improvement of life for the most vulnerable groups, while at the same time

investing in stronger policies and improving the evidence base. UNDP focused on securing government ownership of the SDGs agenda and helping it to move from commitment to achievement.

UNDP, on behalf of the UN in Turkmenistan, organized two MAPS missions to identify SDG acceleration areas. A RIA for the SDGs was conducted to review the current national and sectoral development programmes and identify gaps in their alignment with SDG goals and targets. The RIA showed 84 percent coverage of SDG targets in the national programmes. This resulted in a Presidential decree formalizing the national SDG implementation and monitoring mechanism and the inclusion of the SDGs in the National Development Plan of the President (2019-2025), which focused on the social and economic development of Turkmenistan. This is an overarching mid-term national development programme document that guides sectoral and subnational programmes. The evaluation found that these documents were a direct output of UNDP's and other UN agencies' policy work and their promotion of the Agenda 2030. In close cooperation with UNDP and other UN agencies, the Government of Turkmenistan, in September 2016, formally adopted 148 targets and 187 indicators across the 17 goals to be implemented over the next 15 years.

The Presidential decree has resulted in the establishment of a working group on the SDGs under Ministry of Finance and Economy (MoFE) leadership. The decree defines the roles and responsibilities of the MoFE, Turkmenstat, Research Institute of Sustainable Development and line ministries. Additionally, it includes more than 60 government institutions, parliament, national human rights institutions and CSOs to coordinate the integration of the SDGs into Turkmenistan's medium- and long-term development plans and their implementation and monitoring. The establishment of the working group is a direct contribution of UNDP policy efforts.

UNDP's policy support has also resulted in the MoFE signing a three-year project to establish an SDG platform in Turkmenistan. The platform's key role is to promote financing for SDGs implementation from UN and non-UN sources, including from development banks

and the business sector. Other features of the platform include enhanced coordination and involvement of various stakeholders, including the Turkmenstat, sectoral ministries, academia, CSOs, parliament, the private sector, UN agencies, IFIs and international and regional development banks. The platform is co-owned and funded by UNDP and the MoFE.

In response to the challenges of data availability in Turkmenistan, technical assistance (in the form of advisory and capacity-building support and facilitating networking and intersectoral cooperation) was provided to the Government to develop monitoring and measurement systems for SDG implementation in cooperation with Turkmenstat. UNDP supported Turkmenstat's institutional and technical capacity-building to strengthen national statistical capabilities for 2030 Agenda implementation and the improvement of macroeconomic statistics.

UNDP's support has helped Turkmenstat in the uptake of recommendations from the institutional self-assessment conducted in 2014-2015, 20 percent of which have been implemented. The most relevant and effective implementation has been the integration of EUROTRACE software and its alignment with International Merchandise Trade Statistics. UNDP acted as a bridge between EUROSTAT and Turkmenstat to ensure that EUROTRACE software was effectively installed in the Russian language for easier use and access. The effects of the new software are already visible. Turkmenstat interlocutors note that work efficiency has increased significantly, mainly from cutting data entry time from 10-15 hours to 10-15 minutes. The EUROTRACE installation has improved international trade statistics, leading to actual improvement in data availability. These efforts have helped put together a VNR with the strong support of UNDP. This is a positive indication of the Government's efforts to integrate and monitor the SDGs.

The development of mechanisms for the integration and monitoring of the SDGs as an overarching framework for evidence-based policymaking is now on the Government's agenda. The extent to which achieved outputs (i.e. increased capacities and mechanisms like the platform, working group and government policies) will lead to the desired outcome depends on continued support to facilitate the availability of data, organizational capacities and access to sufficient resources.

Finding 17: UNDP support to the SBFEA has improved its capacity and network to expand access to international development finance. Given the nascence of the initiative, it is too early to assess the outcomes.

In line with Turkmenistan's efforts to diversify its economy, UNDP has supported the SBFEA through capacity-building and advisory support to develop an institutional development strategy for the bank. UNDP has also supported improvements to the human resource and technical capacities of the SBFEA through training and the purchase of equipment. UNDP also used its international network of experts to help organize an international conference that brought together high-level officials from the Government, the UN system, IFIs and business executives to explore new opportunities for development financing in Turkmenistan.

Interviewed interlocutors from the SBFEA and the Government note that these measures have helped the bank to function better through improved strategic planning as well as to provide avenues to network with new partners and institutions and to explore new opportunities for development financing in Turkmenistan. However, this feedback could not be triangulated from other sources. Also, as the initiative is still in the preliminary stages, it is too early to assess the potential outcome of the assistance.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted line that starts vertically on the left, turns 90 degrees to the right, and continues horizontally. Along this line are five colored circles: a yellow one at the top of the vertical segment, a blue one just below it, and then a light green, a yellow, and another blue one along the horizontal segment.

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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3.1. Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: UNDP has played an important role in supporting the Government to implement its national development plans and strategies and established itself as a strong, reliable, valued and trusted development partner in Turkmenistan.**

UNDP's long-standing presence and partnership with the national Government has strategically positioned the organization as a trusted and well-respected development partner in Turkmenistan, particularly regarding the country's international relations and neutrality status in the UN. The UNDP country programme addressed key priorities stated in the President's Programme for Socio-economic Development, relevant sector strategies and underlying human rights and socio-economic challenges highlighted in international country assessments and studies. UNDP has designed a broad programme and used multipronged approaches to support the Government's core roles by strengthening institutional and technical capacities combined with policy advice, advocacy and piloting of innovative practices. Such an approach has responded to the need for investments in increasing human and institutional capacities across sectors, including human rights, labour, health, social welfare, the environment and climate-change adaptation. UNDP's strategic position is complemented by its lean and committed country office team, with a high level of expertise and good relations with the government counterparts, which support efficient implementation and raise its credibility.

- **Conclusion 2: The demand-driven nature of UNDP's work – while addressing the country's needs – has to some extent contributed to the fragmentation of interventions, reducing their potential for scaling-up or replication to bring about system-level changes.**

UNDP's demand-driven strategy and the broad scope and definition of outcomes and interventions within the CP framework have worked well to respond to the Government's needs. They have led to ownership of results, particularly from the

perspective of the complex country context, its UMIC status with limited funding sources and increasing reliance on government funds. To this effect, the broad nature of the CPD allows for more flexibility to adapt the approach depending on the arising needs or emerging requirements in the country. However, it has also led to fragmentation in certain parts of UNDP's programme interventions, with an incoherent theory of change behind and across the levels of intervention (programme-outcome-project level). This results in fragmentation across some parts of the country programme portfolio with an accumulation of rather incoherent small-sized projects, leading to limited catalytic effects within a large set of reforms it aspires to influence.

- **Conclusion 3: The UNDP country programme portfolio has a weak gender dimension, with limited efforts to mainstream gender in pursuit of transformative effects on women. Recent measures by the UNDP CO to mainstream gender across the country office are a positive step forward.**

Most results that UNDP contributes to poorly target gender, particularly in terms of their transformative effects. Across all projects, gender is presented and analysed only superficially without much elaboration on the gender dimension of achieved results. UNDP has not utilized its strategic position and partnership with the Government to support gender advocacy and promote gender equality and women's rights. In 2018, the UNDP CO took measures towards improving the CP portfolio by establishing the Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan. An important and overdue measure, the extent of the plan's success in integrating gender dimension, addressing the structural causes of inequality and applying a rights-based approach across the country programme is yet to be seen.

- **Conclusion 4: UNDP has played a leading role in promoting Agenda 2030 and supporting the Government in integrating the SDGs into domestic plans and policies, although faster progress is warranted around the evidence base (reliable statistics) for the SDGs and related policies.**

UNDP has made good use of its strategic position and convening power to respond to the conducive operating space surrounding the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs. UNDP's support to the Government laid the foundations for the SDGs in the country which have been institutionalized through official policies and processes to integrate, implement and monitor nationalized SDGs through established indicators. This is of critical importance for Turkmenistan, considering the imperative of responding to the needs of right holders and addressing a range of socio-economic, environmental and human rights issues across the country, and particularly in local communities. However, it is too early to assess the extent to which all measures and outputs will lead to the desired outcome. This is because the systematic costing of SDG implementation and monitoring still needs to take place, along with the development of the government institutions' capacity to collect, analyse and present data and evidence of progress.

- **Conclusion 5: UNDP has made valuable contributions in establishing the policy and institutional framework, laying the foundations for furthering its human rights work.**

UNDP's investment in human rights has been valuable in laying the much-needed foundation for human rights work in the country. This was done by strengthening the institutional and technical capacities of the Government and the establishment of human rights policies and monitoring mechanisms like the Ombudsperson's Office. As a result of these investments, the Government today is better able to respond to UPR and other human rights treaties' recommendations and international obligations. More efforts are, however, needed towards meeting respective treaty body recommendations, particularly from the perspective of strengthening participatory governance and access to rights. Thus far, UNDP has responded to the Government's demands for support in the human rights sphere, but has not taken proactive steps to strongly advocate for the rights of the most vulnerable groups. UNDP's continuous investment in this area will ensure that core UN principles and core values are consistently

promoted and protected to benefit the country and its citizens.

- **Conclusion 6: UNDP has played an important role in strengthening the Government's response to TB, with catalytic effects on quality and access to treatment and social integration of TB patients and their families. Further and consistent effort, however, is needed in the area of PWD and social service provisions.**

UNDP and its partners, with support of the Global Fund, have invested significant and long-term efforts in increasing capacities of health institutions to provide adequate and quality services to TB patients and those at risk of the disease, while simultaneously investing in their psychosocial support and economic integration. These efforts have resulted in higher cure rates and faster diagnostics and treatment of new cases. Paradoxically, the data shows an increase in TB incidence in Turkmenistan in recent years, a result of reliable early diagnostics now in place because of this long-term support. However, the Government faces challenges in dealing with new forms of TB. Successful piloting of social service provisions tailored to the needs of PWD present lessons and models for replication and scale-up. However, follow-up by the Government or UNDP has yet to materialize. This is an area where UNDP efforts have been minimal and fragmented with no catalytic effects.

- **Conclusion 7: UNDP's multipronged strategy to strengthen institutional and technical capacities combined with policy advice, advocacy and demonstration pilots has led to important progress in climate change adaptation and mitigation and promotion of sustainable energy solutions. Now, there is a need to focus on upscaling and institutionalization of results to ensure sustainability.**

UNDP's main contribution to improving Turkmenistan's standing on sustainable energy and environment has been in climate change adaptation and the promotion of energy-efficient technologies in residential and irrigation sectors.

This can be attributed to its multipronged approach to addressing policy-level improvements coupled with capacity-building, advocacy and promoting innovative solutions. UNDP contributed to the country's ratification of the Paris Agreement, which calls upon the Government of Turkmenistan to implement climate commitments, by advocating for energy efficiency and improved water and land management practices. UNDP helped the Government reflect these in the NSCC along with the drafting of relevant laws and regulatory frameworks. However, most of UNDP's effort has been focused on demonstration pilots by providing proof of concept and the value of green technologies and practices. Large-scale country-wide replication through the institutionalization of government programmes and knowledge transfer remains a significant need. Efforts are required to deepen the focus and facilitate knowledge transfer on

successful green technologies, combined with private-sector financing to scale up innovations and improve resilience.

- **Conclusion 8: UNDP's achievements in certain areas still face fragile sustainability prospects due to multiple factors, including limited funding possibilities.**

UNDP's approach to interventions primarily in developing individual and institutional capacities combined with investment in policy and legal frameworks (by supporting policies, strategic plans, etc.), provides positive prospects of continuation of the established systems upon expiry of support. Further support to ensure implementation mechanisms and human rights monitoring will be critical to the sustainability of reforms in the medium and long term in Turkmenistan.

3.2. Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.



Guided by a strong theory of change, UNDP should consolidate its country programme portfolio through the integration of themes and strengthen the focus and depth of interventions in a limited number of thematic areas to ensure stronger outcomes.

UNDP CPD outcomes have been sufficiently wide to provide for the demand-driven nature of UNDP and also piloting some new approaches (e.g. in the field of social services, civil society participation, PWD, climate change adaptation and energy). Considering the country's UMIC status, limited funds and lessons learned from pilots and tested models, UNDP needs to consolidate its portfolio through the integration of themes, strengthening of focus and depth of interventions in a limited number of thematic areas to ensure stronger outcomes and contribution to impact. UNDP's new country programme needs to be founded on a well-articulated theory of change elaborating what it intends to accomplish and how it will do it around the identified focus areas. Long-term programmes that have brought sustainable capacities, such as response to TB, should start phasing out with a carefully crafted exit strategy. New areas, such as support to social service provision, should be strongly advocated with integrated interventions to support mechanisms and policies. Human rights and gender dimension should cut across the programming and be the bedrock of UNDP's work. While UNDP should continue piloting and modelling new approaches, these pilots should be an integral part of a wider set of interventions that take into account replication, scalability and the institutionalization of results.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted and addressed through the actions below. UNDP's new country programme will be based on a well-articulated theory of change elaborating analysis of how different interventions lead to synergies and desired outcomes and contribute to the overall impact of UNDP support.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. Develop a theory of change for the new CPD 2021-2025 enabling integration of themes.	September 2020	Resident Representative (RR), Assistant Resident Representative (ARR), Programme Team	Initiated	

Recommendation 2.



UNDP should continue its coordination role in driving the SDGs and Agenda 2030 in Turkmenistan and use its strategic position to strongly advocate for the inclusion and contribution of civil society, private sector and other development partners in the fulfilment of the SDGs.

UNDP's Strategic Plan envisages the organization undertaking an integrator role by creating a platform for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach towards the achievement of the SDGs. UNDP has led these efforts in Turkmenistan and established itself as a trusted partner of choice of the Government making positive headway in collaborating with the Government and UN agencies to create foundations for the implementation of the SDGs. This work needs to continue by ensuring that shared understanding and commitment to the fulfilment of Agenda 2030 obligations is maintained and operationalized by supporting the Government to engage in dialogue with civil society, the private sector and other development partners on further operationalization and monitoring of SDG indicators. Thus far, UNDP has had only limited success in enhancing capacities and positioning of civil society and private sector in this process, and further efforts are needed to create more space and enabling environment not only for civil society and the private sector, but also for other development partners to contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. UNDP CO has played a key role in driving the SDGs and Agenda 2030 resulting in the integration of the SDGs into domestic plans and policies. UNDP's efforts will be focused on providing policy advice and technical assistance to the Government in adapting the SDGs to the country context together with assisting the Government in developing the capacity of institutions to better manage, disseminate and use data feeding into SDG monitoring. Furthermore, in this process, UNDP will continue its role as the SDG integrator to ensure continuous onboarding of civil society, private sector and development partners in the SDG implementation framework.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. Reflect in the CPD greater engagement with civil society, private sector and development partners in the fulfilment of the SDGs.	December 2020	RR, ARR, Programme Team	Initiated	
2.2. Collaborate with the Government and UN agencies to promote the integrator platform for the implementation of the SDGs.	Continuous	RR, ARR, Programme Team	Initiated, no due date	

Recommendation 3.



UNDP should capitalize on good partnership and collaboration with the Government in the area of human rights to advocate for and support implementation of its international obligations (UPR, ratified international conventions and treaties).

UNDP has contributed to laying the foundations for human rights in the country through policies and establishment of institutions such as the Ombudsperson's Office and the Human Rights Commission. UNDP has also been a strategic partner in the implementation of the Human Rights Action Plan for 2016-2020, with the new phase coinciding with the new CP cycle. The next country programme should provide further support to empowering the Ombudsperson's Office and Human Rights Commission to fulfil the human rights obligations and integrate global values of human rights and fundamental freedoms. UNDP should consider providing technical assistance through training and mentoring; exchanges with similar institutions in the region; supporting the Ombudsperson's Office's participation in the regional network of Ombudsperson's Offices; and potentially, assisting the Ombudsperson's Office in producing the next reports on the state of human rights in the country. Support to the Government to prepare for the next rounds of UPR should also be continued. Most importantly, UNDP should continue advocating strongly for the rights of men and women and ensure that collaboration with the Government does not take away their voice when a violation of rights happen.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. The next country programme will provide further support to empowering such institutions as the Ombudsperson's Office and Human Rights Commission to fulfil the human rights obligations and integrate global values of human rights. This will include more rigorous effort on advocating for the implementation of international obligations.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. Initiate the human rights project to provide technical assistance through training and mentoring, to support the Ombudsperson's Office's participation and knowledge outreach in the regional network of Ombudsperson's Offices, and to provide support to the Government in the preparation of the UPR next rounds.	December 2021	Democratic Governance (DG) Portfolio Team, Human Rights Project Team		

Recommendation 4.



UNDP should evaluate the effective models of social service provision from the perspective of their scalability and focus on their promotion, replication and institutionalization.

Support from the Global Fund and the engagement of the Red Crescent Society in the provision of services have brought positive outcomes for persons living with TB and their families and remains an example of best practice. This should be assessed in detail for its lessons learned, impacts, replicability and scalability, and promoted to the Government and international partners in light of their aspiration to invest further in the development of the social services in the country. UNDP should further strengthen the cooperation with CSOs on the social service provision and promotion of the CSOs as a partner of the Government in this sector.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. UNDP will lead on developing and testing a social contracting mechanism, all service models relating to PWD and people in need of support with basic care functions. UNDP will also contract the training package providers and organize the logistics of delivering all the training inputs while ensuring that the content of training packages is coordinated with other UN agencies.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1. Ensure the successful implementation of the joint programme 'Improving the system of social protection through the introduction of inclusive quality community-based social services' funded by Joint SDG Fund.	December 2021	DG Portfolio Team	Initiated	
4.2. Ensure the successful implementation of the project 'Towards decent work for people with disabilities in Turkmenistan: transforming social enterprises into meaningful training and employment opportunities'.	December 2021	DG Portfolio Team	Initiated	

Recommendation 5.



UNDP should continue supporting the Government in its response to TB as it encounters new challenges emerging from the new forms of the disease.

The partnership between the Government of Turkmenistan, WHO and UNDP has brought important results in terms of prevention, diagnostics and treatment of TB across the country. There is an ongoing demand for UNDP to continue being active and to play a key role in addressing emerging gaps in terms of treatment of new forms of TB and strengthening laboratory services, including in etraps, as well as the promotion of new forms of treatment protocols and approaches.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. UNDP will support the national TB response, as well as to other infectious diseases, through two channels:

1. Global Fund's TB grant implementation – Turkmenistan received the allocation letter from the Global Fund, according to which the country can receive \$5 million grant for 2021-2024. UNDP has been requested to continue being the principal recipient of the grant. Through the TB grant UNDP will ensure effective and efficient control of drug-resistant TB in line with the most up-to-date WHO recommendations.
2. Through the Government-funded health procurement project – The MoH has initiated estimation of the needs in various lab supplies and medicines for TB, HIV, hepatitis C control in 2021-2022 and is willing to procure those medical goods through UNDP to ensure quality and cost-efficiency as well as programme support.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
5.1. Development of 'National Programme for Control of TB in Turkmenistan in 2021-2024'.	31 December 2020	WHO CO and UNDP CO Global Fund project implementation team	Initiated	The completion is the date by when the Government approves the document.
5.2. Development and submission of a funding request to the Global Fund for TB grant for 2021-2024 to initiate a new phase of support.	31 August 2020	UNDP Global Fund project implementation team	Initiated	

Recommendation 6.



Building on achievements, UNDP should deepen its engagement with the Government in areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable energy solutions with a strong focus on knowledge sharing, outreach and replication to promote their upscaling and institutionalization. To facilitate the implementation of policies, UNDP should continue to support building local capacities, explore innovative financing models involving the private sector and non-traditional donors, and ensure that government ownership is strong in the areas supported by UNDP.

UNDP has heavily invested for years in building the legal frameworks, awareness and knowledge on climate change adaptation, which have now resulted in a greater on-the-ground understanding of climate change impact and the importance of promoting climate-resilient practices and technologies. This uniquely positions UNDP to deepen its focus and engagement with the Government to promote a green-economy approach and institutionalization of climate-smart solutions with a strong focus on knowledge-sharing, outreach and upscaling. To facilitate the implementation of policies, UNDP should continue to support building local capacities (especially with more exposure to international best practices) and explore innovative financing models involving the private sector (which is already happening with a growing engagement of UNDP with the Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs) and non-traditional donors. UNDP should also ensure that government ownership is strong in the areas supported by the organization to mitigate the risk of UNDP supported policies and laws not being adopted for a long time.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. UNDP has heavily invested for years in building the legal frameworks, awareness, behaviour and knowledge on climate change adaptation, which have now resulted in a greater on-the-ground understanding of climate change impact and the importance of promoting climate-resilient practices and technologies. UNDP intends to further expand its climate agenda, building on the demonstrated successes and broadening the partnership framework, including engagement of new actors such as the private sector and non-traditional donors.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
6.1. Explore new and innovative financing models and commence large-scale government projects in the areas of climate change adaptation and mitigation, climate-smart agriculture and sustainable energy solutions.	December 2025	ARR, Energy and Environment (EE) Portfolio Team	Initiated	
6.2. Develop new projects contributing to promotion of a green-economy approach and institutionalization of climate-smart solutions with a strong focus on knowledge-sharing, outreach and upscaling.	December 2025	ARR, EE Portfolio Team		

Recommendation 7.



UNDP should integrate gender dimensions into all its work and utilize its strategic position and relationship with the Government to advocate for and address the structural causes of women's rights and inequality.

With the establishment of the gender focal group and the action plan in 2018, the CO has taken the necessary first steps to address gender issues in its programming and increase awareness among staff. In the next programme cycle, UNDP should make concerted efforts to systematically integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all its programming. Gender equality remains high on the national agenda with the ratification of CEDAW, adoption of the national adaptation plan on gender equality and the SDGs. UNDP should use this as an opportunity and utilize its strategic position and relationship with the Government to advocate for and promote gender mainstreaming across national policies and budgeting process for the implementation of the SDGs.

Management Response:



The recommendation is accepted. In the next programme cycle, UNDP will continue efforts to systematically integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into all its programming. Besides, the new country programme and results and resources framework will to a greater extent integrate gender dimensions across the outputs and indicators.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
7.1. To ensure that gender dimensions are mainstreamed through CP outputs and indicators to address gender inequalities and gender (and sex) disaggregated data and indicators in the programme and projects.	May 2020	RR, ARR, Gender Equality Focal Group	Initiated	
7.2. To organize training on gender issues in its programming to increase awareness among the CO and project staff.	June 2021	ARR, Gender Equality Focal Group		
7.3. Revise and implement the Country Office Gender Mainstreaming Action Plan.	December 2021	RR, ARR, Programme/ Project Team		

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

Annexes



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at:
<https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12290>

Annex 1. Terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

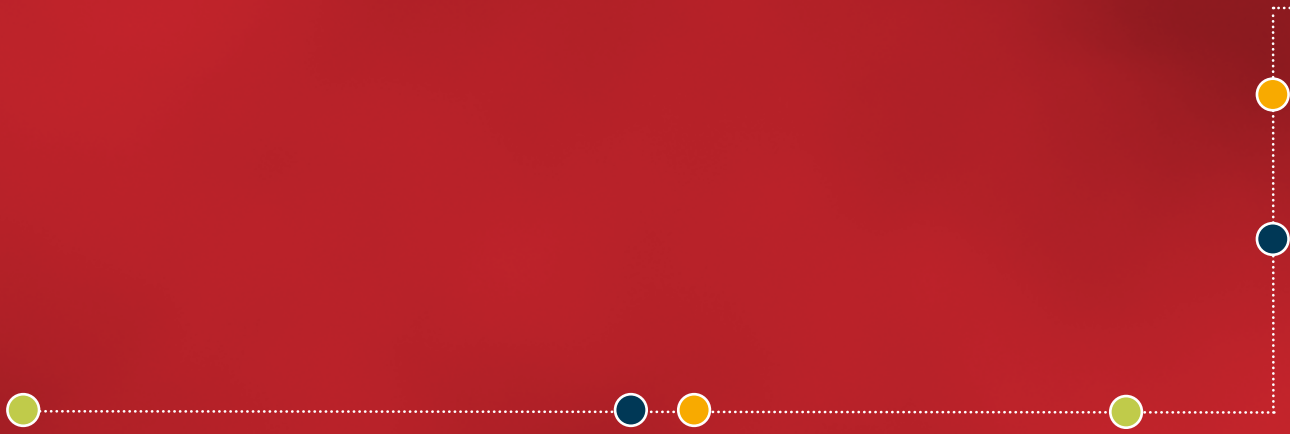
Annex 3. Country at a glance

Annex 4. Country office at a glance

Annex 5. Project list


Annex 6. Documents consulted


Annex 7. People consulted




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