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United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION TAJIKISTAN



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and multilateral development partners.

Foreword

I am pleased to present the Independent Evaluation of the UNDP Country Programme in Tajikistan, the second country-level assessment conducted by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 2009. This evaluation covers the programme period 2016 to mid-2019. It has been carried out in collaboration with the Government of Tajikistan, UNDP Tajikistan country office, and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

UNDP has been in Tajikistan since 1994 supporting the National Development Strategy of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 (NDS 2030) for poverty alleviation focusing on policies and investments necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Over the years, its programme has been shaped by the country's development priorities and challenges. During the programme cycle under review (2016-2020), the UNDP country programme focused on supporting the national development needs outlined in the NDS 2030 and Medium-Term Development Plan 2020, such as ensuring food security, expanding effective employment, ensuring energy security, and development of the country's communication potential.

The evaluation found that UNDP has made significant contributions in improving governance, rule of law and access to justice by enabling the Government to enhance the delivery of services and the establishment of mechanisms to protect rights, particularly of the most vulnerable. It has actively engaged with the civil society actors and the most vulnerable groups, particularly women,

persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV and tuberculosis, and played a catalytic role in improving employment, entrepreneurship and trade opportunities, contributing to improved livelihoods.

UNDP contributed to climate change mitigation through improvements in legislative, policy and regulatory environment for small hydropower development and green energy more broadly, and promoting hydrochlorofluorocarbon phase-out and better use and management of water resources by promoting integrated water resources management. More legislative effort is, however, needed to support water sector reforms.

There remain considerable development challenges in Tajikistan, and UNDP has strategically positioned itself as a trusted and reliable provider of development services supporting the implementation of Tajikistan's NDS for 2030 in the foreseeable future.

I would like to thank the Government of Tajikistan, the various national stakeholders, and colleagues at the UNDP Tajikistan 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 Tajikistan.



Indran A. Naidoo
Director, Independent Evaluation Office

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

AIDS	Acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
CAREC	Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation
CEDAW	Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CO	Country office
CoES	Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence
CPD	Country programme document
DRM	Disaster risk management
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
DWSS	Drinking water supply and sanitation
EEP	Energy and Environment Programme
EIMMS	Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System
ERW	Explosive remnants of war
FLA	Free Legal Aid
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
INDC	Intended nationally determined contribution
IT	Information technology
IWRM	Integrated water resources management
LAC	Legal Aid Centre
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MEDT	Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
MEWR	Ministry of Energy and Water Resources
MoHSPP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of Population
MTDP	Mid-Term Development Programme
NDS	National Development Strategy
ODS	Ozone depleting substance
OFID	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PPP	Public-private partnership
PVE	Prevention of violent extremism
PWD	Person with disability
RAC	Refrigeration and air-conditioning
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

REACT	Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team
RES	Renewable energy sources
ROAR	Results Oriented Annual Report
SALAC	State Agency Legal Aid Centre
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SED	Social and economic development
SHP	Small hydropower
SME	Small and medium enterprise
TB	Tuberculosis
UN	United Nations
UNCP	United Nations Common Premises
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

Evaluation Brief: Tajikistan

UNDP has been present in Tajikistan since 1994 supporting the Government's National Development Strategy for the period to 2030 (NDS 2030) for poverty alleviation, focusing on policies and investments necessary to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Over the years, its programme has been shaped by the country's development priorities and challenges. During the programme cycle under review (2016-2020), the

UNDP country programme focused on supporting the national development needs outlined in the NDS 2030 and the Medium-Term Development Plan 2020, such as ensuring food security, expanding effective employment, ensuring energy security, and development of the country's communication potential. The Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation of Tajikistan in 2019.

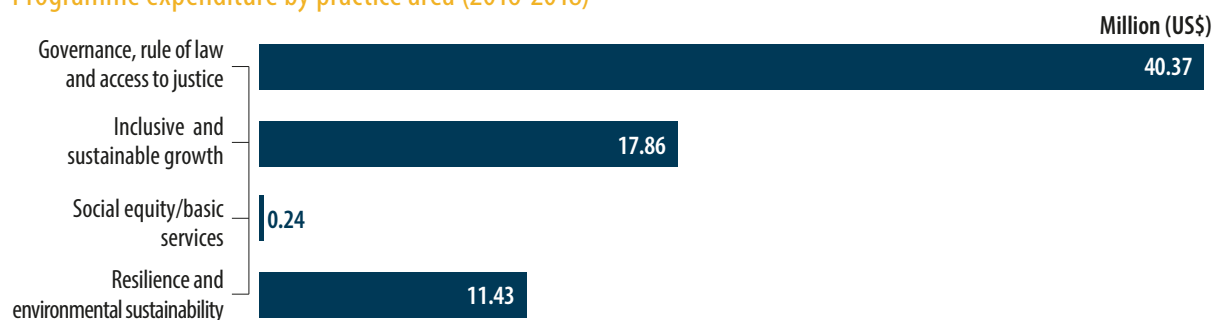
Total programme expenditure (2016-2018)

US\$69,885,971

Funding sources, 2016-2018



Programme expenditure by practice area (2016-2018)



Key findings and conclusions

UNDP has sustained a strong and close relationship with the Government of Tajikistan, civil society and the private sector, positioning itself as a reliable partner for the provision of advisory and development support services. UNDP's added value as a partner of the Government and other stakeholders in the country lies not only in its ability to bring in expertise and international experiences but also in promoting a holistic approach to address

the most pressing challenges in line with recognized needs and government priorities. UNDP is trusted as a partner that ensures transparency and credibility. Particularly valued is UNDP's capacity to bring actors with diverse interests together in a neutral space of trust, assisting dialogue and joint problem solving. Such an approach has brought positive results in terms of enhanced participatory decision-making, stronger and more evidence-based policies and interventions better suited to the needs of citizens.

UNDP has made significant contributions – with the potential for transformative effects – in improving governance, rule of law and access to justice by enabling the Government to enhance the delivery of services and establishing mechanisms to protect rights, particularly of the most vulnerable. The challenge, however, remains to ensure full uptake and sustainability, due to weak absorption capacity on the Government side and limited technical, human and financial resources.

UNDP has played a catalytic role in improving employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, access to loans, vocational education and promoting trade for improving livelihoods and empowerment of citizens, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Outcomes for targeted individuals and their families are positive, with enhanced incomes and livelihood conditions. However, sustainability is hindered by persisting challenges for the private sector due to high taxation and generally limiting governmental framework and investment in the sector, unpredictable markets and ability to enhance trade and exports.

The country programme's pursuit of inclusive development through multiple projects across the country programme portfolio involving various government and civil society actors has enabled UNDP

to promote and empower the most vulnerable groups, particularly women, persons with disabilities and persons living with HIV and tuberculosis. Improved access to basic services has been a key driver for empowerment and quality of life of communities.

UNDP has made an important contribution in promoting environmental sustainability and resilience in Tajikistan. Its efforts in promoting disaster risk management (DRM) and improving water sector policy and governance have yielded positive results. However, structural changes and delays in the adoption of supportive legislations impede the sustainability of efforts. On conservation of biological diversity, the needs are large and sustained efforts will be required to help shape the post-2020 global biodiversity agenda with an accurate and up-to-date reflection of national and global progress to address the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

UNDP has contributed to climate change mitigation by promoting green energy and hydrochlorofluorocarbon phase-out. However, its work on climate change adaptation has been minimal. Significantly more effort is required to improve energy efficiency and the use of renewable sources by promoting innovations and exploring non-traditional sources of funding.

Recommendations

- **RECOMMENDATION 1.** UNDP should ensure that the next country programme cycle is founded on a well-articulated theory of change and supported by a results framework that includes measurable and realistic indicators for assessing change at the outcome level.
- **RECOMMENDATION 2.** UNDP should invest in promoting the scaling up and institutionalization of pilots and models it has promoted across the country programme portfolio.
- **RECOMMENDATION 3.** UNDP should further integrate and consolidate its economic and private sector development portfolio to generate evidence from the models for scaling up and promote a systematic approach to value chains and promotion of trade.
- **RECOMMENDATION 4.** UNDP should continue focusing on enabling national and local partners (including the private sector) and communities to create more jobs and strengthen livelihood opportunities, with special focus on women and vulnerable groups, promoting cross-sector integration.
- **RECOMMENDATION 5.** UNDP should strengthen its focus and address climate change adaptation in a more integrated manner, linking it to addressing environmental degradation, wastewater management and biodiversity conservation.
- **RECOMMENDATION 6.** UNDP should consider merging its DRM programme and energy and environment programme under one umbrella programme and supplement it with a results-based learning and management strategy.

A decorative graphic consisting of a dotted line. It starts with a vertical segment on the left containing two circles (orange and dark blue), then turns horizontal to the right, passing through three more circles (light green, orange, dark blue) before ending. The circles are spaced evenly along the line.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

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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 national development priorities, 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 second country-level evaluation of UNDP's work in Tajikistan 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).

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 programme cycle. 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 evaluation 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.

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

1.2. Evaluation methodology

The evaluation methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards,² ensuring that all steps of the evaluation 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 a desk review to explain causality and change, including underlying assumptions. This was further refined as the evaluation progressed, based on discussions with stakeholders during the country missions on the progress of UNDP towards the achievement of the country programme outcomes (Figure 2). Choices about the methods and the strategy for undertaking 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.

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.

Documentation review: The evaluation team undertook an extensive review of documents. This included 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 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 31 percent of total CO projects, representing a cross-section of UNDP's work in the country, for in-depth review and analysis (Annex 5, available online); and also used the analysis to further 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 of the evaluation, and to examine any potential partnerships that could further 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 additional evidence was very valuable as a supplementary source of information on the UNDP country programme, its effectiveness and sustainability, allowing triangulation of these findings with those to be collected in the framework of 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-Annex 2, available online) were validated in the field phase, and used to identify gaps in data and any important issues requiring subsequent follow-up.

Country mission and key informant interviews: A country mission for data collection was undertaken from 26 to 31 May 2019. A multistakeholder approach was followed and 79 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 water supply and sanitation project sites in Tanyol village, the Civil Registration Office in Kulyab city and a fruit-drying facility in Vose district – which is part of the rural livelihoods improvement project in nine districts of Tajikistan – for discussions with the project beneficiaries.

Triangulation: All information and data collected from multiple sources were triangulated to ensure their validity. The evaluation matrix was used to guide how each of the questions was addressed and to organize the available evidence by key evaluation questions. 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 evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. Following the

⁴ The CO completed nine decentralized evaluations during the review period, two of which were rated satisfactory, five moderately satisfactory and two moderately unsatisfactory 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.

peer review, the draft ICPE report was shared with the country office and the RBEC and finally with the Government and other national partners in Tajikistan.

1.3. Evaluation considerations

The ICPE Tajikistan 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 percentage 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 before the country mission and team members used their presence in Tajikistan to validate the emerging findings. Most of the research for the evaluation was conducted remotely and only five working days were 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 country mission by ensuring full 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 became a wrap-up meeting with discussions on the next steps and follow-up.

1.4. Context analysis

Tajikistan is a landlocked country in Central Asia with a population of 8.8 million, 70 percent of which lives in rural areas.⁶ The country went through civil war in the 1990s and since the last peace accord of 1997 has worked to stabilize its macro-economy and implement structural reforms. The following paragraphs highlight the key development challenges in Tajikistan.

Socio-economic: Tajikistan is the poorest of the Commonwealth of Independent States, with 20 percent of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day and 57 percent on less than \$3.10 a day.⁷ Tajikistan transitioned to the status of lower-middle-income country in 2015 for a short period, however, sliding back to the low-income-country status in 2018, mainly due to deteriorating terms of trade. Life expectancy is 71.2 years, which is an increase of 8.1 years since 1992. The national economy is predominately agrarian, comprising more than 20 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)⁸ and employing 70 percent of the country's labour force.⁹ Tajikistan recorded a 6.8 percent growth in GDP between 2000 and 2017. The World Bank Doing Business report ranked Tajikistan 126th among 190 economies in 2019.¹⁰ For the first time, in 2017 Tajikistan entered the international bond markets with the issuance of a 10-year US\$500 million bond with a yield of 7.125 percent.¹¹ Small and medium-sized enterprises employ about half of the population, but they are very small and lack development potential.¹² State-owned enterprises are dominant in key infrastructure networks.¹³

⁶ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/137111539098348193/Tajikistan-Snapshot-Oct2018.pdf>

⁷ <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.DDAY>

⁸ \$7.52 billion in 2018.

⁹ Summary: 'JICA Country Analytical Work for the Republic of Tajikistan'.

¹⁰ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/209521554997976969/Tajikistan-Snapshot-Apr2019.pdf>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Country Strategy for Development Cooperation – The Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan 2018-2021: <https://um.fi/documents/35732/0/Country+Strategy+for+Development+Cooperation+2018%E2%88%922021+The+Kyrgyz+Republic+and+Tajikistan.pdf/bf0b49af-bc78-987c-4e00-8699f25660b6>.

¹³ World Bank Group Country Economic Update, Tajikistan, 2018.

Tajikistan's economy remains vulnerable to external shocks caused by its weak economic base and a heavy reliance on remittances by labour migrants. The country still faces major challenges in developing a diversified industry, reducing the decline of high literacy rates, developing and maintaining an up-to-date national health infrastructure, creating more employment opportunities, and investing in overall infrastructure development. The World Bank finds that provision of basic services such as heat, power and clean water remained undermined by low public expenditures in the social sector.¹⁴ Only three out of four persons have access to an improved water source. Due to lack of access to clean water, sanitation and diversified food, more than 20 percent of children under the age of five are stunted.¹⁵ Over a million of Tajikistan's citizens live and work outside of their home country for most of the year. Many of the migrant workers are often vulnerable to human trafficking, including exploitation, both domestically and abroad due to insufficient knowledge of host countries' languages, legislation, and their own rights.¹⁶

Health indicators in Tajikistan remain among the lowest in the Europe and Central Asia region, though there have been some important improvements. For example, the infant mortality rate declined from 106.49 per 1,000 live births in 2006 to 31.8 in 2017.¹⁷ According to World Bank data, total government health expenditure over the past decade has ranged from 4.6 to 5.3 percent of GDP¹⁸ and remains the lowest in Central Asia.

The primary enrolment rate stands at 98 percent, with gender parity. 98.9 percent of adult women in Tajikistan have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 87 percent of their male counterparts.¹⁹ Nonetheless, gender inequality is pervasive in

Tajikistan despite a legal framework that protects women's rights. In 2018, the Global Gender Gap Report ranked Tajikistan 123rd out of 149 countries, with a score of 0.638 (0.00=impairity and 1.00=parity).²⁰

Governance: Tajikistan's Government has undertaken a number of structural reforms to address existing gaps in the policy and regulatory framework with a view to strengthening accountability and effective governance. However, the country still faces obstacles in access to and quality of public services as well as inefficiencies and inequity in public spending and widespread corruption. Civil society representation and oversight in governance are weak, and since 2017 civil society funding has been increasingly scrutinized in line with amendments to the Law on Public Associations that stipulates that all non-government organizations (NGOs) receiving foreign funds are obliged to report to the Ministry of Justice.²¹ However, the law has not been widely enforced.

Tajikistan is burdened by security issues because of the border disputes with Kyrgyzstan as well as radicalization and potential for violent extremism noticed especially among youth and returning labour migrants banned from entering Russia. Its border with Afghanistan also remains vulnerable to security threats.

Environment and climate change: Over 90 percent of Tajikistan's territory is mountainous, making it prone to a wide range of natural disasters such as floods, landslides, avalanches and earthquakes.²² The country has been assessed as the most vulnerable to future climate change risks in Europe and Central Asia region.²³ Over the past 10 years, much effort has been put into strengthening the DRM system, including by UNDP, but the risks are still high.²⁴

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/addressing-childhood-malnutrition-and-stunting>

¹⁶ United States Agency for International Development info sheet, 2018: <https://www.usaid.gov/tajikistan/democracy-human-rights-and-governance>.

¹⁷ Index mundi: <https://www.indexmundi.com/g/g.aspx?c=ti&v=29>.

¹⁸ The World Bank Group – Tajikistan Partnership Programme Snapshot, April 2015.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf

²¹ Amendments introduced to the Law on Public Associations were developed in support the fulfilment of the country's international obligations, such as the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) and Part 2 of Article 9 of the UN Convention against Corruption, which calls that "Each State Party shall, in accordance with the fundamental principles of its legal system, take appropriate measures to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public finances".

²² World Bank, 'Sustainable Management of Natural Resources Helps Tajik Communities Adapt to Climate Change', 2018.

²³ World Bank, 'Europe and Central Asia: Country Risk Profiles for Floods and Earthquakes', 2017, pp.111-113.

²⁴ Index for Risk Management 2018 (INFORM 2018) - Inter-Agency Standing Committee Task Team for Preparedness and Resilience and the European Commission: <http://www.inform-index.org>.

Tajikistan aspires to play a leading role in advancing the global water agenda. Still, despite considerable effort and investment, lack of access to clean drinking water continues to be a major issue, particularly for people in rural Tajikistan, where many residents rely on rivers and open ditches for drinking water.²⁵ Ninety-five percent of the population has only basic sanitation service, with no data available for safely managed sanitation. Evidence points to environmental damage from the latter, coupled with inadequate industrial and municipal wastewater management.²⁶

The country currently covers 90 percent of its electricity demand through hydropower plants²⁷ in river basins fed by glacial meltwater and snowmelt. This greatly exposes the energy sector to climate change, in part due to the melting of the glaciers. The country reports 100 percent access to energy; however, uninterrupted access is not ensured, especially in rural areas. The launch of the first aggregate of the Roghun hydropower plant in 2018 led to an increase of power generation by 100 megawatts, but there still are off-grid communities in remote rural areas with limited access to renewable energy sources (RES). Residents there still use wood from forests for heating houses and cooking, negatively affecting biodiversity, increasing erosion and potentially augmenting vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.²⁸

Overall, the country faces a serious problem of inefficient use of water and energy resources.²⁹ Energy efficiency has low priority in practice,³⁰ despite the Law on Energy Saving and Energy Efficiency (2013) promoting it. RES account for 45 percent of energy consumption, but less than 1 percent other than hydropower. Highly subsidized energy prices are one

of the key reasons behind the lack of incentives to promote energy saving in practice.

Climate change is expected to impact key economic sectors in Tajikistan, including agriculture, energy, and water, putting rural livelihoods at risk. Tajikistan's agriculture sector, in particular, will likely be affected by low levels of rainfall, the drying-up of water resources, lower snow accumulation in mountain glaciers, and more frequent extreme weather events.³¹ Tajikistan's Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC), submitted in 2015, and its Third National Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) reiterate the importance of reducing the country's vulnerability to climate change, including frequent natural disasters. The INDC communicated unconditional (not to exceed 80-90 percent of greenhouse gas emissions at the 1990 level by 2030) and conditional on international support climate targets (not to exceed 65-75 percent on the same basis)³² with regard to both adaptation and mitigation. The INDC outlines a range of priority sectors that require further adaptation actions, which largely coincide with those for mitigation (energy, agriculture, water resource management, transport, DRM, etc.).

An increase in economic activity in the past years is the main cause of changes in biodiversity and loss, increase in deforestation and grassland degradation, with arable land decreasing by 3.2 percent over the last 15 years.³³

1.5. National development planning architecture

The National Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for the period to 2030 (NDS 2030) aims

²⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/tajikistan/publication/poverty-diagnostic-drinking-water-sanitation-and-hygiene-conditions-in-tajikistan>

²⁶ UNECE, 'Third Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan', 2017, p.116.

²⁷ World Bank, 'The Costs of Irrigation Inefficiency in Tajikistan', 2017, p. 61: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/116581486551262816/pdf/ACS21200-WP-P129682-PUBLIC-TheCostsofIrrigationInefficiencyinTajikistan.pdf>.

²⁸ <https://adaptation-undp.org/explore/central-asia/tajikistan>

²⁹ Statement of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan H.E. Mr. Emomali Rahmon at the 7th World Water Forum (Daegu, 12 April 2015): http://www.cawater-info.net/7wwf/statement-tajikistan_e.htm

³⁰ See Regulatory indicators for Sustainable Energy (RISE), maintained by the World Bank. RISE scores reflect a snapshot of a country's policies and regulations in the energy sector, organized by the three pillars: energy access, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Indicators are assigned to each pillar to determine scores.

³¹ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/05/04/sustainable-management-of-natural-resources-helps-tajik-communities-adapt-to-climate-change>

³² Government of Tajikistan, 'Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) towards the achievement of the global goal of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) by the Republic of Tajikistan: 'Third National Communication of the Republic of Tajikistan under the UNFCCC', 2015.

³³ <https://www.cbd.int/countries/profile/default.shtml?country=tj>

to align the national development agenda to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and is anchored in four strategic goals, i.e. ensuring energy security; development of the country's communication potential; ensuring food security; and expanding effective employment.³⁴ The NDS 2030 envisages, inter alia, ensuring the diversification of the country's electric power system capacity, including an increase in RES by at least 10 percent; increasing access to water and sanitation; strengthening systems for environmental protection and economic incentives; and development of natural hazards risk management system.³⁵

The strategy is further elaborated through the Mid-Term Development Programme (MTDP) 2016-2020, which is directed towards, inter alia, wide implementation of the principles of 'green economy'.³⁶ Taking into account significant water supply shortage across the country, the Water Sector Reforms Programme 2016-2025 was developed based on common principles of integrated water resources management (IWRM). The programme aims at laying the foundation for application of decentralization and devolution of part of service delivery. The MTDP has been developed to tackle a range of socio-economic challenges. The National Strategy for DRR 2018-2030³⁷ and the National Strategy and Action Plan for Biodiversity Preservation (NSABP) until 2020 (2016) with the Aichi Biodiversity Targets address the acute priorities for Tajikistan given its environmental context. The Government has developed (with the support of the Asian Development Bank during 2016-2017) and approved the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy (NCCAS) in October 2019. To operationalize the implementation of the Strategy, the Government has embarked on the development of national adaptation plans (NAP), focused on integrating adaptation into development strategies across sectors such as water and agriculture.

The Government has established the National Development Council (NDC) as a centralized coordination framework to track the progress of

its NDS. Chaired by the President of Tajikistan, the body comprises representatives from selected ministries, departments and agencies. The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) serves as the Secretariat to the NDC by providing coordination and technical support for all the aspects of the process. This framework serves for coordination of development efforts of the Government and development partners, including the UN, which enabled their inclusion in the Council meetings. In addition, the MEDT acts as Secretariat for coordination of United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) implementation in Tajikistan and provides support to the Resident Coordinator's Office with coordination of UNDAF Joint Result Groups work.

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

Tajikistan is a signatory to the main body of international treaties and conventions, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC), etc. The country has been a member of the UN Economic and Social Council for the period 2017-2019. Taking into account its ongoing water management challenges, the country takes a more proactive role as a leader on global water-related issues, including an active role in the International Decade for Action 'Water for life, 2005-2015', and membership of the High-level Panel on Water. Tajikistan is a key sponsor of UN General Assembly Resolution 71/22 on establishing the International Decade for Action 'Water for Sustainable Development, 2018-2028'.

Tajikistan hosts a range of development partners, including bilateral and multilateral actors such as the Government

³⁴ <https://medt.tj/en/strategy-and-programmes/nds2030>

³⁵ Government of Tajikistan, 'National Report on Implementation of Strategic Documents of the Country in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals', Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, p.18.

³⁶ Midterm Development Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan for 2016-2020, p.16.

³⁷ <https://www.unisdr.org/files/globalplatform/amcdr2018ministerialstatementtadjik.pdf>

of Japan and Japan International Cooperation Agency, Government of Russia, Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC), Government of Finland, Government of Norway, European Union, United States Government, Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries Fund for International Development (OFID), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), etc. UN agencies active in the country include UNDP, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), World Health Organization, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme (WFP), International Organization for Migration, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia, International Labour Organization, and UN Office for Project Services. Besides, Tajikistan is benefiting from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and Global Environment Facility (GEF).

1.7. UNDP programme strategy in Tajikistan

The UNDP country programme for 2016-2020 focuses on four priorities which have been set forth based on analysis of the country's context, development challenges and priorities, successes and lessons learned from the previous CPD cycle and emerging needs. These include improved governance, rule of law and access to justice; sustainable and equitable economic growth; social equity and protection of vulnerable groups from violence and discrimination; and resilience and environmental sustainability. The CPD addresses national development needs outlined in the NDS 2030 and MTDP 2020 such as ensuring energy security; development of the country's communication potential; ensuring food security; and expanding effective employment. Table 1 presents an overview of the UNDP CPD outcomes and CO budget.

TABLE 1: Overview of CPD outcomes and budgets

Theme	Outcomes	Budget US\$ (2016-2018)	Expenditure US\$ (2016-2018)
Governance, rule of law and human rights	Outcome 7 People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender-responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.	53,683,611	40,366,395
Inclusive and sustainable growth	Outcome 8 People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment, stable energy supply, improved access to specialized knowledge and innovation and more favourable business environment especially for entrepreneurs and farmers.	20,638,704	17,858,103
Social equity/basic services	Outcome 9 Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence and discrimination, have voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society.	235,500	235,203
Resilience and environmental sustainability	Outcome 10 People in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and human disasters benefiting from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources.	14,589,857	11,426,270
Total		89,147,672	69,885,971

The UNDP country programme portfolio consists of 59 projects active within the current CPD (some of which have started during the previous country programme) under the four outcomes. More than half of all projects are small, with 22 projects under \$200,000 and 10 projects between \$200,000 and \$500,000, 8 projects between \$500,000 and \$1 million, 12 projects between \$1 million and \$3 million, and 7 projects over \$3 million. Out of the total, 52 projects are directly implemented by UNDP and 7 are implemented by national agencies. Over a half of the projects within the CPD portfolio were closed by the end of 2018, while the remaining 26 projects are ongoing.

Within the governance, rule of law and human rights portfolio, UNDP has been implementing 19 projects broadly falling into the following sectors: health (7); border management (2); access to justice and rule of law (3); aid coordination and public administration (6); and civil registry (1).

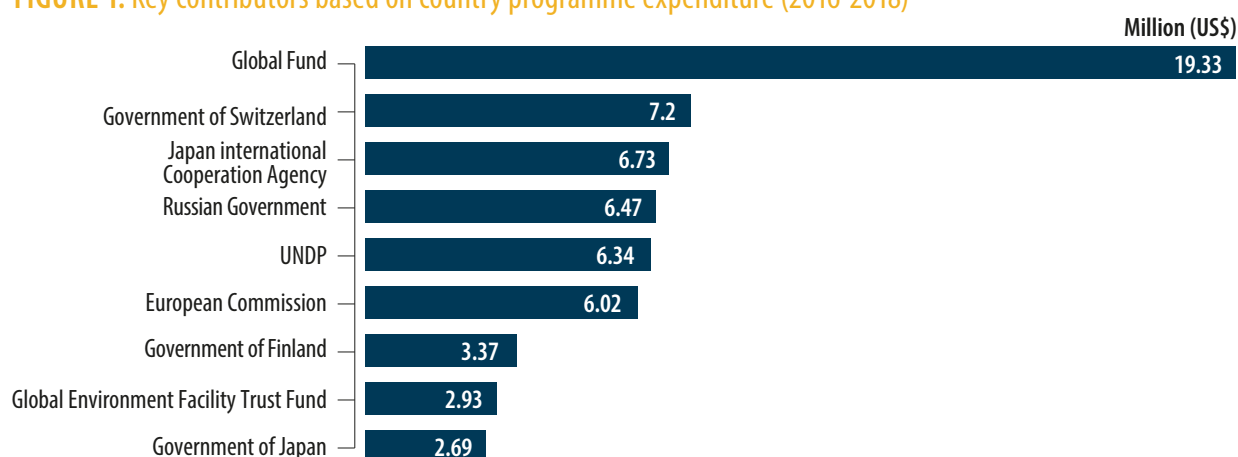
Under inclusive and sustainable growth, UNDP implements 20 projects including regional projects, some of which fall within the broad environment portfolio. Out of the 20 projects, 9 deal with equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment; 7 with energy and water sector; 2 with cross border and prevention of violent extremism; and 2 with strengthening government capacities in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) portfolio. All projects within this portfolio are directly implemented by UNDP. Energy and water-related projects under

the energy and environment programme (EEP) are linked to this portfolio. EEP builds on the previous achievements of UNDP in the environment and energy sectors, intending to support Tajikistan's transition to low-emission and climate-resilient development through (a) market transformation towards low-emission economies, including climate change mitigation projects; and (b) capacity development for climate-resilient communities, including ecosystems, natural resources and climate change adaptation projects.

Within the resilience and environmental sustainability portfolio, UNDP works closely with the Government to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency; to further the reform agenda for IWRM; and to promote integrated and gender-responsive approaches to building the resilience of communities to climate variability and climate-related hazards and disaster risk reduction (DRR). There are 19 projects in the portfolio, 8 covering DRR/DRM and mine action, with the rest covering renewable energy, environmental monitoring, climate reporting and resilience, chemicals management, biodiversity conservation and ecosystems management.

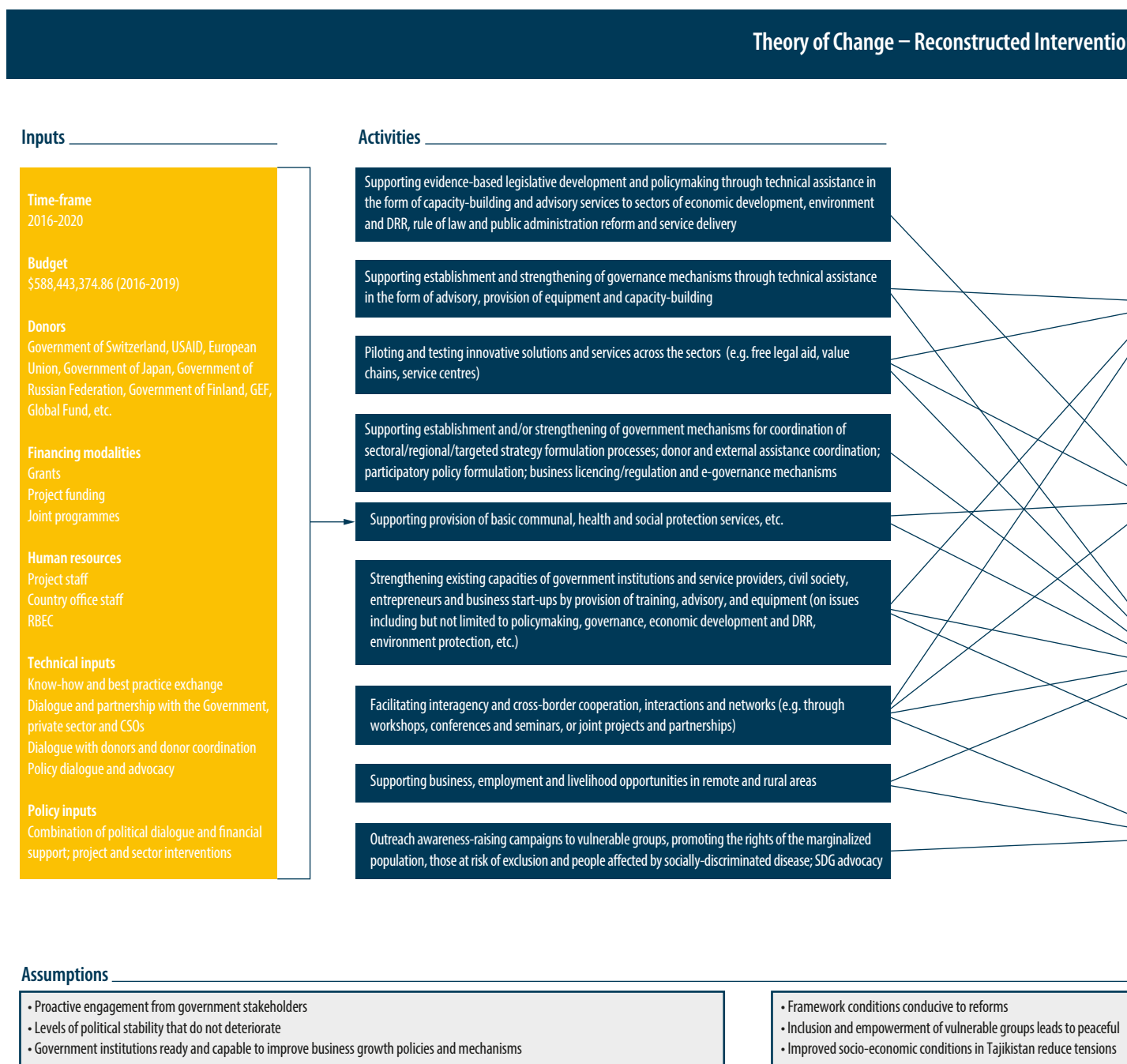
Various donors have supported the implementation of the country programme during the review period (Figure 1). The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (or the Global Fund) is the single largest donor with \$19.33 million, followed by Switzerland, Japan, International Cooperation Agency, Russian Government, UNDP, European Commission, Government of Finland, Global Environment Facility Trust Fund, and Government of Japan.

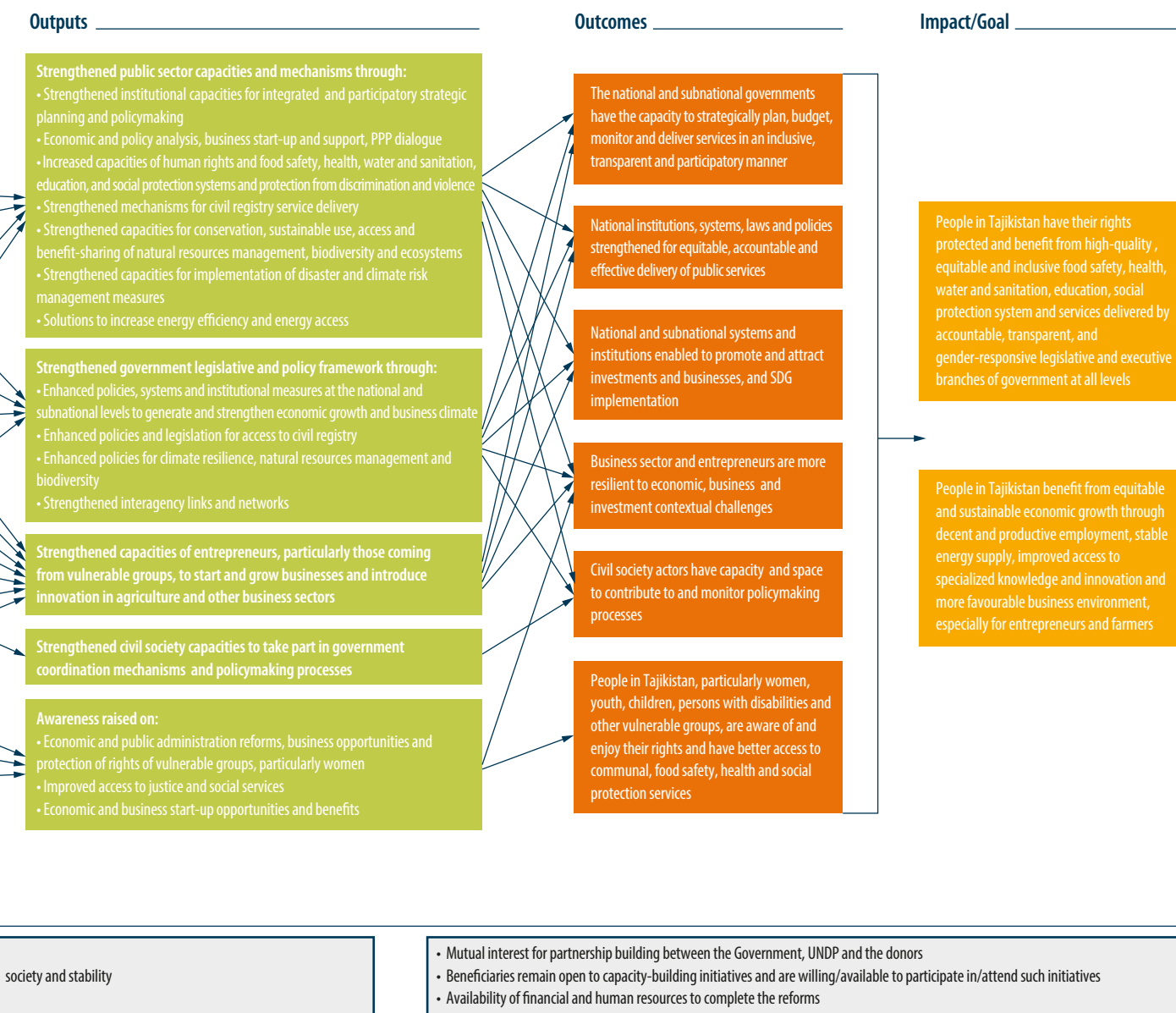
FIGURE 1: Key contributors based on country programme expenditure (2016-2018)³⁸



³⁸ UNDP ATLAS, October 2019.

FIGURE 2: UNDP Tajikistan: 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

This chapter presents 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. The assessment, which is qualitative in nature, is based on an analysis of the correlation between reported project achievements, their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and consequently the overall outcome objectives. The main factors influencing UNDP's performance and contribution to results are discussed under each finding/outcome.

2.1. Overall programme implementation

Finding 1: The UNDP country programme is highly relevant to national development priorities. UNDP has strategically positioned itself as a trusted and reliable provider of development services supporting the implementation of Tajikistan's National Development Strategy for 2030.

Tajikistan faces persisting development challenges, particularly in terms of economic growth, diversification and ensuring decent jobs and productive engagement for growing young population including women. Challenges also include gender disparities, inequalities and deeply rooted stereotypes; a slow pace of reforms towards a more decentralized, transparent and accountable evidence-based decision- and policymaking; building social cohesion to prevent the expansion of violent extremism; and addressing environment and climate change issues. UNDP in close cooperation with the Government addresses these challenges through a range of interventions within its country programme.

The evaluation found that UNDP is recognized as a trusted partner for public authorities, civil society and donors in providing development information and advice, as well as effective technical assistance services (including training, policy advisory, mentorship, modelling approaches and mechanisms, infrastructure development, etc.) to achieve results in a transparent, accountable and timely manner and help build national capacities. UNDP's long-term presence and technical expertise at the policy and operational levels are perceived as an asset and help maintain a great level of trust among the

public authorities and other partners with the ability to influence policy formulation and discussions. Through most of its projects, UNDP is helping the Government meet its regional and global obligations on international agreements.

However, the Government's centralized nature of decision-making has affected the effectiveness of UNDP's efforts towards institutionalization of tested mechanisms and approaches to work. Yet, in some cases, the high level of centralization also appears as a positive driver for change. In cases where the President's Office recognizes the added value of proposed models and approaches, these are institutionalized through fast-track decisions. One example is the civil registry system, which has been scaled up with the commitment of the Government to ensure a secure and functional Internet for the system to work and maintain its interoperability feature (i.e. the ability of computers within the system of government to exchange and use information), though had not been achieved at the time of the evaluation.

There is general agreement among interviewed stakeholders that UNDP is strategically positioned to support the Government in its major reform initiatives. UNDP invests efforts to maintain and enhance partnerships with the most senior ranks in the Government through continuous communication and open dialogue as well as engaging the Government in planning and programming of its interventions across sectors. UNDP also invests in advocacy and outreach of its work and achievements across sectors. These measures help to ensure buy-in and commitment of the Government and uptake of the reform interventions.

Finding 2: The quality of the country programme and project documents' results frameworks are somewhat challenged by the lack of fully elaborated underlying theories of change and lack of reliable data for indicators. Yet, the country programme is implemented through an integrated and holistic programmatic approach, crucial to the achievement of coherent results. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and knowledge management systems are appropriate, though weaknesses are visible in outcome level analysis beyond the outputs.

Although the country programme theory of change is not complete, the results matrix presents linkages between UNDP interventions, UNDAF, national goals and the UNDP Strategic Plan. It also presents a set of indicators at the outcome level as well as outputs and their related indicators. Each indicator has baselines and targets, though these are often ambiguous and very broad and general, and in some cases, it is not clear how they will be measured.³⁹ This was also noted in the UNDAF Mid-Term Review in 2018, which identified weaknesses in the UNDAF results and resources framework indicators related to the lack of baselines and annual/overall targets; some of the targets being unrealistic and/or unachievable; and the number of sources of independent verification being very limited.⁴⁰ Another challenge is the lack of official statistics and other reliable data for many indicators, making it difficult to track progress and results. At the time of writing this report, the UNDAF results framework was going through a substantive revision process by an independent consultant jointly with UNDAF Results Groups, which may result in newly formulated and/or revised indicators.

To mitigate potential challenges of silos and lack of coherence, the country office has introduced a flexible and multidisciplinary issue-based approach during the implementation of the current country programme. It has done so by bringing all projects under governance, sustainable economic development, environment, resilience and social sector together to ensure a holistic response for achieving multidimensional impact. Efforts to integrate its cross-sector approaches have resulted in the grouping of projects with common/similar areas of interventions to be implemented under 'programmes' or 'teams'. These frameworks include communities programme, disaster risk management (DRM) team, access to justice and rule of law programme, energy and environment team and the HIV programme team. The coordination is ensured mainly through bi-weekly programme meetings and individual project meetings. For effective communication, an e-mail group for programme

and project managers is established where all the important updates and information are disseminated. Bi-weekly delivery tables that allow for monitoring of programme delivery in an effective and coordinated manner are also shared within this group. This is a positive move, as confirmed by stakeholder interviews and document review, as it brings added value to the implementation of multisectoral interventions.

Integration of the office portfolios and themes has proven to be particularly successful at the local level. A key driver of the CO is the geographical distribution of its field offices. UNDP in Tajikistan operates from its headquarters in Dushanbe with a network of five field project offices across the country (in Sughd [Khujand and Ayni] and Khatlon [Bokhtar and Kulyab] regions, as well as in Rasht Valley). Such a structure helps in reaching out to the most vulnerable parts of the population and also ensures the timely and efficient implementation of activities. It also helps in ensuring coherence and a common approach to topics and issues tackled by projects. All interviewed parties, including representatives of other UN agencies, the Government, civil society and final beneficiaries, confirm that these field project offices add important value, serving as resource hubs and partners in local activities. UNDP has established a hub in the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, which favours/facilitates UNDP's advisory support to the ministry and advocates for the inclusion of the SDGs and critical development issues (such as gender, human capital and climate change) into national policies and planning.

UNDP has fared very well on outreach through M&E and knowledge management as well as public relations activities to increase the visibility of its interventions and their achievements. The CO has a well-developed M&E framework to ensure a systematic progress analysis towards the achievement of CPD results, offering comprehensive and well-structured information on outputs and outreach to different population groups, with available disaggregation of data. In addition to the standard monitoring activities, starting from 2018,

³⁹ For example, an indicator "Number of subnational governments/administrations which show improved capacities for planning, budgeting and monitoring, including on gender-responsive planning, budgeting and monitoring, basic service delivery" was included for output 1.1. However, it is not clear how 'improved capacities' will be measured.

⁴⁰ UN Agencies, 'UNDAF Mid-Term Review', 2018.

the CO has initiated joint field visits by project officers and the CO M&E analyst to assess the progress towards the achievement of CPD outcomes linked to the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and UNDAF 2016-2020. These joint teams also oversee project activities and exchange feedback from different perspectives (communications, M&E, management). The CO also conducts decentralized evaluations as per the CO evaluation plan. During the review period, the CO completed nine decentralized evaluations, two of which were rated satisfactory, five moderately satisfactory and two moderately unsatisfactory by the IEO quality assurance mechanism.

An area in need of improvement is the analysis of outcome-level data. It should go beyond the numbers of persons engaged in activities or job creation or access to water, health or electric supply systems to encompass the kind of effects these measures have brought at the individual and community levels. The analysis should explain what this change means within the developmental context of those communities and the country as a whole. There are gaps in data at these levels which make it difficult to fully understand and appreciate the added value of UNDP's engagement and the catalytic effect of its interventions in addressing development challenges. Lack of data sources for most CPD indicators and the limited number of sources of independent verification are key hindering factors. However, from the perspective of this evaluation, UNDP could have invested more systematic efforts to collect output- and outcome-level data from the pool of partners, target groups and beneficiaries. Regular monitoring and management of risk is another area that requires improvement. In addition, UNDP could have performed better in monitoring social and environmental standards. While the project documents mostly reflect these standards, they are not monitored regularly.

Finding 3: UNDP interventions contribute to the environment-governance-livelihoods nexus.

Emphasis on integration of programmes and interventions has increased synergies and holistic approach across the country programme. There are clear benefits of such an approach across the levels of engagement, and most visibly at local levels. For example, within the framework of the global UNDP/United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Poverty and Environment Initiative, UNDP in Tajikistan supported the development of the methodological framework to integrate poverty-environment-climate change issues into district-level development planning.⁴¹ This framework has also been introduced into the National Methodology on District Development Planning, which the Government later approved. Following this, the M&E framework of 60 out of 68 District Development Plans integrates pro-poor environmental sustainability objectives and indicators.⁴² UNDP also contributed to improved governance at the level of local institutions and communities by helping establish Public Advisory Councils (PACs) under Khujandvodokanal, Dushanbevodokanal and Water Trust Fund of the Local Executive Branch of State Power of Kulob City, bringing transparency and a culture of consultations in decision-making. These councils include representatives of the local communities and institutions who provide insights to inform the pending decisions by these companies and advise on the course of action.

Investment in integrating infrastructure (e.g. water, electric supply, border crossings and health and other social infrastructure) with economic activities has directly affected the quality of lives and livelihoods across targeted communities. In particular, UNDP's work on DRR and climate risk adaptation in areas prone to increased risks of flooding, mudflows and landslides brings added value to tackling challenges of low agricultural productivity and higher levels of poverty. For instance, UNDP projects focusing on riverbanks protection infrastructure benefited over 42,000 community residents (over 50 percent of which are women) across nine districts.⁴³ Projects on Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS), which aim at

⁴¹ UNDP/UNEP Poverty and Environment Initiative, 'Guidance Note on Integrating Environment linked Poverty Concerns into Planning, Budgeting, and Monitoring Processes', 2015.

⁴² https://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/operations/projects/poverty_reduction/undp-unep-poverty-environment-initiative-.html.

⁴³ ROAR 2018, p.23.

improved water distribution mechanisms and tariff setting systems, helped more than 1,240 people (half of whom are women and girls) gain access to clean drinking water.⁴⁴ UNDP support to local communities in Sangvor and Lyakhsh aimed at improving ecosystem resilience and ensuring snow leopard habitat connectivity in a wider landscape outside protected areas. The initiative has reached out to more than 12,110 people (including 5,520 women), helping with the rehabilitation of pastures and forests and employment opportunities (e.g. as community patrol officers, rangers and guides).⁴⁵

The Aid for Trade project has introduced several interventions to tackle environmental issues in trade and to build capacities of entrepreneurs in promoting environmentally friendly and energy-efficient processes, for example, by encouraging organic certification. Under the Livelihood Improvement in Tajik-Afghan Cross Border Areas project, interventions on energy access, climate-driven DRR and economic development have been intertwined to ensure complementarities and synergies in the target areas.

Efforts to integrate the SDGs and to establish more coherent planning processes have increased the level of inclusiveness of such processes and the empowerment of civil society and the private sector to engage in dialogue, and made the Government's efforts more open and transparent. However, significantly more effort is needed to ensure meaningful engagement of NGOs in environmental protection. The Government still has strict regulation and control over NGO activities in this sector and there is no public access to certain environmental data and information. For example, data on poaching and illegal trophy hunting and data on air pollution by housing and utilities sectors are not as yet publicly available.⁴⁶

Finding 4: UNDP has fostered a healthy collaborative relationship with other UN agencies in the country with attention on achieving synergy and integration. Joint initiatives with successful collaboration experiences serve as good examples of how coordination within the UN can be further enhanced.

UN agencies have implemented a number of joint programmes and initiatives over the period of reference for this evaluation. UNDP and UN Women cooperated on the reform of the civil registry system, with UNDP taking the lead in improving capacities of government institutions for improved civil registry process. UN Women provided gender expertise in legal review and capacity-building efforts and supported civic awareness activities to enhance the gender dimension of the civil registration reforms. More generally, the joint work of these two agencies resulted in the establishment of a Government Working Group to advance policies compliant with Gender Equality Principles in line with Universal Periodic Review Cycle 2 recommendations of 2016. Through this joint initiative, a total of 300 civil registry staff in four districts of Tajikistan were trained on the importance and gender sensitivity aspects of timely registration of vital acts. The Empowering Rural Communities with Better Livelihood and Social Protection project engaged multiple UN agencies (UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, UN Women and WFP) in multidimensional support across all sectors of UNDP engagement. The project tackles different areas of importance, ensuring contribution to the nexus between environment, social development and health, through investment in infrastructure, business development, empowerment, social protection and health with particular attention to the most vulnerable groups. Other examples included jointly organized international conferences (e.g. on women empowerment, prevention of violent extremism (PVE)). Joint initiatives are seen positively, as confirmed by stakeholder interviews.

UN agencies also engaged in the UN Common Services project to set-up the UN Common Premises 2 building (UNCP 2). As a result, the UNCP 2 building hosts UNICEF, UNDP projects and other UN agencies. In 2018, the UNCP 2 was connected to the central heating system in view of cost-efficiency and reduction of the recurrent expenses. This initiative, coupled with the office greening initiatives, resulted in the reduction of monthly electricity bills by four

⁴⁴ ROAR 2018, p.14, under the EEP.

⁴⁵ ROAR 2018, p.14, under the Snow Leopard Protection project.

⁴⁶ UNECE, 'Third Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan', 2017, p.xxivvv.

to five times. Interviewed stakeholders expressed enthusiasm at having had the opportunity to share premises as a means of easier exchange and collaboration. Yet, they emphasized that more could have been done in terms of investment in collaboration, particularly taking into account the needs in the country, availability of donor funds and the need to take a more integrated approach to social development and governance.

Synergies with the development partners were overall strong. This is especially true for the areas of work where UNDP plays a leading role (DRM, mine action and water supply and sanitation, until recently). UNDP supported the Government and humanitarian community to improve coordinated inter-agency emergency preparedness and response through the Rapid Emergency Assessment and Coordination Team (REACT) co-chaired by the Government and the Resident Coordinator. With UNDP support, in 2017, REACT completed preparation of inter-agency contingency planning, joint needs assessment methodologies and tools, the establishment of joint disaster information management platforms and data sets. The UN, along with the donor community and REACT members, jointly advocated for streamlined institutional arrangements. There is some confusion, however, related to the division of the roles between the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (OCHA) and UNDP in the eyes of the stakeholders in relation to the team, which affects the perceptions of the effectiveness of this mechanism.⁴⁷

To foster regional coordination in DRR, UNDP supported the Government in hosting the Central Asia regional meeting of the heads of emergency services on DRR to review progress on implementation of the Sendai Framework for DRR and discuss cooperation for effective implementation. The forum enabled commitment to prepare an action plan of cooperation on joint regional interventions such as drills, exercises and training of selected staff of emergency authorities to become trainers in the region, and on cross-border DRM and DRR. UNDP was nominated by the Government as coordinator

for water sector reforms and played this role until 2017, where development partners committed a total investment of around \$240 million in support of infrastructure rehabilitation and Water Sector Reform Programme. Within these projects as well as mine action, UNDP has had good cooperation with international organizations such as OSCE, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, US Department of State, World Bank, SDC and Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation.

UNDP has also strengthened the network of its contributing partners. With declining resources from some traditional sources, the CO was able to strengthen existing partnerships with Japan and Russia and maintain partnership with the GEF, Finland and Switzerland. UNDP managed to renew cooperation with the Government of Norway and capitalize on the opportunities with new donors such as OFID and China. With the World Bank and Asian Development Bank becoming more active in many areas where UNDP had and has a significant role (e.g. DRR) or plans (e.g. climate change adaptation), finding more regular and closer cooperation avenues with such partners is important.

Finding 5: UNDP has utilized the potential of South-South and triangular cooperation within the country programme framework. However, in most cases, cooperation is one-off and not systematic to foster and facilitate long-term peer-learning and exchange regionally and beyond.

UNDP has been supporting some international cooperation opportunities and events that help boost South-South cooperation. One such example is UNDP's support to the Government to explore new partnerships towards achievement and financing of the SDGs. Under this initiative, UNDP CO in cooperation with UNDP China supported the Government of Tajikistan to implement a niche research to map, identify and generate projects/ideas for implementation under Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, in alignment with national strategies and the SDG agenda in Tajikistan.

⁴⁷ There is no OCHA country office in Tajikistan, but OCHA has fielded one adviser on humanitarian issues attached to the Resident Coordinator's Office: before that, UNDP had stepped in to fill the gap and supported the initiative.

Tajikistan's experience with the protection of snow leopards was shared with the Government of Kazakhstan in May 2018. In turn, consultations with the World Wildlife Fund Russia in October 2018 allowed the sharing of experience in developing and implementing a smart patrol system and snow leopard monitoring. In continuation of this initiative, a specialist from National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre took part in relevant practical training in Altai, which helped to increase skills and knowledge capacities of national staff. UNDP facilitated these visits, and the fact that it is supporting similar projects in the neighbouring countries adds value in terms of bringing UNDP's own lessons in managing these projects, overcoming hindrances and finding innovative solutions.

In 2016, Tajikistan water experts benefited from a study tour to Armenia to learn about consumer rights protection mechanisms and rights-based state regulation for drinking water supply and sanitation, as well as exchange best practices in water supply and sanitation regulatory framework. In addition, capacities of the members of the national platform to engage in risk governance policy and practice were strengthened through study tours to Switzerland and Bosnia and Herzegovina. UNDP has also facilitated bilateral meetings with the heads of emergency agencies of the Republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia to discuss and identify potential areas of cooperation.

While these initiatives and exchanges help UNDP to build network resources and support capacities and readiness of Tajik counterparts to benefit from international exchanges, they, however, are not part of a systematic and larger programme strategy. These initiatives have mostly responded to ad hoc request from the Government for support. More could have been done to establish long-term cooperation with partners to facilitate peer-to-peer learning regionally and beyond, leveraging UNDP's presence in and outside the region.

2.2. Governance, rule of law and human rights

Outcome 7: People in Tajikistan have their rights protected and benefit from improved access to justice and quality services delivered by accountable, transparent, and gender-responsive legislative, executive and judicial institutions at all levels.

To support the Government in reversing growing inequalities and exclusion, UNDP has been investing in initiatives to support policies and capacities for more effective, transparent, accountable and responsive governance and access to justice. The governance, rule of law and human rights portfolio has been an evolving one, which started off as a pure security sector support portfolio with a strong focus on border management. Within the period preceding the current CPD, particularly from 2014, the portfolio started to grow, increasingly including rule of law, access to justice and human rights and, most recently, peacebuilding efforts and prevention of violent extremism.

Within efforts in these sectors, UNDP's premise has been that strengthening national and local governance is key to securing more equitable access to services and rights for the poor and excluded. Hence, interventions have targeted policy, legislative and financial frameworks' planning and budget allocation, sustainable public procurement, improved management and monitoring capacities for service delivery across sectors, while testing and scaling up new models of civil society engagement. Interventions also included technical assistance and support to the Ombudsman Office to improve its effectiveness, assistance to create an effective, transparent and sustainable legal aid system and improved civil registration services, especially for rural women, victims of domestic violence, and persons with disabilities. The following are main findings relating to the governance, rule of law and human rights portfolio.

Finding 6: UNDP has strongly positioned itself within the rule of law sector and has laid the ground for improved access to justice, particularly for the most vulnerable groups, such as the rural population and women. The contribution is noted in the area of strengthening of the justice system through improvement of the legislative base, improvement of the Free Legal Aid (FLA) system and civil case justice more broadly. In these areas, UNDP has been able to create significant depth and strong cooperation with the Government, which helps to ensure ownership and support the sustainability of interventions. UNDP has contributed to creating a positive foundation for further democratization of society by building bridges between the Government and civil society towards more participatory policymaking and provision of services.

UNDP has been engaged in justice sector reform since 2013, with ongoing partnerships with the Ministry of Justice and civil society, particularly in the area of legal reform and FLA. Long-term continuous engagement was made possible by the mutual interest of all parties and stable funding from donors, which enabled support for the sustainability of efforts. The support to justice sector reform was comprehensive and well elaborated to include: 1) bringing together CSOs and public servants to joint platforms to discuss emergent policy issues and potential solutions; 2) raising awareness on citizens' legal rights through work with CSOs as core partners; 3) provision of FLA to those in need, starting from the premise that once people know their rights, they are more ready to exercise them; and 4) capacity-building of public offices to provide quality service to the population within efforts to provide FLA. The mix of different types of services points to a holistic approach, which is deemed appropriate, as confirmed in stakeholder interviews and document review. There has been continuous effort to provide FLA, ensuring that the lessons learned from the existing services address ambiguities, leading to the drafting of the FLA Law currently under the Council of Ministers' consideration. This comprehensive support has materialized in better access to justice (through empowering and assisting affected people), as evidenced by this evaluation.

This evaluation found that citizens, particularly in the most deprived communities across Tajikistan, have benefited from improved mechanisms for the protection of rights and access to justice. Interlocutors note that initial engagement in FLA (before 2014) provided important lessons for both the Government and the donors, who invested in building capacities of CSOs to provide FLA. These support measures, while effective, were not sustainable, pointing to the need for a more viable FLA system. UNDP has since worked with the Government to establish a state-run system, both as adviser and facilitator, to enhance the legal basis for FLA and build the institutional and human capacity to provide services across the country. Building on the Government's readiness to engage with CSOs, a platform for discussing the features of FLA law was organized, leading to the adoption of an official Concept for FLA in 2015 and subsequent modelling of the state-run system. This process resulted in the establishment of the State Agency Legal Aid Centre (SALAC) to implement the concept. The continuous platform meetings also led to the drafting of the Law on FLA, which is pending public hearings. The Government hopes to adopt it in April-May 2020. Besides, UNDP has supported the electronic case management system for FLA, which is in use by SALAC to monitor and analyse the FLA case flow and outcomes across the country. As a result of joint legislative and piloting efforts, SALAC is fully functional, with a strong network of FLA providers across the country, particularly in remote regions. The initiative has a high potential for sustainability as the Government provides in-kind contribution to the functioning of SALAC and compendium of legislation to FLA providers. UNDP support has led to the establishment of 18 Legal Aid Centres (LAC), particularly in small and deprived communities across the country, that now make up the country-wide network of FLA providers under auspices of the SALAC. According to UNDP, the network currently covers over 30 community groups across the country. Government interlocutors confirm that from 2020, upon adoption of the Law on FLA, the State should start funding 20 percent of the entire system, with full coverage of SALAC costs as well as in-kind contribution. The UNDP project concluded in September 2018.

FLA reach to the most vulnerable groups across the country has seen a steady increase over the years. SALAC's statistics show that almost 16,000 people have used FLA since 2016, out of which 53 percent have been women, and 3.8 percent persons with disability (Table 2). The high percentage of women is important particularly from the perspective that FLA is primarily provided in civil law cases, in which women constitute the most vulnerable group subject to rights violation as per data collected through stakeholder interviews. The ability to access legal aid free of charge

in their local communities or close by helps empower women to request help and protect their rights in civil law cases. While the ICPE could not establish evidence from primary sources on the utility of FLA to women and general population across the country, evidence collected within the CO-commissioned independent evaluation of outcome 5 recorded appreciation of the value and importance of such services, especially for vulnerable groups who do not have the necessary means to pay for legal advice.⁴⁸

TABLE 2: Primary Free Legal Aid provided by State Agency Legal Aid Centre

Period	Number of people helped by SALAC LACs	Women	Persons with disabilities
2016 (March-December)	1,561	854 (54.7%)	99 (6.3%)
2017 (January-December)	4,886	2,778 (56.9%)	167 (3.4%)
2018 (January-December)	9,311 (of which 6,615 until the end of the project on 30 September 2018, and 2,696 subsequently from October to December 2018)	5,290 (56.8%) (of which 3,827 until the end of the project on 30 September 2018, and 1,463 subsequently from October to December 2018)	309 (3.3%) (of which 235 until the end of the project on 30 September 2018, and 74 subsequently from October to December 2018)
TOTAL (31 months)	15,758	8,922 (53.3%)	575 (3.8%)

Source: SALAC

The evaluation found evidence that civil society actors within the justice sector are empowered and vocal at the central and regional levels. UNDP has facilitated and supported CSOs through capacity-building (training, mentoring and engaging with organizations) to enable them to voice their concerns and demand changes in the justice sector, as confirmed by civil society actors interviewed during the evaluation. UNDP has utilized its strategic position within the sector and partnership with the Ministry of Justice to initiate and maintain dialogue between

CSOs, the Government and judiciary through a range of events spanning the previous and current CPD. These efforts resulted in the establishment of a sector network composed of CSOs active in the justice sector, and recognition of the network as a partner and watchdog by the Government. In recognition of the role CSOs can play in the policy dialogue, as confirmed in stakeholder interviews across different sectors, the Government is increasingly including civil society representatives in annual National Forums on Rule of Law and the Policy Dialogue

⁴⁸ UNDP, 'Outcome Evaluation: Outcome 5 – Governance', 2017 p.30.

Platform chaired by the Minister of Justice (and attended by heads of the Supreme Court, General Prosecutor's Office, Ombudsman, Strategic Research Centre, National Legislation Centre, Parliament, Executive Office of the President of Tajikistan). These actions, in particular the Policy Dialogue Platform, are of critical importance for Tajikistan, as they promote cross-sectoral representation of relevant institutions linked to the justice system in dialogue in Dushanbe (capital) and in the regions on access to justice, challenges and opportunities to improve mechanisms to protect rights and access to justice.

The National Forum on Rule of Law, organized with UNDP technical support since 2015, is the only platform that gathers policymakers, lawyers, academia, CSOs and businesses to identify, discuss and prioritize policy measures to address emerging issues on rule of law and access to justice. More concretely, the CSO network, with UNDP facilitation, has contributed to the elaboration of several policy documents.⁴⁹ The intersectoral engagement also resulted in the establishment of an Independent Agency on the Implementation of Judicial Decision under the Government concerning law enforcement in cases of domestic violence. UNDP takes the initiative to spearhead such interventions and uses its convening power to bring together different sectors to consult on policies and challenges, which adds value to UNDP's ongoing engagement in the sector.

UNDP engaged with CSOs in efforts to enhance awareness of citizens on rights and mechanisms to be used in civic justice cases, through supporting advocacy activities and awareness-raising projects. Stakeholders confirm that engagement with CSOs has been the underlying foundation of UNDP's support to increased access to justice. However, it is hard to establish conclusively the extent to which these interventions have brought significant change in the level of awareness or directly influenced increased use of mechanisms for the protection of rights, and its interlinked outcomes. UNDP and CSOs

have not devised an appropriate methodology to monitor progress, which is understandable given the complexity and cost involved. However, the absence prevents an analysis of UNDP's contribution to the outcome overall.

Finding 7: UNDP has the potential to make a significant contribution to enhancing access to rights and services through investment in civil registration reform.

Reform of the civil registration system is another key area of UNDP's support in Tajikistan. UNDP engaged with the Government to address challenges faced by FLA clients who struggled with a lack of basic documentation depriving them of rights to access government services. UNDP's engagement on the civil registry combines the legislative work (sharing international experiences) with investment in institutional and human resources and innovation through piloting and modelling of novel approaches. The work is still preliminary, with the first phase now under completion. Still, some relevant outputs have the potential to lead to transformative results, such as the drafting of the amendments to the Law on Civil Registry was adopted by Parliament in 2019; a new Strategy of the Civil Registration System for 2020-2025; draft agreement for cooperation between agencies engaged or linked with the civil registry; as well as a number of bylaws and instructions. Once adopted, these legislative solutions will have a strong potential for changing the systems of civil registry and interlinked services. The amendments, for instance, envisage birth registration to be free of charge, which will incentivize people to record births.

Another value will be the institutionalization of an innovative electronic system for civil registration in 68 district- and state-level offices dealing with seven types of registration through successful modelling of IT system for civil registry – Civil Registration Electronic System (CROIS). These measures, once in place, will be the direct outcome of UNDP's contribution to enhancing interoperability and efficiency of the civil

⁴⁹ Examples of such documents include the Draft Law on state-guaranteed free legal aid; Judicial Legal Reform Programme for 2019-2023 and Criminal Policy of the Republic of Tajikistan (both approved); Criminal Code of the Republic of Tajikistan (amended); Commentary to the Code on Execution of Criminal Sentences (adopted); Draft Law on access to judicial information (elaborated); Recommendations to the legislation and policy on execution of judicial decisions on elaboration of effective mechanism of implementation on civil and family cases – Law on execution of judicial decisions, Codes (amendments have been introduced); Report on the state of legislation and law enforcement practice in the Republic of Tajikistan on the access of women affected by domestic violence to justice; Prepared proposals and recommendations for the improvement of legislation in the field of access of victims of domestic violence to legal protection (draft amendments under review).

registry system through a switch from a paper to digital base. The IT system⁵⁰ has passed through security and operational certification by the Government. An Instruction by the Minister of Justice enabled the IT system to become operational from April 2019, with the aim of full country coverage by November 2019. Once the IT system is in full operation, it will enable the civil registry offices to efficiently and accurately record and update the most important events in citizens' lives (e.g. life, marriage, divorce, death, etc.). Government and UNDP interlocutors stressed the need for a strong and secure Internet, a precondition for the success of this initiative. While this was discussed and committed during the design stage, interlocutors confirmed, progress has been slow. This may result in the need for both paper and electronic entries as well as other redundancies, posing a major threat to the sustainability of the system.

Investment in human and institutional capacities has been complementary to the above interventions, particularly at the level of civil registry offices in Dushanbe and in the regions. Over 400 civil servants have been trained in the use of the new software/IT system and new approaches to the civil registration. At the time of the evaluation, it was still too early to observe evidence of concrete outcomes as the IT system was not yet functional. UNDP has also invested in the reconstruction of infrastructure of civil registry offices in some communities, to enable the application of a 'one-stop-shop' model for the civil registry, in line with the Ministry of Justice's plan to establish such offices across the district centres. The evaluation mission visited a Civil Registry Office in Kulyab city, reconstructed by UNDP to transform the existing closed and inadequate space into one capable of serving clients with modern registry and processing abilities. However, issues relating to Internet connection and software as well as accessibility for PWD were observed during the visit.

Finally, UNDP is set to support the Ministry of Justice in digitizing the civil registry archives, a demanding,

complex and time-consuming process. At the time of the evaluation, technical specifications for the process and the tender had been prepared. The idea is to pilot the digitalization of archives in seven district centres, a project that is ultimately envisaged to include 35 million documents in the national archive, as emphasized in stakeholder interviews. Such an effort will ensure better accessibility of files, although the work is at an early stage.

UNDP's support to the justice sector and civil registration are important investments, particularly in smaller communities that face issues with registering or obtaining personal documentation. Such assistance has the potential to bring important catalytic effects in Tajik citizens' ability to access the services. A study conducted at the onset of UNDP intervention in the civil registry field found that 46 percent of surveyed Tajik citizens stated that they had not applied for their documents.⁵¹ UNDP intervened in raising awareness in selected districts of Tajikistan (Rudaki, Bokhtar, Gafurov and Vahdat) and on timely registration of vital events such as births, deaths and marriages. However, concrete outcomes of the awareness-raising campaign were not evidenced by the evaluation due to time and resource limitations.

Finding 8: UNDP interventions have contributed to creating the opportunity for increased cooperation along the Tajik-Afghan and Kyrgyz-Tajik borders to reduce security risks. The results highlight the value of continued holistic support to sectors across a longer period.

UNDP has been investing in cross-border management and security since the previous CPD cycle. Traditional border management interventions have been augmented by a project on PVE since 2018, adding new elements of community security and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The main UNDP outputs have been the construction of border crossing points (BCP) in Langar in Tajikistan and Khohon in Afghanistan and the construction of

⁵⁰ UNDP invested in equipment with preinstalled software and training of civil registry staff to use the software.

⁵¹ Reasons for not applying for documents according to the study findings were: 'I do not think I need to have this document' (36 percent); 'I did not know where to obtain information on the registration process' (16 percent); 'I did not know where to go' (13 percent); 'I could not afford the cost' (10 percent); 'I was unable to go because of difficulties accessing the location' (8 percent); 'I did not know how to complete the forms' (6 percent). For more, see UNDP project document on 'Support to Civil Registration System Reform in Tajikistan', p.11.

a training centre in Mazar-e-Sharif. BCPs Aqina and Shughnan in Afghanistan and Tem, Ruzvai, Ishkashim, Shoghun, Khumroghi in Tajikistan and cross-border markets in Ruzvai and Ishkashim were also improved. During this programme cycle, the interventions have moved from mere border crossing (re)construction towards a more comprehensive and holistic approach, wherein border crossings are envisaged as space for connecting the countries and enabling exchange, mutual learning and trade. The underlying idea has been that the Governments on both sides allow visa-free travel during allotted times once in a week. But due to security constraints, some of the cross-border markets and bridges remain closed for significant lengths of time, which is a challenge for the sustainability and overall utility of the markets. From the evaluation standpoint, these investments are a good example of UNDP's efforts to integrate programmes towards the achievement of stronger outcomes through a holistic approach.

The border issues between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan have also been addressed through a number of interventions in cooperation with UNDP in Kyrgyzstan. Available data from 2016 baseline and 2018 mid-line surveys of the project note a change in behaviour and perceptions of citizens living in bordering and conflict-prone areas of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan due to the UN's conflict prevention work. As a result of the intervention, the percentage of Tajik respondents who positively describe improved relationships with the neighbouring communities in Kyrgyzstan increased by 25.5 percent. The share of respondents who prefer peaceful dialogue and official grievance mechanisms as a method of conflict resolution also increased by 8.1 percent (from baseline of 67 percent to midline survey result of 74.9 percent).⁵² These results suggest increased trust in formal mechanisms of cross-border conflict resolutions. However, the evaluation could not validate this result further owing to time constraints.

The work on PVE is in its initial stages. A high-level international conference on countering terrorism and preventing violent extremism was organized on 3-4 May 2018 to address the security challenges facing

the world and promote united efforts. This is an area where UNDP has a comparative advantage from the perspective of a regional PVE project implemented by UNDP COs in the region.

To conclude, across interventions within outcome 7, UNDP has succeeded in producing important outputs with the potential for positive outcomes with direct linkages and contributions to SDG 16: peace, justice and strong institutions. These are primarily linked to improved service delivery in different sectors (civil service, justice and FLA, cross-border security and peace) as well as raising awareness and sensitizing the Government and citizens across the supported sectors. The sustainability of such services has been strengthened through the adoption of relevant legislation and acts as well as in some cases ensuring that the new mechanisms are maintained by the Government. However, the results in most cases are small and mostly restricted to models and pilots. There is a need for further investment in advocacy and support to government institutions to institutionalize these to ensure that the most vulnerable and deprived groups of citizens benefit from continued access to services. UNDP is well-positioned to provide ongoing support in these sectors, and holds comparative advantage through its expertise, openness and close cooperation and partnerships with the Government. UNDP is in a position to use its leverage to ensure that the Government's commitments are maintained towards stronger uptake and sustainability of the mechanisms promoted.

2.3. Inclusive and sustainable growth

Outcome 8: People in Tajikistan benefit from equitable and sustainable economic growth through decent and productive employment, stable energy supply, improved access to specialized knowledge and innovation and more favourable business environment especially for entrepreneurs and farmers.

⁵² Project reports.

Despite the Tajikistan Government's aspirations to develop the economy and improve trade, the private sector faces significant challenges from high taxation and the absence of modern technologies and related restrictions. To respond to the Government's priorities and contextual challenges, the UNDP CPD envisaged continued support to private sector development by creating a favourable environment for businesses, trade and direct investments. Besides, UNDP extended its support to border management to include important cross-border exchange and trade opportunities. Integrating recommendations from evaluations during the previous CPD cycle on support to agriculture, UNDP focused on expanding value chains to enhance the agro-processing sector. Across all its interventions, UNDP continuously supported local policies and capacities for job creation and improved livelihoods, particularly for women and youth, and sustainable management of natural resources. UNDP worked on the development of 'green jobs' through the promotion of economic diversification and sustainable technologies at the local level and improved access to irrigation and sustainable and renewable energy resources.

UNDP's approach has been to support the Government in policymaking and enhancing institutional capacities across the sector, while directly working with final beneficiaries (producers, entrepreneurs, vulnerable groups) on enhancing skills and improving livelihoods.

Finding 9: UNDP has made an important contribution in promoting inclusive growth in Tajikistan. UNDP's support has resulted in the strengthening of the policy framework on economic development. At the same time, through investment in education, microcredits, trade opportunities and public-private partnerships (PPP), UNDP has strengthened entrepreneurship potential across the country. However, the sustainability of the initiatives and structures supported by UNDP is uncertain.

Across all interventions within the economic development portfolio, UNDP has continued to work (both in the previous and current CPD cycles) to enhance entrepreneurship skills and opportunities through investment in training, support to

microloans and grants, vocational education as well as various non-formal educational opportunities. The results of the support on economic empowerment and employability are the most visible on the lives of people, particularly in small rural communities. UNDP's work has also produced strong outputs in strengthening the private sector development and trade framework in the country through the adoption and implementation of plans and strategies.

UNDP is increasingly applying innovative ideas, such as hackathons, 'teahouses' (café platforms with open lectures of successful entrepreneurs) and start-up incubation events, to create more attractive forums for young people to participate and share/develop their ideas, with financial support from the private sector. Through these efforts, UNDP data show, the organization reached out to 287,872 people (52 percent women) and created 2,709 full-time jobs (67 percent of which were for women) between 2016 and 2018. UNDP did so through a coherent approach linking good governance practices with local economic initiatives and matching local businesses with microfinance and vocational education. Specifically, 3,000 young people participated in different events between 2016 and 2018 and the benefits vary from improved knowledge and skills to finding new jobs and launch of businesses. Interviewees acknowledge that the number of businesses is very small (15), a direct result from the initiative Start-up Choykhona (Teahouse). A total of 175 young people benefited from this initiative till May 2019, which is a positive result. The evaluation found that the most relevant type of assistance for final beneficiaries is the combination of learning and access to financing, which enables them to go through with their business ideas.

The most important move forward by UNDP within the current country programme in comparison to the previous one is the investment in value chains. Building from the investment in increasing capacities for better local agricultural production, UNDP has worked on increasing the knowledge on and investment in agro value chains, by connecting producers with entrepreneurs and increasing opportunities for trade and, in some cases, exports. For instance, UNDP assisted producers of dried fruits

to improve storage and packaging of agricultural goods, their promotion and trade within the country and abroad, including by introducing international standards (such as Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points), to be able to export. Site observation and interviews confirmed this support was beneficial for fruit producers. UNDP's scale and targeting of support, while positive, is small, bringing some important results to individual or groups of producers. These efforts are still fragmented and not systematically organized to benefit the agricultural value chains across regions or clusters of producers.

Support to economic development and trade policies through trade institutions and associations for private sector development have been other areas of UNDP assistance. Efforts to promote private sector development were made through the development of conducive business policies and legislation, public-private partnership models and standardization of the quality of agriculture products. UNDP acted as a facilitator and convener of public-private dialogue, bringing together the Government and associations (of producers and entrepreneurs) and the private sector in various events but also by engaging with the Consultative Council for Investment Promotion under the President. Interviewed entrepreneurs appreciated this support for having brought the voice of the local private sector through the feedback system that UNDP helped establish to the highest level of government, whereby private sector actors could send their inputs to legislation. This has led to the integration of some of the feedback/recommendations in the legislation (e.g. standardization of goods, trade and quality certification; changes in the tax legislation). Besides, as a result of comprehensive interventions on strengthening economic governance, the Government was supported to prepare and implement the following documents/mechanisms to promote trade and export: NDS 2030 and the accompanying MTDP; the State Programme on Export Promotion and Increase of Competitiveness 2016-2020; and Trade Development Programme of Khatlon region introducing a registry for businesses there. UNDP also supported the Government in introducing the online statistics reporting system, resulting in an 80-percent utilization, according to UNDP records. The new simplified statistics reporting

system for entrepreneurs has brought efficiencies, reducing document submission by half, but also increasing accessibility and transparency.

In order to promote PPP, UNDP provided technical, advisory and policy support to the Investment Committee on setting up and maintaining PPP as well as the Centre for PPP. Through these efforts, the Government developed the PPP programme 2019-2020 and adopted institutionalized guidelines on monitoring PPP projects. Five new PPPs have been officially approved and are under implementation (PPP for public transport; medical services (diagnostics) and a kindergarten in Dushanbe). Within efforts for localization of the SDGs, several PPP project proposals were also developed for further scrutiny by the Government. It was early to assess outcomes of PPP at the time of the ICPE, but the mechanisms to sustain institutional structures have been put in place with the Government's commitment to further promote and utilize the PPP in service provision. The remaining obstacle for all three parties, the Government, private sector and UNDP, is to ensure finances to conduct feasibility studies for PPP for different services. Such studies are expensive as they envisage assessment of cost-benefit of PPP options and services. The Government is hesitant to allocate funds for this and unsure of investments; the private sector also does not see an incentive in investing in these studies. UNDP has filled this gap by outsourcing sector specialists for these studies and building the capacity of the Centre for PPP. However, in the absence of sector specialization within the Centre's team, this is not a sustainable measure in itself, though it complements the ongoing efforts.

Finding 10: UNDP's support has led to the inclusion of the SDGs in the national development strategies and plans, but to a lesser extent, their localization at the subnational and sectoral levels. Monitoring of the SDGs remains an issue, due to capacity limitations on both UNDP and government sides.

In cooperation with other UN agencies, UNDP has actively supported the Government in promoting the Agenda 2030, including advocacy with the private sector. The Government's SDG Agenda was adopted in 2016 and UNDP utilized its strategic

position, expertise and leverage in supporting the Government to integrate the SDGs in its strategic documents at the national level.

UNDP's support was directed to working with ministries to integrate the SDGs into the sectoral strategies. As a result, national development strategies were aligned to the SDGs. In 2017, in preparation for the voluntary national reviews, the Government again requested UNDP and other UN agencies to support the development of its first national SDG report on implementation of national strategies. As a result of the SDG report, the President issued an instruction to the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade (MEDT) and the Agency on Statistics to continue working on SDG indicators and the Development Strategy and also to create a mechanism for coordination of the SDG and the Development Strategy agendas. At the time of the evaluation, the MEDT serves as the Secretariat of the National Development Council with working groups on different themes within the SDGs.

Operationalization of the SDGs remains a key issue, the main reason being the Government's weak capacity and limited clarity on distribution of accountability for SDG data collection, monitoring and reporting between the MEDT, Agency of Statistics and the line ministries. While UNDP has helped the Government to establish a comprehensive monitoring framework for the SDGs and also supported the Agency on Statistics to improve its coverage, as in a number of areas, national statistics are either unavailable or unreliable.⁵³ However, the institutional weaknesses at the national level have left a big risk of scattered actions by different UN agencies for SDG mainstreaming and policy support under the umbrella of their specific mandates.

The MEDT, in its capacity as the Secretariat of the National Development Council, was also struggling with coordination challenges during the elaboration of national SDG report, as its responsibility for SDGs monitoring and reporting was not legally stipulated. This is compounded by a lack of willingness of ministries to ensure coordination among themselves and,

simultaneously, the resistance of government entities to coordinate with international partners. To address this coordination challenge, UNDP worked with the MEDT to update the Regulations for the National Development Council. The Government approved the regulations in August 2019, clearly stipulating the responsibilities and authority of the MEDT as the Secretariat, and included new provisions for establishing 13 multisectoral thematic working groups. The situation is similar at the district level, where UNDP helps administrations in local development planning from the perspective of integrating the SDGs into local development strategies. UNDP work is also affected by high staff turnover at the district level and consequently the capacity to understand and integrate the SDGs into planning and to implement and monitor them.

2.4. Basic services

Outcome 5: Women, youth, children, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups are protected from violence and discrimination, have voice that is heard and are respected as equal members of society.

UNDP's efforts under this outcome include only one project to strengthen governance mechanisms (primarily) for procurement of medical equipment and drugs for HIV and TB, aimed at improving the provision of basic services. However, the definition of the outcome statement is broad and includes social equity issues related to the empowerment of women, youth, PWD and other vulnerable groups. The evaluation team found interventions spanning all outcomes which address these issues; hence the findings below include an assessment of these contributions from across the country portfolio and is not limited to the one project under this outcome.

Finding 11: UNDP has made significant contributions in improving the well-being and livelihoods of the local population by taking an integrated and holistic approach in its interventions.

⁵³ UNECE, 'Third Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan', 2017, p.xxxxv.

UNDP's holistic approach towards building communities by investing in good governance, economic empowerment and (re)constructing social infrastructure (schools, medical centres, water supply systems, electric power supply) has brought significant results in improving the livelihoods and well-being of the local population. UNDP's key value addition has been through the integration of efforts, combining projects of economic development with investment in governance and infrastructure. UNDP area offices have played a significant role in understanding needs, challenges and opportunities for support, and also engaging continuously with local authorities and citizens.

As a result of the holistic approach, governance of (re)constructed infrastructure has improved through investment in knowledge and capacities of local and national water, electricity regulatory bodies and health authorities on decentralized management of drinking water supply and sanitation, and maintenance of local health and electric supply infrastructure.

For example, UNDP built a hydropower facility in remote villages (with no electrical power supply) serving 10 villages with over 100 households. In the same region, UNDP constructed a school and a medical centre and connected the villages with local businesses. This has proven to be a game changer for that region, as new jobs have been created. The local population also benefits from access to electric supply, clean and safe drinking water, and proximity and availability of health and education services.

Another example is UNDP's effort to restore the livelihoods of women in the flood-affected Sarichashma village of Tajikistan, whereby in addition to rehabilitation of houses UNDP supported the renovation of the health centre and water supply system and provided dairy cows and agricultural inputs. A total of 158 families (including 70 women) directly benefited from these measures. The drinking water supply infrastructure built in Chorbogh village

of Hamadoni district helped 1,243 people (including 617 women and girls) gain access to clean drinking water and enjoy transparent water distribution mechanisms and tariff setting system. Over 32,000 people are benefiting from improved sanitary facilities (public baths). In this district, 20 women were able to establish businesses as a result of ensured access to clean and safe drinking water.⁵⁴

From the document review and stakeholder interviews, it is evident that UNDP's support has been a strong catalytic potential for these local communities in terms of improved well-being and livelihoods. Site observation conducted during the evaluation noted important outcomes for women, who are most affected positively by these improvements. Interviewed women emphasized how their quality of life has been directly affected by the availability of health services for them and their children, with better access to immunization and women health services. They also described how the availability of water in their households or close by saved time and effort. In countries facing significant shortages of electricity, water, health, and other types of social infrastructure, these are extremely relevant and life-changing contributions.

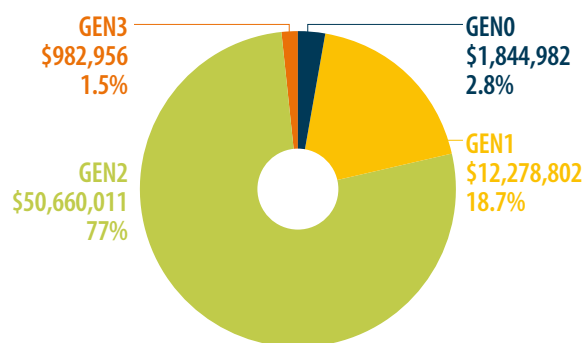
Finding 12: UNDP has done well in mainstreaming gender, making a notable contribution in the promotion of women's rights and empowerment. There is evidence of transformative effects on women, especially from rural areas. However, very little effort has been made by the CO to collect and analyse the data at the outcome level to measure change in the lives and livelihoods of women.

Tajikistan's country programme portfolio comes quite strong in gender mainstreaming objectives, with 78.5 percent of the expenditure for the programme outputs committed to GEN2⁵⁵ and GEN3 projects (though, with 1.5 percent projects with GEN3). Besides, 18.7 percent of the expenditure was committed to GEN1, and 2.8 percent was committed to GEN0 projects, i.e. those with no gender consideration (Figure 3).

⁵⁴ TajWSS II project under EEP.

⁵⁵ 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.

FIGURE 3: Programme expenditure by gender marker (2016-2018)



Source: UNDP Atlas, February 2019

The CPD itself presents a strong gender framework with gender indicators and gender-related outputs mainstreamed across all outcomes. Reports follow the pattern by providing an overview of gender-disaggregated outputs and a strong orientation towards presenting gender-specific results across sectors.

In areas relating to access to justice, economic empowerment and health, document review and stakeholder interviews confirm that UNDP has strongly invested in the empowerment of women and girls to take more active social roles or access their rights (either through economic empowerment, additional education and or more proactive role in their communities). UNDP interventions tackle the rooted gender inequality and negative social norms in Tajikistan, and their resulting lack of opportunities for women to become economically independent and in a position to protect and exercise their rights. UNDP interventions include investment in improving access to justice (particularly civic justice); economic empowerment (access to training and capacity development, business start-up training, events, grants and loans); enabling environment for women rights (e.g. CEDAW); protection from violence, etc.

The evaluation found that UNDP has achieved many important results that have the potential for catalytic effects on women. For example, there is ample evidence of UNDP's systematic efforts to empower women to take a more active role in economic development through investment in

entrepreneurship skills and employability/income generation across all programmes focusing on economic development, particularly in small communities. A good example is the Livelihood improvement of rural population in nine districts of the Republic of Tajikistan project (LIRP), whose interventions included access to microcredit funds, which enabled over 1,000 women to start or expand their businesses. These investments have had further result in increased business opportunities and jobs, and overall improvement of livelihoods of women and their families, as also confirmed by the LIRP evaluation.⁵⁶ Besides, there has been investment in the improvement of business skills of women and active promotion of entrepreneurship among women and youth. Through these efforts, the income-generation capacities of 3,199 women were improved thanks to technical support to small and medium enterprises and farmers, micro-capital grants to CSOs and business associations and affordable loans to private entrepreneurs. In addition, 1,346 women aged 15-29 attended business training and master classes on innovative entrepreneurship.

Throughout the implementation of the country programme, UNDP continued organizing countrywide advocacy campaigns (e.g. on gender-based violence); convening meetings and events (e.g. national forum on women entrepreneurship, the first national workshop on strengthening opportunities for women in energy sector); and analyses of gender dimension of legislation from the perspective of CEDAW,

⁵⁶ UNDP, Final Evaluation: "Livelihood Improvement of Rural Population in 9 districts of the Republic of Tajikistan (LIRP Project)", 2017, p.37.

whereby some of the recommendations have been integrated into laws. One example is the law on equal rights of men and women and equal opportunities for their implementation, which is awaiting adoption. UNDP also succeeded in incorporating gender considerations into the National DRM Strategy 2017-2030 in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030). The strategy outlines commitments on gender equality, e.g. stating the crucial role of women's participation for effectively managing disaster risks, as well as designing, resourcing and implementing gender-responsive disaster risk reduction policies, plans and programmes. However, concrete plans or actions to improve gender inequalities are still lacking and need attention to have an impact on risk governance.

UNDP also used its convening power in its work on empowerment of women in decision-making, particularly within the framework of support to the governance of new infrastructure (as discussed above) and the SDGs. Within these efforts, UNDP supported the Government in elaborating the national SDG report that included important aspects of gender. Besides, UNDP established partnership with the Coalition of Public Organizations on gender issues while also working with the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, UN agencies, international organizations and CSOs within a country platform to facilitate a more coordinated, strategic programming and monitoring of the progress on SDGs 5 and 16. Nevertheless, the advocacy interventions in most areas have not yet brought any significant changes in terms of improving legislative mechanisms for women. The law on the prevention of domestic violence provides weak mechanisms for further implementation and does not contain a concept of direct and indirect discrimination in public and private life. The mechanisms for promoting women's involvement and equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making processes remain ineffective.

One of the key challenges in this area has been the deeper analysis of output-level data to measure the resulting change or the potential for change in the lives and livelihoods of women. The availability of gender-disaggregated data is a challenge in Tajikistan due to a lack of cross-sectoral collaboration between government

departments at the national and local levels and an absence of a nationwide survey or comprehensive analysis on gender-related issues. UNDP is well-placed to do so given the holistic nature of its interventions which articulate and address gender dimensions across the country programme as well as its regional presence through field project offices, which can facilitate data collection and analysis at the outcome level.

UNDP could have used its programmes and M&E capacities within the CO and in its field project offices across the country to design a strong monitoring framework for tracking the outcomes of assistance at least on their target population with the possibility of including control groups. Thus far, UNDP has been collecting only gender-disaggregated data, mostly at the output level (e.g. the number of loans to men/women, etc.) without efforts to assess the outcomes of the assistance.

Finding 13: UNDP's engagement as the principal recipient of the Global Fund has contributed to an improvement of basic health services and raised awareness on the challenges posed by stigma related to persons at risk of HIV. However, support to awareness-raising and improving the lives of persons at risk of or living with HIV are challenged by extremely difficult contextual and operational environment surrounding issues of most vulnerable groups at risk of HIV.

UNDP has been working on the provision of social and health services, with a strong focus on HIV, tuberculosis and malaria since the previous CPD cycle. The main reason behind using UNDP as the principal recipient has been the demand for ensuring full transparency of the procurement process, investment in building the capacity of Tajikistan's institutions in charge of HIV/TB, and ensuring measures are in place to represent and protect the rights and needs of the most at-risk population, particularly to HIV. Continuous support to institutional capacity-building has resulted in improved capacities and frameworks for social/health service provision through increased local domestic capacities to implement the programme and budget allocation from the overall government health budget, particularly for TB response. As a result, the TB programme was transferred to the Government in 2017, whereby the Centre for TB implements the

programme and has the capacity to fight the disease, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders.

The situation with HIV response is more complicated due to many reasons, including stigma against the disease and persons living with HIV but also due to institutional limitations. While the project approach has been the same as that for TB, the Global Fund has been continually using UNDP without a concrete exit strategy due to lack of institutional capacities and corruption risk. The Government, meanwhile, is steadily increasing its co-funding, which has gone up from 20 to 30 percent in 2017 as well as ensuring that costing of HIV key interventions is integrated into the MTEF 2017-2019 process as a key priority component of the health budget.

There is evidence of broad outreach and services to persons with tuberculosis and HIV. For example, in 2018 the HIV project reached a total of 9,327 people of the key affected groups, namely sex workers and people who inject drugs through HIV prevention services. Such services included but were not limited to the provision of preventive commodities, conducting pre- and post-testing counselling, conducting HIV testing and referral to other medical services. Apart from this, 1,777 HIV-positive women were reached with treatment and care services, including free HIV and opportunistic infection treatment in in-patient and out-patient settings. One of the driving factors for increased coverage of women was the engagement of peer-to-peer consultants who closely worked with HIV-positive women.

The most challenging aspect of UNDP's response to HIV has been its human rights dimension. Tajikistan's Criminal Code includes a very disputable article (Article 125, Part 1) that allows law enforcement authorities to initiate a criminal case on people who register as HIV-positive with the Republican AIDS Centre for "intentionally exposing or putting at risk of HIV infection". This has raised safety and human rights concerns among persons at risk or living with HIV, as criminal cases against HIV-infected people create resistance to testing due to fear of persecution and force HIV-infected people to go into the shadows, resulting in decreased uptake of information and necessary treatment and services. At the time of the evaluation, UNDP figures show that 134 persons were in jail on these charges.

In response, UNDP has stepped up cooperation with NGOs to ensure that they have sufficient capacity to provide services to their constituencies and are empowered to represent their rights. As a result, many NGOs have raised the issue in the Country Coordination Mechanism for HIV. This was evidenced by the evaluation through motions and issues raised by NGOs in the meetings on human rights, gender, and discrimination of most at-risk population. Human rights have been strongly pushed by NGOs, particularly with regard to the imprisonment of people. NGOs advocate with local authorities and the Republican AIDS Centre outposts in the regions to ensure patient confidentiality. This is an encouraging but very unstable step forward, due to the unfavourable legislative framework surrounding persons at risk or living with HIV and widespread stigma.

The sustainability of the results achieved depends to a large extent on the Government's willingness to ensure full protection of confidentiality, rights and access to services to most at-risk population, and inclusion of NGOs in decision-making processes.

Finding 14: UNDP's work on inclusive social protection of the most vulnerable groups has been minimal and fragmented without a clear theory of change, limiting them to one-off activities, with limited or no linkages with more structured programme interventions.

The CPD envisages investment in inclusive social protection of the most vulnerable groups as a distinct output of its results framework. However, UNDP had minimal investment in this field. Specifically, UNDP in coordination with other UN agencies has been working with the Social Protection Department of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP) on a functional review of the Social Assistance at Home Units (SAHUs) in Tajikistan. The document resulted in a number of recommendations provided to the MoHSPP for better functioning. As a result of the support, the MoHSPP adopted the 'Charter of the Sample Centres of Social Support' in April 2017 vide Article 742, as the first step towards the transformation of SAHUs. However, no follow-up to this action was identified during the evaluation process.

In other interventions during the CPD cycle, UNDP provided support to strengthening the immunization service quality and safety, whereby 10 hard-to-reach districts were identified for either construction of new or rehabilitation of existing primary health care facilities (PHCs) in close cooperation with the MoHSPP. In 2018, construction of eight new PHCs began, which are expected to cover 9,769 citizens (nearly half of whom are women) in remote areas. At the time of the evaluation, it was too early to assess actual outcomes.

A key limitation of UNDP's support in the area is the stand-alone and fragmented nature of these activities which have been implemented without a clear vision and outcome in mind and isolated from a larger structured set of programme interventions.

Finding 15: UNDP has laid the necessary foundation for further work on empowerment of PWD. However, significant challenges lay ahead, particularly from the perspective of deep-rooted social norms and unfavourable conditions for social inclusion of PWD.

As part of efforts to ensure vulnerable groups have increased access to resources and justice, UNDP has invested efforts in engaging with PWD and other vulnerable groups, applying the human rights-based approach and principles. UNDP applies a two-pronged approach by assisting the Government to improve its mechanisms for the protection of rights of PWD while engaging with PWD directly in economic activities and access to justice.

Initial results are beginning to materialize from the engagement with the Government in this area. The Convention on the Rights of PWD (CRPD) has been signed, inter alia, as a result of UNDP's advocacy and support efforts, and UNDP continues to advocate for its ratification. Besides, UNDP has supported the Government in conducting a legal review of five selected laws to screen their compliance with the CRPD. This also includes a focus on the rights of women with disabilities.

Within the economic development efforts, PWD have been engaged in income-generation activities, with

some associations of parents of children with disability having opportunity to open inclusive cafés and services in other communities. Documents and interviews reveal that such cafés are becoming popular among other parents with children with disability and have encouraged the production of handicrafts for sale in the premises. However, this could not be verified by this evaluation due to time constraints.

Further, as discussed in Finding 6, as a result of efforts to engage with PWD, FLA in some communities is provided by PWD serving as paralegals in cases. Evidence (Table 2) shows that PWD are increasingly using the FLA in civic cases, albeit to varying degrees.

Document review and stakeholder interviews point to a strong need for more sustained work in this area. According to the recent shadow report on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, "persons with disabilities are in very difficult and vulnerable situation, majority of persons with disabilities and members of their families live below the poverty line, majority of benefits established by the law are declarative and not applied in practice. Among the reasons are poor financing of this area, lack of legal awareness among persons with disabilities as well as lack of adequate control over implementation of adopted legislation".⁵⁷ These and other interlinked challenges surrounding support to PWD require continuous and systematic support.

2.5. Resilience, environmental sustainability and sustainable energy

Outcome 10: People in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters resulting from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and sustainable management of natural resources.

⁵⁷ See: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CESCR/Shared%20Documents/TJK/INT_CESCR_CSS_TJK_19139_E.pdf

UNDP's resilience and environmental sustainability programme has evolved as two programmes running in parallel – DRM programme (outcome 10) and energy and environment programme (outcome 8). This section includes findings for the entire portfolio covering both outcomes.

Finding 16: UNDP has made contributions towards strengthening DRM in Tajikistan by raising awareness, strengthening institutions and supporting improvements in institutional, legislative, and policy frameworks. However, the focus of the work of concerned agencies, until recently, has been on 'response', and the shift to 'risk reduction' is still in its early stages with limited sustainability prospects.

The portfolio of the DRM programme within UNDP Tajikistan is the largest among the UNDP portfolios in the region. Together with the Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence (CoES), UNDP has supported efforts to strengthen DRR in the country since 2003 and has been instrumental in advocating for unified, streamlined, multisectoral and inclusive DRM mechanisms and approaches in the country.

In order to improve governance in DRM, UNDP supported the CoES in the development and adaptation of a National DRM Strategy for 2019-2030 aligned with the Sendai Framework for Action for 2015-2030. Earlier in 2012, UNDP supported the establishment of the National Platform for DRR as a consultative advisory body to the CoES consisting of major ministries and government agencies and chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister. The interministerial dialogue offered by the National Platform helps in advocating for the shift of the disaster management focus to the reduction of risks, with an ultimate goal of integrating DRR into development planning.

UNDP contributed to the development of the CoES Programme for 2018-2022 and supported the capacity-building measure on preparedness for disaster-response operations. This has helped enhance professional and technical capacity and coordination with the relevant structures. Examples

include the recently introduced Unified State System on prevention and liquidation of natural and human-made disasters, developed with UNDP's support. The system helps to harmonize sectoral DRM initiatives with commissions set at the national, regional and district levels, responsible for decision-making and coordination in case of emergency. Another example is the increased response capacity of Tsentropas (Search and Rescue Department of the CoES), which was provided with 13 types of heavy machinery and 196 search-and-rescue equipment. This has helped the search-and-rescue teams save more lives,⁵⁸ and the Government to keep all major roads open throughout the year, serving approximately 1.9 million people despite the lack of finance.

With UNDP support, local-level risk management planning is improving. The improvements include (a) a risk assessment methodology adopted with assessments in 16 districts leading to infrastructure sub-projects for improving disaster preparedness in the communities, e.g. with flood defences; (b) a flood management guidebook, developed with local best practices, which is being used by the river-based organizations and line ministries to develop alternative DRR measures (ecosystem-based approaches to disaster risk reduction and management); and (c) ongoing enhancements of the weather warning system with capacity-building of the Agency of Hydrometeorology.

UNDP initiatives have also raised awareness of the importance of DRM through numerous activities and drills. For example, through a workshop on flood management planning, the awareness within river basin organizations and districts on water-based risks was raised on integrating water-based risk information into common risk governance planning and activities.

UNDP support also facilitated improved cross-border cooperation in disaster preparedness and response. Examples include facilitating: (a) the signing of the bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of prevention and liquidation of emergency situation

⁵⁸ In 2018, Tajikistan's CoES conducted 506 response operations and saved 148 lives (Source: CoES).

between Tajikistan and Afghanistan (signed on 21 August 2019); and (b) the dialogue between the CoES and the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, which identified and agreed on the routes for the delivery of the emergency stockpiles to Badakhshan province of Afghanistan and construction of two warehouses for non-food items along the Tajikistan-Afghanistan border. In addition, as part of regional Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Remediation in Central Asia initiative,⁵⁹ stakeholder awareness on remediation of uranium tailings is being raised, including on the benefits of remediation and risk management.

The shift from disaster response to disaster preparedness is yet an unfinished process, despite the long engagement with the CoES and sectoral ministries and agencies, and despite the fact that DRR has now become a known concept in the country.⁶⁰ Risk information is not systematically managed, with vertical silos hindering information sharing between authorities and across sectors. The main gaps are in determining institutional coordination arrangements; understanding technical components to be operationalized, particularly around data requirements; and ensuring that climate and disaster risks are interlinked. While improvements were made towards institutional strengthening through training, improved methodologies and awareness-raising, the practical work of the agencies concerned still focuses on response, with the shift to DRM only starting to emerge.

Further, the sustainability of capacity-building on DRR issues among policymakers has been a major challenge. The chairmanship of the National Platform on DRR has remained ambiguous following the structural changes within the Government. This has adversely affected the operational capacities of the National Platform, with UNDP having to continuously revisit its capacity-building interventions for the new leadership and members.

Finding 17: UNDP-supported National Mine Action Centre is now a recognized institution and is fully owned by the Government of Tajikistan. Mine action priorities are recognized at the national level and included in the NDS 2016-2030 and the MTDP 2016-2020.

Tajikistan has made considerable progress in addressing the threat landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) pose. UNDP's Support to Mine Action Programme helped ensure Tajikistan's compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons obligations. With capacity-building support from UNDP, Tajikistan's National Mine Action Centre, established in 2014, has turned into a fully functional and recognized government institution, funded both by the Government and the donor community. The Centre is proving its leadership in management, coordination, accreditation, planning, quality management, information management as well as monitoring and evaluation of all components, including but not limited to, mine risk education, victim assistance (ranging from first aid to medical and rehabilitation support), land release, stockpile destruction and advocacy of mine action programme in country.⁶¹

The commitment of the Government to implement the Mine Ban Treaty has helped mobilize financial resources and enhanced the cooperation of Tajikistan with mine/ERW-affected countries. The regulatory field and policy were improved with the National Mine Action Strategy 2017-2020, the Law on Humanitarian Mine Action, and National Mine Action Standards. Mine action priorities are now more recognized at the national level with the inclusion of mine-action-related activities in the NDS 2030 and MTDP. As required by Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Article 5, Tajikistan planned to conclude its land release operations by April 2020 or earlier, but recently received an extension until 2025. In addition, Tajikistan will have to address its ERW threat in the long term.

⁵⁹ Stakeholder Engagement for Uranium Remediation in Central Asia is a three-year project, funded by the European Union and implemented by Environment and Security Initiative partners including UNDP, OSCE and UNEP in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

⁶⁰ UNECE, 'Third Environmental Performance Review of Tajikistan', 2017, p.xxxvii.

⁶¹ The Tajikistan Mine Action Centre coordinates all mine-action-related projects in the country in order to ensure Tajikistan's compliance with the requirements under the Ottawa Treaty, ratified by the country in 1999. Founded in 2003 with UNDP support, the TMAC oversees Tajikistan's efforts in the areas of demining operations, information management, mine risk education, as well as victim assistance. It is the country's focal point for all implementing partners in the field, the Government, and the international mine action community: http://www.mineaction.tj/about/background_information/.

Finding 18: UNDP's support to climate change adaptation has been minimal, while the needs are large. UNDP support to mobilize funding for building climate-resilient communities across Tajikistan, if successful, will open up new avenues to pursue in climate change adaptation.

Tajikistan is vulnerable to climate change and climate change adaptation is a priority for the country. However, it lacks an efficient climate policy targeting adaptation. UNDP's portfolio on climate change in 2016 was small, limited to GEF projects focusing on support to the national reporting to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. In 2017, UNDP mobilized financing of \$950,000 from the Russian Trust Fund on Development, to support the Government of Tajikistan in accessing climate finance. To date, the project has been successful in facilitating access to climate finance, with a project proposal pipeline (some of which are already approved) on climate change adaptation amounting to \$66 million.⁶²

At the time of the ICPE, UNDP had commenced supporting climate resilience in agriculture and water sectors of rural Tajikistan with a new initiative, aiming to scale up successful adaptation practices and technologies at the community level and facilitate access to new and existing funding opportunities⁶³ with the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Global Fund, the GEF, the Adaptation Fund and the Islamic Development Bank. This represents an important step towards deeper engagement in promoting climate change adaptation by UNDP in the country.

Finding 19: UNDP has contributed to the better use and management of water resources by promoting

IWRM and improving the regulatory environment for drinking water supply and wastewater management in decentralized systems. The progress, however, has been very slow because of the delays by the Government in adopting draft legislation supporting water sector reforms.

Water resources management has been high on the Government of Tajikistan's agenda. UNDP has taken a multipronged approach and supported the Government in institutional and policy reforms as well as building capacities of water sector institutions.

To strengthen water policy and governance, UNDP, along with EU, supported the Government of Tajikistan in drafting the Water Sector Reform Programme for 2016-2025, complete with its Investment/Implementation Plan, laying the legal foundations for the implementation of the reform agenda in the water sector. It piloted IWRM at sub-basin level in Isfara, an important milestone as the government units of different levels were constantly strained by conflicting demands for water by various sectors. This was later replicated across all water basins in the country. In consultation with partners,⁶⁴ UNDP also developed the capacity needs assessment methodology for water basin management, which was piloted subsequently in Syr Darya in 2016 and then promoted by the Ministry of Energy and Water Resources for use across all water basins. This helped to build coordination and coherence in identifying the needs and delivering training for basin management staff.

In the area of drinking water supply and sanitation, UNDP interventions – both analytical⁶⁵ and policy level – have helped in improving the regulatory environment for water supply and wastewater management for the

⁶² The following project proposals were developed utilizing resources of seed funding provided by the Russian Federation: (1) the project 'An integrated landscape approach to enhancing the climate resilience of small-scale farmers and pastoralists in Tajikistan' approved by the Adaptation Fund in August 2019 with a budget of \$9.9 million (2020-2024); (2) the project 'Improvement of Water Resources Management in Khatlon Region', approved in August 2019 and funded by Islamic Development Bank, Saudi Fund for Development and OFID in the amount of \$50 million; (3) the project 'Support to National Adaptation Planning' submitted to the Green Climate Fund (under its Readiness and Preparatory Support window), with a proposed budget of \$3 million, which is under review; and (4) the project concept 'Conservation and sustainable management of high-value arid ecosystems in the lower Amu Darya basin' developed under the GEF-7 funding cycle and under review by the GEF Secretariat (with a budget of \$3 million).

⁶³ Project preparations to finalize a project to the Readiness Window of the Green Climate Fund on enabling the national adaptation planning process in Tajikistan (approximately \$3 million); project submission on ecosystem-based climate change adaptation to the Adaptation Fund (approximately \$9.5 million); and projects to the GEF-7 programming cycle (approximately \$3 million).

⁶⁴ Swiss Development Cooperation, United States Agency for International Development, Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

⁶⁵ UNDP supported several analytical studies in DWSS. Examples include: (a) A comparative policy analysis: legislative, institutional, and economic perspectives of effective business models in organization of DWSS services in rural Tajikistan with recommendations on effective business models for drinking water supply and sanitation; (b) Analysis of aspects of ownership rights to drinking water supply and sanitation systems and possibilities of organizing their effective management; and (c) analysis on state of monopolization and private sector involvement for drinking water supply and sanitation sector in Tajikistan.

decentralized water supply systems. UNDP helped introduce the cost-recovery tariff methodology and new construction standards (SNiP)⁶⁶ for DWSS systems which have been adopted by the Committee of Architecture and Construction. It also helped in drafting DWSS taxation guidelines and the law on drinking water, water supply and sanitation and the sanitation policy (which however does not cover on-plot sanitation). UNDP also supported the development of 'Practical recommendations on good governance: transparency, accountability and citizen participation' for DWSS, which helped to clarify the distribution of roles for policy, regulation and management in the sector. These were applied to all the new DWSS systems which were constructed/rehabilitated in the country and subsequently integrated by Ministry of Energy and Water Resources into the new draft law mentioned above, but already applied to the DWSS systems constructed/rehabilitated in the country, including by development partners.

Many examples demonstrate that transparency and accountability of water management were improved at the community level as a result of these interventions. One example is Chorbog village in Hamadoni district, which has established a public advisory council to oversee the operations of the water supply company (Tojikobdehot) and improved the institutional environment for operator organizations in DWSS, including through the introduction of water meters.

In order to build capacity, UNDP trained over 300 staff of local and national water authorities, helping them gain knowledge in decentralized management of drinking water supply and sanitation. Eleven permanent jobs have been created as a result of the establishment of self-sufficient water management organizations.

UNDP has helped to coordinate the activities of various actors in the sector, by (a) supporting the Interministerial Coordination Council and the Network of Stakeholders on drinking water supply and sanitation in promoting an enabling environment for policy reform; and (b) providing a high-level policy adviser for the MEWR. The MEWR has gradually taken full ownership and is leading the water sector

reform agenda, with IWRM at its core (including the coordination role) – an outcome to which UNDP has greatly contributed over the years. The challenge is to keep this pace and momentum going by the government champions. The slow pace in adopting key legislation is another challenge. The draft Law on Water User Association (supported by the World Bank) has not been adopted yet, and the Government approved the Water Code only in October 2019.

Finding 20: The introduction of the Environmental Information Management and Monitoring System (EIMMS) and partnerships with think tanks and CSOs have improved national reporting capacities on multilateral environmental agreements, as well as the environmental policy development and decision-making process in the country.

The EIMMS has strengthened national reporting capacities on multilateral environmental agreements and improved the policy development and decision-making on environmental issues. This has included the establishment of regulatory and institutional frameworks to enable coordinated multi-agency information management and monitoring, development of standards, norms, procedures and IT architecture. UNDP (with GEF support) demonstrated what could be achieved in effectively meeting the demands in efficient environmental information management and monitoring, allowing, inter alia, to comply with the Rio Conventions' reporting obligations. However, there is room to extend/deepen the coverage, especially since there is important environmental data that is not currently captured (e.g. comprehensive data on water pollution, data on air pollution by housing and utilities' sectors, data on poaching and illegal trophy hunting, etc.).⁶⁷ As UNDP is helping the Government with SDG monitoring, this provides opportunities for ensuring linkages with the EIMMS.

UNDP has established diverse partnerships with CSOs and think tanks across different thematic areas (biodiversity, energy, climate change) in the country, many of which have been under UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme. UNDP's partnership with these

⁶⁶ строительные нормы и правила (Construction Norms and Rules).

⁶⁷ See UNECE, 'Tajikistan Environmental Performance Review', 2017, Executive Summary, pp.xxv, xxvii, xxxi, xxxv.

institutions (e.g. Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan, Association of Energy Professionals, Consumers Union of Tajikistan) helps in policy development in environment and DRR areas. For example, the Association of Energy Professionals has been a long-time partner in UNDP's pursuit of promoting the efficient use of renewable energy sources (in piloting and analysis), and the partnership with the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan has helped to promote the awareness on DRR in schools.

Finding 21: UNDP contributed to climate change mitigation in various ways, including through improving legislative, policy and regulatory environment for small hydropower (SHP) development (and green energy more broadly) and promoting hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFC) phase-out. More effort is needed in terms of continued technical and financial support schemes for local entrepreneurs involved in SHP and there is a need to incentivize HCFC phase-out, especially in the residential sector.

UNDP has contributed to the expansion of RES capacities, with the promotion of green technologies and energy-efficient practices and helped in improving the enabling legislative and regulatory environment for SHP development.

Following on the SHP support programme from previous CPDs, the legislation on energy efficiency and RES has been revised and adopted, including bylaws and regulations for SHP financial support scheme and trust fund operation, along with the revised and improved National SHP Programme. An innovative and demanding SHP technology transfer initiative was implemented, and to address the sustainability concerns, production of turbines for SHPs in two local production companies was supported along with multiple training workshops in SHP development, maintenance and repairs. However, while with UNDP contribution, the approach by the Government (MEWR) shifted from extensive low-quality SHP development (facing a risk of unsustainable operation) towards feasible SHP development with sustainable operation and monitoring, there has been a decrease in the SHP development actually supported and constructed.

This is because of: (a) lack of budgetary resources; (b) improvement of centralized electricity supply; and (c) delay in using the feed-in tariff mechanism (developed with UNDP support). Partly due to this, the local SHP manufacturers engaged in the technology transfer process have not been yet able to fully absorb the transfer of small hydropower technologies. This is a short-term phenomenon, however, as the interviewed experts in the field believe that in the mid-/long-term, after completion of the CASA-1000 transmission line to Afghanistan and Pakistan, new power export capacity will attract private investors to finance new hydropower projects, including SHPs, and thus reducing the need for subsidies for new SHP plants.

In line with UNDP's Derisking Renewable Energy Investment approach, UNDP has initiated work on promoting business development in solar energy in consultation with the MEWR, and piloted innovative business models for promoting solar energy in the country in support of the Government's effort to close the energy gap. However, more could be done especially with regard to energy efficiency as well as RES, for example, by exploring and non-traditional sources of funding (e.g. lending schemes) for projects that aim at energy efficiency (e.g. in the housing sector). The sector needs further support, and the planned Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Trust Fund (now pursued under green energy), could be an important step.

On HCFC phase-out, UNDP contributed towards the implementation of the country obligations under the Montreal Protocol facilitating the reduction in the amount of HCFC vented to the atmosphere. In particular, with UNDP support, Tajikistan:

- (a) adopted a national strategy and action plan for HCFC phase-out until 2020, complemented by a number of regulatory measures to reduce HCFC consumption;
- (b) banned imports of non-refillable refrigerant containers and refrigeration and air-conditioning equipment containing or relying upon HCFCs and introduced annual reporting requirements for enterprises on the type and quantity of ozone-depleting

substances (ODS) imported, used and stored,⁶⁸ signalling the need to adopt more ozone-friendly alternative refrigerants and technologies;

(c) introduced a transparent licensing and quota system for HCFC import and effective customs controls of ODS transboundary movement;

(d) enhanced the capacity of the enforcement agencies with two mobile mini-laboratories for control between the official border-crossings, complemented with an upgrade of two national training centres, incorporating the training programmes into the existing ones to ensure that training on ODS will be sustained;

(e) improved the knowledge and skills of refrigeration and air-conditioning (RAC) technicians with training (with training of trainers elements) and provision of RAC servicing equipment to the RAC Association, enabling certification of 480 technicians annually; and

(f) introduced four centralized/semi-centralized national schemes for ODS recollection, recycling and reclamation triggering data collection on amounts of ODS recycled and reclaimed for reuse.

There is room for improvement, given that some reclaim centres are not fully linked for provision of refrigerant purification services to all workshops with ODS recovery units. Also, there are no incentives for ODS end-users (in particular from the residential sector) to call for services of trained and certified refrigeration service technicians (with so-called 'suitcase technicians' constituting around 20-25 percent of RAC service operations).⁶⁹ This situation will persist in the continued absence of certification for RAC service technicians and licensing of RAC service workshops. UNDP has now commenced on complete HCFC phase-out where some of these issues are planned to be addressed.

Finding 22: UNDP has made an important contribution to improving the conservation of

protected areas in Tajikistan (including Pamir Alay and Tien Shan ecosystems for snow leopard protection) and to strengthen national capacities in the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit-sharing.

Biodiversity conservation is a priority for UNDP Tajikistan. Some notable achievements to which UNDP contributed include the adoption of the Protected Areas Law and subsidiary regulations, as well as the Forestry Code and its subsidiary regulations. The Government is a party to the Bishkek Declaration on the Conservation of Snow Leopards (2012) and the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Programme (2013) which seek to bring together governments of snow leopard range countries to coordinated national and international action. UNDP supports the implementation of the priority actions contained in the National Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Priorities for Tajikistan.

UNDP has contributed to improving the policy framework around snow-leopard protection with: (a) indicators for snow leopard and prey monitoring now included into the system of state environmental monitoring by the National Biodiversity and Biosafety Centre; (b) establishment of a National Snow Leopard Conservation Committee; and (c) drafting of the National Action Plan on Conservation of Snow Leopard Ecosystems for 2018-2022 and the concept of the smart patrol system. In addition, the planning and management of the high-altitude livestock pastures and indigenous forests located along/adjacent to the key snow leopard migration routes within the Hissar-Alay and Vakhsh-Darvaz areas have improved with recommendations on ways to use pastures rationally alongside relevant guidelines and provision of forage crop seeds, tools and equipment.

UNDP has also contributed to improving the state of knowledge on conservation of snow leopard and their ecosystems through public awareness campaigns, educational and information materials,

⁶⁸ Twenty-two sets of specialized laboratory equipment were provided for analysis and identification of ODS at the Customs Service checkpoints. Two mobile laboratories for analysis and identification of smuggling of ODS provided to the Customs Service: http://www.tj.undp.org/content/tajikistan/en/home/operations/projects/environment_and_energy/initial-implementation-of-accelerated-hcfc-phase-out-in-the-ceit.html

⁶⁹ UNDP/GEF, 'Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP-GEF full-sized project Initial Implementation of Accelerated HCFC Phase Out in the CEIT Region (Belarus, Tajikistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan)', Evaluation Report, 2017, p.4.

workshops, etc. targeting various audiences, from the general public to academia, media and students/schoolchildren. The coverage of snow leopard and prey monitoring has increased, reaching 15 percent of the snow leopard's range and 10 percent of its prey range.⁷⁰ This was possible due to: (a) zoning (enlarging the Tajik National Park, a World Heritage Site, and avoiding fragmentation of snow leopard and prey landscapes); (b) introduction of smart patrol system in two sections of the Tajik National Park with measures to strengthen protection and enforcement capacities of protected areas; (c) building the capacity of the State Institution for Special Protected Nature Area, the rangers of Sangvor and Lyakhsh sections of the Tajik National Park and local forestry departments (leskhoz) both in terms of their material base and knowledge (planning, monitoring and protection), with around 300 people trained; and (d) development of a public volunteers monitoring programme ('Pathfinder'), etc.

UNDP invested in improving regional and transboundary cooperation between Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan for snow leopard ecosystem conservation within the framework of Pamir-Alay Initiative,⁷¹ which helped identify the most acute priorities. The protocol on transboundary cooperation with Kyrgyzstan was signed in March 2018 and, at the time of writing, the memorandum on transboundary cooperation with Uzbekistan was under review. These efforts contribute to the reduction of direct threats to the survival of snow leopards and prey populations in these key habitats.

Since 2018, UNDP has also worked towards strengthening the legal frameworks and institutional capacities to implement the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization, an agreement under the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which Tajikistan has been a party since 2012. UNDP supports Tajikistan in developing a high-quality, gender-responsive and data-driven Sixth National Report (6NR) aimed to improve national decision-making processes for the implementation of National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and report on progress towards achieving the ambitious Aichi Biodiversity Targets and inform both the fifth Global Biodiversity Outlook and the Global Biodiversity Strategy of 2021-2030. 6NR is expected to provide the main rationale for the follow-up work on the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan beyond this decade and help shape the post-2020 global biodiversity agenda with an accurate and up-to-date reflection of national and global progress to address the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

At the time of the ICPE, UNDP was supporting the Committee for Environmental Protection in preparation of the new project proposal to support biodiversity conservation in the protected areas of the Lower Amu Darya Basin for the GEF-7 funding cycle.

⁷⁰ ROAR 2018, p.20.

⁷¹ Ibid.



CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

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3.1. Conclusions

- **Conclusion 1: UNDP has sustained a strong and close relationship with the Government of Tajikistan, civil society and the private sector, positioning itself as a reliable partner for the provision of advisory and development support services.**

UNDP's added value as a partner of the Government and other stakeholders in the country lies not only in its ability to bring in expertise and international experiences but also in promoting a holistic approach to address the most pressing challenges in line with recognized needs and government priorities. UNDP is trusted as a partner that ensures transparency and credibility. Particularly valued is UNDP's capacity to bring actors with diverse interests together in a neutral space of trust, assisting dialogue and joint problem-solving. Such an approach has brought positive results in terms of enhanced participatory decision-making, stronger and more evidence-based policies and better-suited interventions to the needs of citizens.

UNDP's value proposition has also been strong because of its focus on integrated programming and investing in a holistic approach across all sectors. Although the CPD presents a rather broad-spectrum results framework with overambitious indicators and weak presentation of a theory of change, actual implementation proved to be strong, integrated and following an implicit theory of change. UNDP aimed to increase livelihoods across the country through investment in economic growth and its linkages to DRM/resilience/environment and climate change adaptation, improvement of access to basic services and justice and security, as well as overall investment in democratization through facilitating dialogue between civil society, private sector and to some extent development partners as well. Such an approach proved valuable, bringing results with the potential for catalytic changes in the lives and livelihoods of the people.

- **Conclusion 2: UNDP has made significant contributions – with the potential for transformative effects – in improving governance, rule of law and access to justice by enabling the**

Government to enhance the delivery of services and establishing mechanisms to protect rights, particularly of the most vulnerable. The challenge, however, remains to ensure full uptake and sustainability, due to weak absorption capacity on the government side and limited technical, human and financial resources.

UNDP has expanded its portfolio to include governance, rule of law and access to justice, relatively recently (since 2014) but positioned itself strongly within the sector as a trusted partner of the government institutions and justice sector, but also civil society (as FLA service provider and wider pool of actors in policymaking processes). It has assisted the Government at the national and subnational levels and contributed to the strengthening of the mechanisms for access to justice through institutionalization of FLA as a service, but also building foundations for reform of civil registration. These contributions have strong potential to transform into significant outcomes (and impacts) on Tajikistan's citizens by improving access and ability to exercise their rights, for which civil registration is a prerequisite. These investments have been conducive to improving access to rights and justice for citizens, in particular for women and vulnerable groups, particularly in remote and rural areas. Still, many challenges remain for full achievement of outputs (systems to be in place and functioning), particularly due to limited government capacities and resources, particularly in terms of reliable Internet, which is a prerequisite for a functioning and interoperable civil registry system. Government commitment exists, as noted in the Presidential instruction, but the challenges persist and may jeopardize that commitment to continuing and scaling up the civil registry as it is modelled.

Investment in enhancing good governance resulted in improved governance of (re)constructed public utilities (water, sanitation, electricity) as well as stronger engagement of civil society and women in particular as significant players in governance and policymaking processes, particularly at the local level. Long-term support to enhancing governance of medical supplies (for HIV and TB) have resulted in stronger capacities of respective government bodies to take on and apply transparent and efficient procurement processes. While UNDP is still

in the driving seat, there is an indication of stronger engagement of the Government, which is a positive sign from the perspective of this evaluation.

The cumulative effects of these achievements are positive and contribute to the overall improvement of governance and access to citizen rights and benefits in the country. Yet, challenges persist and affect their transformative effects, particularly due to the low absorption capacity of the Government (e.g. high turnover and capacity limitations) and limited financial, IT and management resources to uptake and sustain mechanisms and results achieved as a result of UNDP work.

- **Conclusion 3: UNDP has played a catalytic role in improving employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, access to loans, vocational education and promoting trade for improving livelihoods and empowerment of citizens, particularly the most vulnerable groups. Outcomes for targeted individuals and their families are positive, with enhanced incomes and livelihood conditions. However, sustainability is hindered by persisting challenges for the private sector to operate due to high taxation and generally limiting governmental framework and investment in the sector, unpredictable markets and ability to enhance trade and exports.**

The UNDP country programme addresses and responds to the country's persistent development needs and national priorities for enhancement of economic growth, particularly from the point of bleak economic prospects and the low-income country status. Interventions across the country portfolio have been targeting enhancement of business and trade prospects, providing an opportunity to agricultural producers, and in particular women, youth and other vulnerable groups to benefit from training, access to microloans and trade linkages and networks. These investments have been integrated with other efforts such as improvement of access to stable water, sanitation, electric power supply, health and education services. However, challenges remain, particularly in terms of the Government's restrictive policies on taxation and the promotion of trade. UNDP has leveraged its expertise with advocacy efforts for enhancement of entrepreneurship policies. Still, a lot depends on the

Government's capacities and commitment to move reforms forward towards full support to the private sector on which government success also depends.

- **Conclusion 4: The country programme's pursuit of inclusive development through multiple projects across its portfolio involving various government and civil society actors has enabled UNDP to promote and empower the most vulnerable groups, particularly women, PWD and persons living with HIV and TB. Improved access to basic services has been key driver for empowerment and life quality of communities.**

UNDP has done significant work on improving access to basic services and empowering vulnerable groups by integrating human rights-based approaches in its programmes. Across its portfolio, and while at different levels of progress, UNDP's programme is supporting the Government's in addressing the challenges of the most vulnerable citizens. Through investment in improving health care facilities, procurement of better-quality medical equipment and drugs (notably for persons living with HIV) and strengthening access to health services, UNDP has directly and positively influenced quality of life of targeted groups. UNDP also offered channels for such groups and their CSO representatives to voice their concerns and enter into dialogue with the Government on policies and measures affecting them. A combination of entrepreneurship and economic measures, education opportunities and advocacy efforts on GBV and women's rights provides for strong foundations for more systematic empowerment of women in particular. However, much remains to be done on empowering women to take a more proactive role in society, particularly in decision and policymaking processes. Other challenges include threatened rights of the most at-risk population (such as people living with HIV) due to restrictive legislation and fear of persecution, and extremely weak government social protection systems. UNDP has advocated strongly for the protection of rights of the most at-risk population, but most pressing challenges, such as rooted social norms, unfavourable legal and policy frameworks, unstable or inaccessible services remain beyond UNDP's control. UNDP's aspiration to work in the field of social protection did not materialize during the current CPD, and rightly so as UNDP lacks the capacity to invest in this sector.

- **Conclusion 5: UNDP has made an important contribution in promoting environmental sustainability and resilience in Tajikistan. Its efforts in promoting DRM, biodiversity conservation and improving water sector policy and governance have yielded positive results. However, structural changes and delays in the adoption of supportive legislation impede the sustainability of efforts.**

UNDP has played an important role in raising awareness on DRM in the country and building the capacity of responsible institutions; however, the major focus so far has been on disaster response. The support in the implementation of the National Disaster Risk Management Strategy 2010-2017 has been instrumental in advocating for unified, streamlined, multisectoral and inclusive DRR mechanisms and approaches in the country. While the capacity-building of the National Platform for DRR as an inter-agency consultative advisory body promises a shift of focus on risk reduction and the integration of DRR into development planning, efficient coordination of the multisectoral response as intended, as well as potential structural changes within the Government, pose a challenge to sustainability.

Within the water sector, UNDP's leadership and support over the past several years have been significant and predominantly focused on interventions on policy and governance. At the national level, UNDP has supported various coordination platforms to promote an enabling environment for evidence-based policy (legal and institutional) reform. This intervention has manifested in the development of the tariff methodology for drinking water supply and construction standards for drinking water supply systems, the establishment of operator organizations for drinking water supply, as well as the building of the model for drinking water supply systems and introduction of water meters. The absence of a revised Water Code (the draft of which has been ready since 2017) impedes the comprehensiveness of these achievements.

Important results have also been achieved in the area of biodiversity conservation and the protection of the

snow leopard ecosystem by improving policy and monitoring frameworks and knowledge base and promoting regional and transboundary cooperation. However, the needs are large and sustained efforts will be required to help shape the post-2020 global biodiversity agenda with an accurate and up-to-date reflection of national and global progress to address the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

- **Conclusion 6: UNDP has contributed to climate change mitigation by promoting green energy and HCFC phase-out. However, its work on climate change adaptation has been minimal.**

UNDP has contributed to climate change mitigation through interventions to improve policy and regulatory environment for HCFC phase-out and small hydropower development, and promotion of green energy by piloting innovative business models for promoting solar energy in the country in support of the Government's efforts to close the energy gap. However, significantly more effort is required to improve the energy efficiency and use of renewable sources of energy by promoting innovations (e.g. energy efficiency in housing, for example by promoting the use of lending mechanisms) and exploring non-traditional sources of funding. UNDP has also helped develop 'green jobs' through the promotion of sustainable technologies at the local level and improved access to irrigation, and sustainable and renewable energy. However, needs are large and continued technical and financial support schemes are needed to support the local entrepreneurs involved.

Within the ambit of climate change adaptation, UNDP's efforts have been minimal. UNDP has initiated work in this area by conducting capacity assessments, collecting climate risk information and providing technical and advisory support in the development of sector-specific and subnational-level adaptation planning. However, this is limited in scope, lacks comprehensiveness and its sustainability is threatened by the absence of an efficient policy framework that could incentivize authorities to pursue climate adaptation-related initiatives. The expected national adaptation plan (if the GCF funds it) and funding proposals by UNDP have the potential to open new avenues for UNDP engagement in this area.

3.2. Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.



UNDP should ensure that the next country programme cycle is founded on a well-articulated theory of change and supported by a results framework that includes measurable and realistic indicators for assessing change at the outcome level.

UNDP has been implementing a range of important and relevant initiatives across its country programme, which have had transformative effects on local communities and the country as a whole. However, evidence of the actual degree of transformation is not readily available even for communities which have benefited from UNDP (and other UN) assistance for prolonged periods. It is fundamental that UNDP improves its results framework and M&E systems, to be able to learn about outcomes of its assistance but also to enhance the outreach and visibility of its achievement. As a starting point, the next programme design should include a carefully articulated theory of change for the overall programme and for each outcome area to identify and develop a set of realistic and measurable indicators. Each indicator needs to be assessed from the point of availability of data including baselines. In the absence of readily available data, UNDP should define measures (e.g. research and baseline studies, M&E systems, etc.) through which data will be collected and baselines established. At the same time, UNDP should develop approaches to enhance the availability of data through capacity development, and in line with its engagement in integrating the 2030 Agenda in national policies and frameworks. These instruments should serve to identify areas where UNDP efforts have triggered long-term change processes that could lead to the structural transformations required to support the country in meeting its SDG commitments. A robust M&E framework should also be developed, with a clear and realistic approach to capturing and evidencing such outcome-level changes. It should further enhance internal oversight, monitoring of progress towards strategic results and capitalization and marketing of experiences and lessons for adequate upscaling and replication by the Government. The presence of field project offices should be further utilized for collection and analysis of regional-level data, through strengthening their structures with focused M&E expertise wherever possible.

Management Response: Accepted



The CO will ensure that the next Country Programme is built upon a solid theory of change, supported by a strong results framework and responds to the strategic priorities of the country.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
1.1. The CO will engage under the current country programme cycle in undertaking analytical activities that would result in building stronger evidence for programming. This would enable UNDP and partners to engage in developing a theory of change that would respond to critical priority areas, as identified and validated. This engagement would also ensure the development or update of baseline data, which would enable the CO and the Government to effectively measure and capture impact and change.	August-September 2020	Programme Unit	Initiated	2020 annual work plans will include analytical activities, as part of the planning process requirement
1.2. The CO will prepare evidence-based new country programme document to respond to strategic priorities of the country demonstrated through a solid theory of change. Special attention, as recommended in the evaluation, will be given to devising results framework that would present the value addition of the CO with measurable and realistic indicators.	31 December 2020	Programme Unit	Not initiated	Timeline conditioned by corporate requirements and deadlines
1.3. The CO, with support from the Istanbul Regional Hub, will undertake a design stage programme quality assurance assessment prior to submission for approval by the Executive Board to ensure that UNDP quality standards for programming are followed.	31 March 2021	Programme Unit; Senior Management	Not initiated	

Recommendation 2.



UNDP should invest in promoting the scaling up and institutionalization of pilots and models it has promoted across the country programme portfolio.

During this country programme cycle, UNDP has invested in and promoted models of critical importance for improving government services across the board (for example, civil registry and FLA) and promoting environmental sustainability and resilience (for example, DRM and IWRM). These models and their related results are fragile and dependent on government commitment and capacity to scale them up. UNDP should follow through to the full scale-up and institutionalization of such models by ensuring appropriate legislative basis and funding commitments are in place for their sustainability. This will take a lot of UNDP resources and attention within the next country cycle. UNDP should take a cautious approach and resist the temptation of embarking on new areas where it does not have strong leverage and comparative advantage (for example, social protection).

Management Response: Accepted

The CO will employ the successful pilots and innovative approaches in evidence-based policy dialogues for institutionalization and scaling of results as well as in new programming.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
2.1. The CO will document lessons of successful pilots and innovative approaches that have yielded high impact and results and use these for evidence-based policy dialogues for institutionalization and scaling of results through partnerships.	31 December 2020	Programme Unit	Not initiated	Knowledge products and lessons learned would be peer-reviewed
2.2. Further analysis will be performed on the scalability of already tested and successful pilots/models to inform policies and new programming.	31 March 2021	Programme Unit	Not initiated	

Recommendation 3.

UNDP should further integrate and consolidate its economic and private sector development portfolio to generate evidence from the models for scaling up and promote a systematic approach to value chains and promotion of trade.

UNDP has piloted innovative models and approaches to enhance agricultural production and marketing across Tajikistan, with some important lessons learned. Its integrative approaches through investment in water supply, energy and social infrastructure in combination with access to microloans, education and trade opportunities have brought transformative effects on families and communities. However, these approaches are still largely individualized and focused on farmers or clusters of producers in a limited number of communities. UNDP should analyse these workable models, generate evidence, and draw out lessons and best practices to develop models and systemic solutions, and advocate for their scaling up by the Government. UNDP should further consolidate its approach based on these lessons and (a) continue assisting the Government to build its institutional and policy solutions, and (b) partner with the private sector to enhance business opportunities.

Management Response: Accepted

The CO will explore ways to integrate and consolidate the economic and private sector portfolios through creation of better synergies and integration within the portfolio and strengthening the systematic approach to greening the value chains and promotion of trade.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
3.1. The CO will initiate a comprehensive strategic review of the socio-economic development (SED) portfolio from SDG perspective and will focus on creating better synergies and integration within the portfolio and explore cross-cutting entry points with other portfolios, explore ways to scale up success models and integrator role of UNDP. The planned review will be based on internal dialogue with all CO thematic portfolios as well as with key external government and other partners in February 2020 and will also contribute in shaping transformational new strategic priorities for SED in 2020 and beyond and in positioning UNDP.	June 2020	SED	Initiated	Review will be performed in partnership with UNDP's Bangkok Regional Hub
3.2. A systematic approach to greening the value chains and promotion of trade, domestically as well as regionally, will be strengthened under SED projects.	December 2022	SED	Not Initiated	This investment will guide and continue under the new CPD

Recommendation 4.

UNDP should continue focusing on enabling national and local partners (including the private sector) and communities to create more jobs and strengthen livelihood opportunities, with special focus on women and vulnerable groups, promoting cross-sector integration.

UNDP has managed to enhance a holistic approach to sectoral interventions during this country programme cycle through integrating different elements of environment-governance-livelihoods nexus across sectors. Investment in an integrated approach paid off through transformative effects, particularly in remote and deprived communities. UNDP should ensure continuous cross-sector integration when promoting governance and livelihoods by interlinking investments in these fields with DRM/resilience/climate change adaptation, environmental protection, community empowerment and economic growth programmes – with equity focus in mind.

Management Response: Accepted

The CO will further expand its programming on supporting jobs creation and strengthening livelihood opportunities including through the use of existing partnerships and attracting new resources from donors.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
4.1. The CO will strengthen its support for job creation using a multipronged approach including entrepreneurship development of vulnerable population, establishment of an institutional ecosystem at national and local levels for start-ups, innovative financing, mentorship, and capacity-building of national and local stakeholders, including the private sector and will promote reforms and partnership to address inequalities and creation of job opportunities, etc. for youth and most vulnerable and marginalized population.	Ongoing	SED; Senior Management	Initiated	
4.2. The results and lessons of ongoing projects on women's economic empowerment will be consolidated, analysed and captured in a strategic policy paper/lessons learned report and used to shape the future resource mobilization and strategic positioning of UNDP for women's empowerment.	December 2020	SED	Not initiated	

Recommendation 5.

UNDP should strengthen its focus and address climate change adaptation in a more integrated manner, linking it to addressing environmental degradation, wastewater management and biodiversity conservation.

While continuing the support for DRM (with a focus on preparedness) and water and sanitation sector policy, UNDP should ensure a stronger focus on climate change adaptation and climate change mainstreaming into different sectors in the next CPD, supporting the Government in developing, adopting and implementing the awaited national adaptation plan. Among other measures, this should include efforts to increase the capacity of central and local government and other relevant institutions to generate, analyse, assess, and disseminate climate-related information and raise the awareness of critical decision-makers about the importance of adaptation for sustainable development. UNDP should tackle climate change adaptation in a more integrated manner, linking it to addressing environmental degradation (including with improved wastewater management strategy) and biodiversity conservation.

Management Response: Accepted

The CO will be adopting an 'integrated landscape approach' in its programming, through its Adaption Fund Project on the integrated landscape approach to enhancing the climate resilience of small-scale farmers and pastoralists in Tajikistan.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
5.1. To date, the CO's interventions in climate change were focused on policy advice and provision of technical expertise. The CO is already considering adopting the 'integrated landscape approach' in its programming. The approach considers urban environments, rural agricultural settings and all ecosystems (biodiversity, forests, pastures, etc.) in designing its projects with interventions on climate change adaptation at the local (community) level.	Ongoing	DRR, resilience and environmental sustainability	Initiated	

Recommendation 6.

UNDP should consider merging its DRM programme and EEP under one umbrella programme and supplement it with a results-based learning and management strategy.

UNDP's resilience and environmental sustainability programme has evolved as two programmes running in parallel (DRM and energy and environment). Traditionally, the energy and environment portfolio has revolved around GEF-funded projects on biodiversity, climate change mitigation, chemicals management, so-called GEF Enabling Activities on support to fulfil the national reporting obligations towards multilateral environmental agreements. During CPD 2016-2020, the energy and environment portfolio expanded with initiatives funded by other donors (OFID, SDC, Coca-Cola, Eurasian Development Bank), along with those funded by the GEF, focused on water and energy sectors, as well as mainstreaming of environmental issues into 'economic development' initiatives.

The focus of the DRM programme has also shifted in the current CPD 2016-2020 from disaster response to risk-reduction and management. It has now evolved into a full-fledge structured portfolio of interventions with a larger scope and diverse range of donors (the SDC, Government of Japan, Russian Federation), with interventions tackling different areas of disaster risk reduction and management, moving up from localized interventions to larger policy-level support on DRM.

In future, the resilience and environmental sustainability area will have a stronger focus on climate change adaptation and climate change mainstreaming into different sectors (with funding utilized from the GCF and Adaptation Fund). While UNDP is committed to ensuring that more efforts will be made to integrate environmental and climate change issues across different clusters/portfolios/initiatives within UNDP, it is worth considering bringing these two portfolios – DRM and energy and environment – under one umbrella. This will allow for more in-depth and operational synergies around climate change response theme. This should be complemented with a results-based learning and management strategy that includes: (a) a system to capture the learning from the pilots to feed into policy and decisions for replication and institutionalization by the Government; and (b) an enhanced monitoring framework, linked to improved government statistics and SDG monitoring framework.

Management Response: Accepted

The CO programming has been inspired by UNDP's Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and is designed to fit signature solutions that define the core work of UNDP. The CO's energy, environment, climate change and DRM portfolios reflect signature solution 3 on enhancing national prevention and recovery capacities for resilient societies, signature solution 4 on promoting nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet, and signature solution 5 on energy. The UNDP CO takes note of this recommendation to ensure programmatic coherence and cohesion yet considers that its two 'programmes' are under one programmatic umbrella and contribute to common result areas.

Key Actions	Time-frame	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Status	Comments
6.1. The CO will initiate a strategic review of its energy, environment, DRR and climate change portfolio to strengthen current programmatic coherence cohesion and alignment to the SDGs and identify new niche priorities for UNDP support. The management structure of the portfolio will also be addressed.	31 August 2020	DRR, resilience and environmental sustainability; Senior Management	Not Initiated	
6.2. Future projects under development will ensure stronger linkage and will address DRR and energy and environment interlinkages under one programmatic structure.	Ongoing	DRR, resilience and environmental sustainability	Not Initiated	

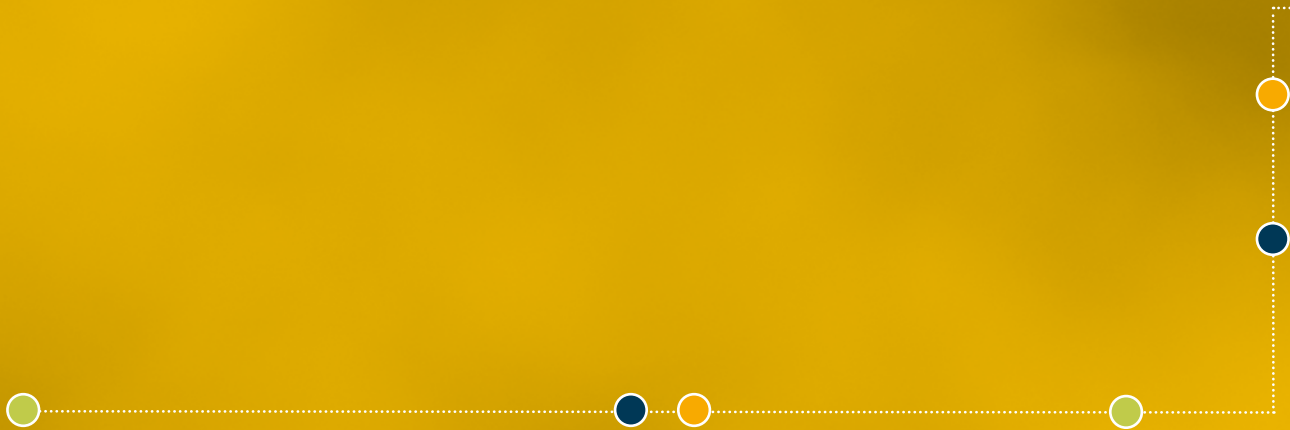
* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database.

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/12565>

- 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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