

# Evaluation Brief: ICPE Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe’s governance has undergone significant political and economic shifts in recent years. Politically, the ousting of former President Robert Mugabe led to the election of a new President and appointment of a new Cabinet in 2018. The country’s economy, which had initially recovered from the 2008 economic and financial crisis, saw high rates of inflation return in 2019 and a significant increase of public debt. Meanwhile, poverty rates across the country are high, and about two thirds of the country’s labour force works in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Recent droughts have had severe food security and nutritional consequences, also impacting sanitation, hygiene and the water and energy supply.

UNDP in Zimbabwe developed a country programme for the period 2016-2020, designed to support national development priorities as informed by the 2013-2018 Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation and to advance on the achievement of the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs). The UNDP programme in Zimbabwe was developed around the following three pillars: (1) inclusive growth and sustainable livelihoods; (2) democratic governance; and (3) climate change and resilience to climate shocks.

## Findings and conclusions

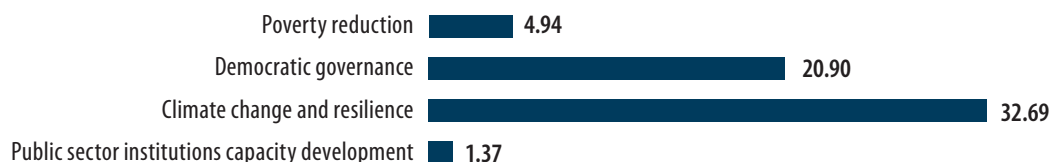
UNDP has managed to adapt to a complex political, economic and social context. The changes in the operating environment have tested its capacity for adaptation, and the country office has focused on strengthening engagement with transitional authorities. UNDP was able to establish new partnerships with government authorities, maintain a working portfolio and find new areas of work. This gave UNDP the ability to work on development opportunities that would possibly have not been addressed otherwise, given the lack of clarity of donor support to the country.

The positioning and engagement of UNDP led to key advances in sensitive areas, including land

### UNDP Programme expenditure funding sources, 2016-2018 (excluding Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)



### Programme expenditure by outcome, 2016-2018 (Million US\$) (excluding Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria)



reform and more prominently, electoral support. Effective collaboration with technical and financial partners, as well as with non-State actors, has led to the development of key policy documents, including the Transitional Stabilisation Plan. Several projects in the area of governance were aligned to contribute to the achievement of a smooth electoral process. UNDP also increased efforts to address women's participation in democratic processes through gender-sensitive election support, with notable results.

The Zimbabwe Resilience Building Fund (ZRBF) is becoming an increasingly important programme for UNDP in Zimbabwe, a clear result of the country office's

strategy to continue targeting vulnerable households while trying to improve national response mechanisms to the country's challenges in livelihoods and climate adaptation. The UNDP capacity to address complex challenges and in good collaboration with key stakeholders is evidenced by the design and effective implementation of the ZRBF. The complex nature and growth of the project has shifted the resources of the ZRBF office increasingly to project management, while the required technical support has sometimes been missing. The UNDP technical capacity for ZRBF will be further tested by increasing climate and economic shocks and by the project's growth.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** While UNDP has been able to address emerging challenges and navigate changes in context effectively, the implementation of the current programme has brought several issues to light that the country office will need to address in the next programme. UNDP must continue to be strategic in choosing partners within government and engage with civil society and citizens to develop frameworks that will support inclusive growth, particularly in the long run. UNDP can build on its existing and unique position to further support SDG integration and monitoring, productive and sustainable use of land for the land reform programme, and continued citizen engagement and participation in future electoral processes.

**Recommendation 2.** The next country programme will need to be built on strengthened partnerships with the

Government of Zimbabwe and other development actors for the full achievement of its programme outcomes. Identifying the right partners, as UNDP has successfully done in implementing its democratic governance projects, can bring more effective and sustainable results. The issues that emerged from some of its upstream work need to be addressed together with government partners. At the district level, partnerships with local authorities must be strengthened to ensure a full contribution from all stakeholders, particularly for resilience outcomes.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should analyse the areas where it can address gender inequalities more strategically in its programme, so as to develop a response that goes beyond targeting men and women. By focusing on structural

barriers and the root causes of gender inequalities in Zimbabwe, UNDP has the opportunity to move from inclusive interventions to truly transformative results.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP support to the livelihoods and resilience of vulnerable communities to climate and economic shocks will depend largely on its capacity to effectively approach the complex issues of resilience in Zimbabwe. While the growth in the project's scope is the result of successes in partnership and resource mobilization, it will need to build broader partnerships and more inclusion of local and central government to ensure sustainability of the approaches.