

Evaluation Brief: Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso is a landlocked and least-developed country in West Africa. Almost half of the country's population lives below the poverty line of \$1.9 a day, and poverty rates in rural areas are almost three times that of urban areas. A new government was elected in 2015, after a major popular uprising forced the long-standing president Blaise Compaoré to resign. The country's security situation has significantly deteriorated in the past three years, with terrorist attacks by armed groups affecting several regions of the country, causing the displacement of people and negatively impacting access to services.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Burkina Faso developed a country programme document for the 2018-2020 period around objectives in line with the country's National Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-2020. The UNDP programme in Burkina Faso planned to contribute to the following three outcomes: (a) institutional efficiency, the rule of law, social cohesion and security; (b) inclusive, sustainable and job-creating growth; and (c) strengthened resilience to climate shocks.

Programme Expenditure by Outcome, 2018-2019



Findings and conclusions

Overall, UNDP is considered an important development partner in the country and appreciated by the Government. The UNDP country programme is aligned to national priorities, and UNDP has made efforts to adapt its programme and operational capacities to the changing context and the deteriorating security situation. However, despite the fact that a context analysis was effectively done, the risks deriving from the security crisis were not analysed in depth for the programme design.

The relevance of UNDP interventions is illustrated by the fact that the programme responds to real development needs, and UNDP has achieved tangible results in all programme areas. UNDP contributed to helping some key institutions carry out their mandate, to strengthening social cohesion in the Sahel and the

North regions, and to facilitating structural reforms of defence and the security forces. It also contributed to enhancing the sustainable management of natural resources through the integration of environmental issues into regional and municipal development plans and improved collection of climate data, and to inclusive growth by incubating entrepreneurship and developing income-generating activities, targeting women and youth. However, those results have not necessarily enabled transformational change, which is the ultimate objective of the UNDP-Government partnership. The limited scope of UNDP interventions and the fragility of their results are among the challenges for UNDP to achieve the desired changes, including towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

UNDP interventions promoted and directly targeted capacity building at national, regional and local levels. But the sustainability of results is a challenge,

especially since the capacities of beneficiaries remain too limited to ensure the continuity of initiatives once UNDP interventions end. UNDP also faces challenges in mobilising resources. Partnerships developed with bilateral and multilateral development partners, including UN agencies, are still weak, although recent efforts in resource mobilisation and communication

with partners were noted. In addition, the monitoring and evaluation system focuses mainly on the implementation of activities, rather than the achievement of programme results, and the country office does not sufficiently capitalise on project experiences for effective learning.

Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1.** In view of the evolution of the security and humanitarian context in Burkina Faso, UNDP should continue to restructure its interventions around the Sustaining Peace initiative and the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. This will enable interventions to be implemented in integration with those of other UN agencies and development partners operating in the country. The establishment of regional offices provides an opportunity for this synergy, but collaboration between actors must be systematic, from design to implementation and evaluation of initiatives. Special emphasis should be placed on strengthening the internal technical and operational capacities of UNDP.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2.** UNDP should promote a programmatic and consolidated approach focused on a small number of key transformational interventions in each thematic area. The development of an intervention logic to guide the design and implementation of activities could help to accelerate planning and implementation of the programme, particularly for the next cycle. The consolidation of interventions around the programmes on social cohesion, security and rule of law (COSED) and sustainable livelihoods (PAMED), currently being finalised, is part of this dynamic and must be reinforced across all areas of UNDP intervention.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3.** UNDP should focus its capacity strengthening support: to institutions to deliver their mandate on the one hand; and to vulnerable communities to integrate into the national economic fabric on the other. An approach integrating these two dimensions would better respond to the challenges of resilience and vulnerabilities.
- **RECOMMENDATION 4.** UNDP should strengthen its knowledge management and communications, and dialogue with donors and national partners. Dialogue with donors would encourage interest in funding the programme and improve perceptions of UNDP, and with national partners it would encourage respect for agreed timelines and accelerate the achievement of results. Communication and dialogue based on good knowledge management, including the sharing of practical experiences from UNDP projects in the field, would provide opportunities to scale-up pilot interventions which have had good results.
- **RECOMMENDATION 5.** UNDP should strengthen its gender efforts and identify strategic approaches and interventions leading to transformational change for women.