

Evaluation Brief: ICPR Cameroon

Cameroon is a lower-middle-income country located in Central Africa, known for its cultural and geographic diversity. Development in the country is guided by Cameroon Vision 2035, through which Cameroon aspires to join the ranks of industrialized, upper-middle-income nations with low poverty rates, strong economic growth and a functioning democracy. In recent years, Cameroon has experienced instability. The country is grappling with the Boko Haram crisis affecting the Far North and beyond in the Lake Chad Basin; the resulting arrival and displacement of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons; refugee influxes from Central African Republic; and, since October 2016, a socio-political crisis in the Anglophone regions of the Northwest and Southwest.

The 2018–2020 UNDP country programme is intended to contribute to the realization of two related outcomes of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF):

1. In 2020, women and youth have increased and equitable access to opportunities for decent work and are more economically independent.
2. In 2020, the population (especially vulnerable groups) in intervention zones are more resilient to environmental, social and economic shocks.

The country programme document (CPD) fore-saw a total budget of \$36.9 million, of which UNDP would provide \$5.4 million (15 percent) and the Government of Cameroon \$12.2 million (33 percent). The remaining \$19.3 million (52 percent) was to be mobilized. At the end of the first two years of the three-year programme, total expenditures were \$21.1 million (\$4.8 million from UNDP, \$15.6 million from other partners and \$0.7 million from the Government).

In January 2020, UNDP conducted a review of the country programme to assess the extent to which it had implemented the recommendations from an independent country programme evaluation conducted in 2016¹ and to assess UNDP's progress towards outputs and outcomes articulated in the current country programme.

Key findings and conclusions

With respect to implementation of the first recommendation of the previous evaluation, which addressed UNDP's strategic positioning and image, UNDP has significantly strengthened its strategic positioning, re-establishing its role as a trusted partner of the Government. UNDP has played an important role in the development of the new national development strategy 2020–2030. This has taken place, for example, through the participatory preparation of the National Human Development Report 2019, titled *Inclusive Growth, Inequalities and Exclusions*, and by accompanying the Government in each step of the development of the new strategy.

UNDP has also been increasing its interventions in the field of governance. Furthermore, it is maintaining an appropriate balance between upstream and downstream work. UNDP has made progress in strengthening its expertise in gender, and the programme gives strong emphasis to reaching the most vulnerable people: women and youth. However, there is still room for progress in this area. With respect to resource mobilization, which was highlighted in the previous evaluation, UNDP has successfully mobilized resources for the current programme and diversified its partnerships with donors.

As to the current CPD, some progress has been made towards achieving the outputs designed to contribute to the first outcome, increased access to

¹ The evaluation covered the period between 2008 and mid-2016, which was the entire 2008–2012 programme cycle and the first three and a half years of the 2013–2017 cycle.

socioeconomic opportunities, and UNDP is contributing in a modest way to this outcome in the zones of intervention. Results are below target, however, in part due to lack of resources, particularly for the resilience programme. Given the limited scale of intervention, UNDP has a low level of influence on the outcome indicators.

As regards the second outcome, strengthened resilience to environmental, social and economic shocks, UNDP has provided significant support at the strategic level to strengthen capacities for inclusive development. This includes support to the development of the new national development strategy 2020-2030. UNDP is contributing to progress at the local level in terms of stabilization, prevention of violent extremism and early recovery efforts. However, progress in other

areas, such as addressing consequences of climate change, has been limited.

With respect to programme design and management, the UNDAF and CPD outcomes do not provide an appropriate framework for UNDP's work, and reporting is inconsistent and insufficiently results-oriented.

Overall, the review concludes that good progress has been made against the implementation of the recommendations of the previous evaluation. With respect to implementation of the current CPD, even though many targets are not likely to be met, given the short time frame of the programme and the difficult context in which it is being implemented, the UNDP country programme is making progress and provides a foundation for the next country programme.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP should continue its main lines of strategic programming, notably support to capacity development for implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the national development plan and other key policies promoting inclusive, sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda. It should also continue to support stabilization and prevention of violent extremism and other crises.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should ensure that the UN Cooperation Framework (UNCF) outcomes – and the UNDP country programme – provide an appropriate framework for structuring and monitoring UNDP's contribution to the national development framework and the 2030 Agenda.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should continue to strengthen its monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should continue its focus on vulnerable groups

and ensure that its programmes are 'leaving no one behind'.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should strengthen its knowledge management, particularly in the area of crisis response.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should seek to increase synergies between teams and interventions, for example between the Support to Economic Resilience Programme (PAREC) and stabilization/crisis prevention and recovery projects working in the same areas.