

Evaluation Brief: Argentina



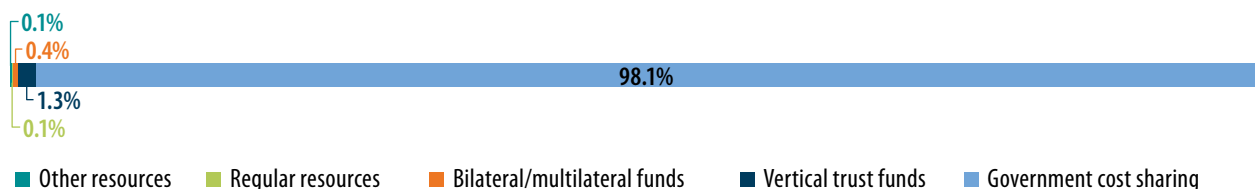
This evaluation covers the work of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Argentina during the period 2016–2019. UNDP’s country programme in Argentina over this period has been the organization’s third largest globally, based on financial delivery, and the largest in Latin America and the Caribbean. The country programme is guided by the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016–2020, and UNDP’s 2014–2017 Strategic Plan. The programme encompasses four outcome areas: 1) inclusive and sustainable economic development; 2) social protection and inclusion policies; 3) citizenship and human rights; and 4) environment and climate change. Each is considered in turn in this evaluation report, in addition to several cross-cutting issues, with the resulting findings leading to a set of conclusions on UNDP’s results during this period and recommendations for UNDP’s future work in the country.

CONCLUSIONS

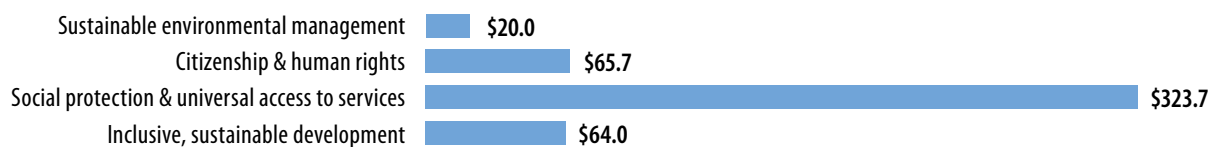
UNDP is a preferred partner to the Government of Argentina, which provides 98 percent of the UNDP budget for work in the country and is recognized by government counterparts for administrative agility, for the competitive cost of services and for contributions to ensuring transparency and credibility in the management of funds.

The UNDP programme in Argentina is especially focused towards social protection and universal access to services. Government counterparts acknowledge that this work enables increased efficiency for the Government and improved services to the general public. UNDP institutional strengthening efforts have been well executed and produced positive results, although broader institutional reforms will be necessary for some capacity-building efforts to achieve intended outcomes.

Country programme funding sources, 2016 – 2018



Programme expenditure by thematic area, 2016–2018 (million US\$)



UNDP has contributed to improved provincial and local government services through various interventions, including the improvement and modernization of health services, the promotion of information technologies and open government, youth employment policies and access to justice. The evaluation notes that programming in the northern provinces, which have the highest poverty levels, has been modest, because of limited financial resources, as well as a lack of specific, long-term interventions aimed at comprehensive countrywide development support.

The country programme includes important advisory services in the area of citizenship and human rights. In particular, UNDP has promoted greater access to justice in Argentina, helping to improve coverage and quality within the justice system, particularly for disadvantaged groups, including victims of gender-based violence.

UNDP's support to Argentina in the area of environmental protection and sustainable natural resource management has shown a positive shift and expansion in focus from an environmental protection vision to a broader, more multidimensional approach

to sustainable development. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and environmental strategies at subnational level remain a challenge.

The evaluation includes attention to cross-cutting aspects of the work of UNDP in Argentina. UNDP is recognized for its technical expertise and its strong advocacy of gender mainstreaming across its programmes. Contributions have been made to promoting women's political participation, their economic empowerment and the reduction of gender-based violence. Expanding the integration of a gender perspective and rights-based approach across all sectors of intervention remains a challenge, nevertheless.

With respect to internal operational issues, the evaluation indicates that results-based management (RBM) practices lack explicit and holistic theories of change with adequate systems thinking and appropriate knowledge transfer strategies. Coupled with a very limited use of evaluations, these shortcomings are hampering UNDP's development effectiveness, including the sustainability of results.

Recommendations

UNDP should make a concerted effort to expand its strategic technical contributions in Argentina, aimed at addressing structural institutional weaknesses and development challenges. UNDP should define key areas in which it can provide substantive value added to the national government and maximize the use of its global network and expertise to foster innovative solutions to advance the SDGs.

UNDP should explore opportunities for strategically expanding collaborative partnerships and programming at

the provincial level, especially in the northern region, with the aim of helping subnational governments reduce poverty and inequality, improve municipal services and adapt to a changing climate.

UNDP should strive to refine its RBM approach in Argentina, placing greater emphasis on programmatic integration and synergies, the adoption of knowledge transfer strategies and the use of evaluations for learning, including the implementation of recommendations, to inform programmatic decision-making and improvement.

With a view to enhancing its contributions to gender equality and women's empowerment, UNDP should strengthen its gender mainstreaming and advocacy work across all programme areas. Emphasis should be placed on ensuring the adequate integration of a gender dimension and rights-based approach in the implementation of all policies and strategies at the subnational level, including local pilot initiatives.