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.
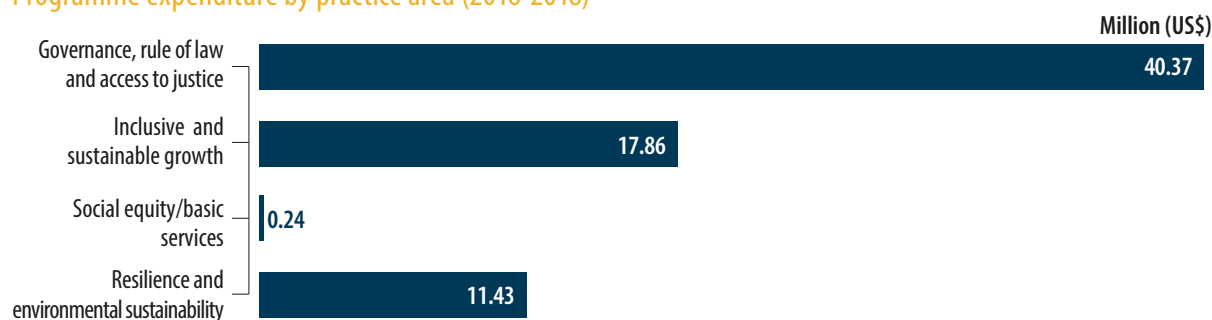
Total programme expenditure (2016-2018)

US$69,885,971
Funding sources, 2016-2018

58%	32%	10%

■ Bilateral/multilateral funds ■ Vertical trust funds ■ Regular resources

Programme expenditure by practice area (2016-2018)

Million (US$)

Practice area	
Governance, rule of law and access to justice	40.37
Inclusive and sustainable growth	17.86
Social equity/basic services	0.24
Resilience and environmental sustainability	11.43

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.