
UNDP
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United Nations Development Programme
EVALUATION
OF UNDP SUPPORT FOR
CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION

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FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present this evaluation of UNDP's support for climate change adaptation. The evaluation comes at a critical time for the world to act on climate change. As shown by the 2019 global warming report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, along with other reports, our window of opportunity to keep warming below levels that will have catastrophic and unpredictable consequences is closing.

The scale of the adjustments we will need to make will be determined by our actions in the current decade. But it is also clear from this and other reports that we are not doing enough. Extreme and unprecedented wildfires, droughts, heat waves, hurricanes and floods across the world are painting a clear picture of the stepwise changes needed to adapt to conditions as they are now, irrespective of how successful we are in containing future warming.

The rise in global hunger in recent years identified by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is just one of many signs of the impacts of climate change and variability and the fact that adaptation measures are falling short of what is required. The strain the COVID-19 crisis is placing on public coffers makes the challenge of financing required measures even more steep, including by meeting global commitments made under the Paris Agreement.

The evaluation shows that UNDP is working hard across the globe to strengthen recognition of what governments need to do to minimize the adverse impacts of climate change and prepare for future climatic conditions. As the report highlights, UNDP has a breadth of technical expertise, geographic knowledge and connections within the UN family and with Member States that provide it with a unique ability to do so. However, the evaluation also shows that UNDP has some work to do to strengthen its own systems for managing the cross-cutting risks posed by climate change and developing measured and proportionate responses to these risks across its development portfolio.

I hope this evaluation will be a useful resource for UNDP in its efforts to build on the platform it has established as a globally significant provider of adaptation support, and a leading advocate on the need for climate action.

Oscar A. Garcia
Director
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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BPPS	Bureau for Policy and Programme Support
CAA	Climate change adaptation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of OECD)
DRR	Disaster risk reduction
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GEF	Global Environment Facility
ICPE	Independent country programme evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
LDCs	Least developed countries
LDCF	Least Developed Countries Fund
NAP	National adaptation plan
NAPA	National adaptation programme of action
ODA	Official development assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PIMS	Project information management system
RBA	Regional Bureau for Africa
RBAP	Regional Bureau for Asia and the Pacific
RBAS	Regional Bureau for Arab States
RBEC	Regional Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
QCPR	Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGP	Small Grants Programme (of GEF)
SIDS	Small island developing states
UNDRR	United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNITAR	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Background

The scientific consensus, reflected in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is that human activities have caused approximately 1.0 degree C of global warming above pre-industrial levels and that warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees C between 2030 and 2052 if current trends continue.[1] IPCC reports demonstrate this warming trend will have rapid and far-reaching impacts on land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities. Impacts will accrue from an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, a trend that is already evident.[2] Beyond extreme events, wide-reaching impacts will accumulate from slow-onset crises caused by increasing temperatures, desertification, land and forest degradation, salinity and ocean acidification, and sea-level rise.

Mitigation and adaptation efforts have expanded substantially in recent years. However, they do not yet approach the scale required to avoid substantial damage to the economy, environment and human health over the coming decades. The IPCC has calculated that even 1.5 degrees of warming, the level targeted by the Paris Agreement, cannot be considered 'safe' for most nations, communities, ecosystems and sectors, and that it poses significant risks to natural and human systems. Models using emissions based on current climate policies suggest warming will exceed 3 degrees.

Adaptation costs will be considerable even if the Paris Agreement targets are met, with the Global Commission on Adaptation suggesting a price tag of US$180 billion annually from 2020 to 2030. However, existing estimates of the costs of adaptation are likely to be underestimates due to the ways that direct climate change will likely lead to indirect impacts, dramatically amplifying costs in ways that are very difficult for existing models to predict. The United Nations Environment Programme has suggested that limitations of current estimates make it likely the costs of adaptation could be two to three times higher than the range cited in the literature, and four to five times higher by 2050.[3]

An important component of the global response to climate change is the commitment by developed country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, also referred to as the climate convention) to mobilize an additional $100 billion of climate finance per year by 2020 to meet developing countries' mitigation and adaptation needs. This commitment was to "assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of adaptation".[4]

In the absence of a definition of what would constitute "new and additional" resources, and a baseline against which progress could be judged, it is difficult to assess the extent to which current trends represent progress against the UNFCCC commitment.[5] Financing for adaptation is increasing but lags well behind demand, projected requirements and UNFCCC targets. Concessional finance for adaptation has lagged finance for mitigation, where private investment is a major component.

1 IPCC, 'Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty', 2018.

2 UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, 2020, 'Human Cost of Disasters: An Overview of the last 20 years, 2000–2019.'

3 UNEP, 'The Adaptation Finance Gap Report 2016', UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya, 2016.

4 Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifteenth session, Copenhagen, 7–19 December 2009.

5 Overseas Development Institute, 'Coding and tracking adaptation finance: lessons and opportunities for monitoring adaptation finance across international and national scales', Overseas Development Institute, 2012.

This creates an imbalance that runs counter to the Paris Agreement aspiration to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation.

Unless it acts as a spur for more decisive global action, the COVID-19 crisis will likely have deep repercussions for the global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The strain COVID-19 has placed on public financial resources reduces the fiscal space for governments to meet adaptation and mitigation requirements under the Paris Agreement and find more sustainable pathways towards development.

The COVID-19 crisis also demonstrates that many of the same factors that led to increased vulnerability to climate change also contributed to unsuccessful, weak or ineffective responses to the pandemic.

UNDP support for adaptation

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has had a long-standing role in shaping the adaptation agenda and pursuing specific adaptation measures, dating back to the Earth Summit in 1992, the Rio conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, and the creation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the (then) principal vehicle for implementing the conventions. UNDP has been a lead implementing agency for the GEF since its establishment, and it has expanded its role through participation in new funds established under the UNFCCC. These include the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF), the Special Climate Change Fund, the Adaptation Fund (all established in 2001), and the Green Climate Fund (established in 2010). Operating under the framework of the climate convention, and others that are relevant to it, UNDP's support has an important normative dimension.

Leveraging its strong presence on the ground, UNDP has captured a significant share of increasing adaptation commitments and is well placed to continue doing so. Building on a strong portfolio of projects funded under the GEF Trust Fund, LDCF and the Adaptation Fund, since 2016 there has been significant growth arising from major commitments from the Green Climate Fund (GCF). UNDP garnered roughly 16 percent (30 projects, $1 billion) of the new finance made available through the GCF, becoming the largest accredited entity for approved projects and the second largest in terms of funding amount. UNDP was particularly successful in mobilizing funds for adaptation projects, which accounted for around 41 percent (21 projects, $646.4 million) of GCF adaptation finance.

The cross-cutting character of climate change adaptation presents challenges for defining climate change adaptation assistance and the scope of UNDP support. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has established a system of markers to track climate-related official development assistance (ODA), UNDP was the channel of delivery for roughly $2.8 billion of ODA-eligible climate change adaptation commitments between 2010 and 2018.[6] These data show that ODA for the objective of climate change adaptation was channelled through UNDP in four policy domains: (i) agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security; (ii) disaster prevention and preparedness (including recovery) and emergency response and reconstruction; (iii) environmental protection and conservation; and (iv) water supply and sanitation, with smaller amounts in other categories.

UNDP has identified seven thematic areas as being at the core of its support for climate change adaptation: mainstreaming adaptation; livelihoods; ecosystem-based adaptation; food security and agriculture; water and coastal resilience; urban resilience; and climate information and early warning systems.[7] UNDP estimates that since 2010 it has

[6] For purposes of this evaluation, the OECD data are used rather than UNDP's internal programme database, as the OECD data provide a clearer breakdown of the sectoral composition of the work undertaken and an ability to position UNDP in the context of global finance for adaptation. Tagging of internal UNDP data suggests UNDP's climate change adaptation expenditure was around $280 million annually in 2018 and 2019, which is broadly in line with the OECD figures while not directly comparable to them.

[7] See: https://www.adaptation-undp.org/about.

mobilized $1.4 billion in grants from vertical funds and bilateral donors and leveraged $3.2 billion in co-financing for adaptation projects for 99 countries.

Even with its significant share of adaptation flows through vertical funds, the scale of the resources UNDP delivers should be kept in perspective. According to data compiled by OECD, UNDP delivered around 2 percent of the $170 billion in ODA commitments made between 2010 and 2018 that identified climate change adaptation as a significant or principal objective.

Purpose of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP conducted this evaluation to take stock of UNDP's achievements and performance in helping partner countries to adapt to new climate conditions created by global warming. The evaluation is part of the IEO workplan (DP/2018/4) approved by the Executive Board in January 2018. The evaluation aims to strengthen UNDP accountability to global and national development partners, including the UNDP Executive Board, and to support organizational learning and improved development effectiveness.

The primary focus of this evaluation is the UNDP activities that directly contribute to climate change adaptation. In practical terms, this encompasses the subset of UNDP's work that has an explicit adaptation objective in project documentation and specific measures that target this objective. However, recognizing the close links between adaptation and development, the evaluation also considered the contributions UNDP makes to adaptation through interventions that do not meet these criteria but directly or indirectly contribute to adaptation. This included consideration of how UNDP is identifying and addressing climate risks across its portfolio.

The evaluation looks across UNDP's climate change adaptation offer but gives special attention to its support for countries that are especially vulnerable to climate shocks. Reflecting the prominence of small island developing states in this category, a specific chapter of the evaluation addresses UNDP's climate change adaptation support for these countries.

The scope of the evaluation excluded UNDP's support for climate change mitigation.

Evaluation findings

UNDP climate change adaptation service offer

UNDP has captured a significant share of increasing finance for climate change adaptation. It implements an extensive portfolio of programming that stands out for its geographic and sectoral breadth compared to support provided by other development partners. The growth in the adaptation portfolio has enabled UNDP to develop strong expertise in several of the sectors that are critical for adaptation through expansion of its vertical fund portfolio. UNDP has made progress integrating this expertise into its business model in the formulation of the Global Policy Network, a network of thematic experts who advise country offices and programme countries.

Building on these achievements, there is room to clarify and strengthen roles, responsibilities and structures for technical support and oversight of the adaptation portfolio, and collaboration with other key areas of UNDP. While there is a well-organized structure for technical oversight and support of the vertical fund portfolio, with clear benefits for pipeline development and oversight, the same cannot be said for projects and programmes funded from other sources – even the task of identifying these in UNDP's systems is difficult.

Lacking such systems, UNDP has defined the sphere of its support for climate change adaptation as being almost entirely funded by vertical funds. Only 4 of the 125 projects under implementation identified by UNDP as comprising its climate change adaptation portfolio are funded directly by bilateral donors. According to data compiled by OECD, bilateral funding of UNDP's programmes is equally if not more significant than funding accessed from vertical funds. This includes, for example, major long-standing programmes in agriculture and food security, projects funded through the European Union's Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative, major urban resilience initiatives and

a wide array of climate information and early warning systems work funded through small and large disaster risk reduction (DRR) initiatives.

Without a clear system for tracking the extent of its climate change adaptation efforts, UNDP has struggled to develop effective models for cross-team collaboration as a basis for the design of more integrated solutions for climate change adaptation, and for climate-proofing of UNDP's development portfolio. One area where effective collaboration will be critical is between UNDP's DRR team, in the Crisis Bureau, and the climate change adaptation team, which is located in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support. The cyclical and event-focused nature of crisis programming means there is a risk that the energies of UNDP's DRR experts will be consumed by reactive and short-term needs. Growth in adaptation finance for DRR means that most of the long-term risk reduction work is managed by the climate change adaptation team in the Policy Bureau.

Uncertainty about global emissions pathways and the impact of different outcomes will require the development of adaptation strategies that place a premium on learning by doing and adaptive management. UNDP's results management systems and culture fall well short of what is needed for this to happen consistently well.

Strategic positioning

UNDP provides extensive support across domains and geographic regions where adaptation will be central to ensuring development gains are not eroded by climate change. Within the different domains where it is working, UNDP has varied in the extent to which it has been able to target core adaptation priorities, with some gaps and persistent challenges identified. These point to the need to continue refining UNDP's articulation of its adaptation service offers, how these link to mainstream development programming and how they complement the strengths of UN partners and other development actors.

UNDP has played an important role as a bridge between global commitments under the climate convention and other international environmental agreements vital to climate action and has facilitated access to climate finance. UNDP global efforts to protect biodiversity and prevent deforestation reinforce climate adaptation objectives. An ongoing challenge in UNDP's ecosystem-based adaptation work is balancing socioeconomic and ecosystem dimensions.

UNDP is an important global advocate for improved DRR and a leader in this area in the UN system. UNDP can point to examples of sustained focus on DRR resulting in the delivery of significant outcomes. Overall, UNDP's DRR interventions have often had modest resources and short time frames, frequently in the context of response efforts, thus decreasing the likelihood of sustained achievements. Adaptation finance is providing an opportunity to correct this imbalance.

UNDP's role in agriculture and food security is limited compared to some other UN partners, but it includes a large number of initiatives, reflecting the importance of agricultural development to poverty reduction and rural livelihoods. While there are good practice examples in the portfolio, there is a pattern of vagueness about what is needed for targeted and effective climate change adaptation for small, poor agricultural producers in risk-prone agroecological zones, which should be addressed.

The need for concerted efforts to address climate change and associated extreme weather risk has been well integrated into UNDP programming on water governance.

UNDP's country offices, backed by expertise in regional and global offices, are an important platform for partnerships supporting the key international frameworks for action on climate change. There is scope for UNDP to further systematize its relationships with other partners, grounded in a deeper understanding of the respective strengths and limitations of the key agencies involved.

UNDP strategies recognize the importance of private sector finance for bridging the adaptation finance gap. While progress on these public/private partnerships has so far been limited, there are

initiatives under way to introduce new instruments, including partnerships to expand insurance coverage against disaster and climate shocks. Successful expansion of capabilities in new areas – such as introduction of new financing mechanisms or scaling up of support for insurance – will require strong prioritization and careful choices.

Programme design

UNDP has progressively developed more rigorous methods for incorporating climate science into project designs. New projects financed by the GCF should yield opportunities for greater influence and impact at scale.

There is scope for UNDP to improve the quality of designs and position itself to obtain more influence and impact in a number of areas, with two areas requiring urgent attention:

First, UNDP is not systematically considering climate risk across its development portfolio. There is currently a significant bias towards rating projects low risk, increasing the likelihood they will lead to harm to people and the environment, with inadequate assessments and management measures in place. Using stronger climate risk screening as a basis for identifying priorities, UNDP also needs to expand the application of rigorous methods for incorporating climate science into project designs beyond projects funded by vertical funds.

Second, UNDP needs to strengthen the strategic clarity about how programmes and projects will leverage policy and system changes at scale. Weak articulation of impact pathways was sometimes evident in the adoption of pilot projects as vehicles for policy influence, as well as in the focus of many country programmes on production of plans, policies and legislative changes. Effective mainstreaming of climate risk in policymaking is a serious long-term challenge. It will require persistent and politically informed advocacy on where and how policies and institutions need to be reformed. Pilots can be an effective tool in this task but need to be supported by rigorous attention to evaluating and communicating results, something that was often lacking in the interventions reviewed.

Other areas that will require sustained attention and efforts in design include establishing projects that can be sustained over multiple programme cycles; proactively breaking down internal silos that prevent the establishment of more integrated solutions to climate-related vulnerabilities; and ensuring there are concrete and well-researched objectives to improve gender equality across the adaptation portfolio.

Support for small island developing states

While small island developing states (SIDS) are diverse, they exhibit characteristics that make them highly vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks, and they face disproportionately higher risks of adverse consequences from global warming. SIDS' vulnerability to climate change makes them a key constituency for UNDP in driving climate action and supporting adaptation to new and emerging climate risks.

UNDP has by far the biggest presence in SIDS of any of the agencies in the UN system – according to the recent UN review, UNDP has around 400 personnel spread across 33 SIDS, which is roughly double the number of personnel and country presence of the next most significant UN entity.

UNDP's presence on the ground provides it with some advantages in helping island states adapt to climate change, including an important role in facilitating countries' access to finance available through vertical funds. As evidenced by project, country and thematic evaluations and regular progress reporting, UNDP's support for SIDS is generally effective and well managed. However, UNDP faces several notable challenges in expanding and improving the effectiveness of its support to SIDS. The small size of SIDS means UNDP's support is mostly managed under multi-country office arrangements, which constrains oversight, engagement and the ability to deliver tailored solutions. UNDP's capacity to support SIDS is also constrained by the limited availability and predictability of programming resources outside of those it accesses through vertical funds or intermittent responses to humanitarian crises.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP has been effective at using its country presence to capture a significant share of increasing adaptation commitments channelled through vertical funds. UNDP has developed a comprehensive climate change adaptation service offer, providing extensive support across geographic regions and sectors that are exposed to climate risk. This provides UNDP with a solid platform to work from in driving home the need for an accelerated and scaled up response to climate risk.

While UNDP is a small provider of climate change adaptation services in the context of global finance for adaptation, it has two notable strengths.

First, UNDP has captured a significant share of the growth in adaptation finance channelled through vertical funds and is notable for the geographic and sectoral breadth of its support compared to other development actors, within and outside of the United Nations. Since 2010 UNDP has mobilized over $2.8 billion for projects across some 100 high, middle and low-income countries, including 43 least developed countries and 16 SIDS, touching the lives of over 82 million people. UNDP ecosystem-based adaptation projects promote understanding of the importance of natural assets such as mangroves, reefs, riparian vegetation and native forests for tackling the climate crisis. Programmes focused on biodiversity and protected area management and reducing emissions from deforestation provide adaptation benefits in the form of watershed, coastal and marine asset protection and sustainable livelihoods. Transboundary and country-level efforts protect vital freshwater and marine ecosystems threatened by climate change. Agriculture and food security work reflects the importance of this area to poverty reduction, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and its high exposure to climate risks. UNDP accounts for around one quarter of the resources channelled through the United Nations for disaster risk reduction and is one of the top two United Nations providers of this support.

Second, UNDP utilizes its global presence as a ballast for the normative work of the United Nations and international cooperation on climate action, working cooperatively with leading United Nations actors such as UNFCCC, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). In doing so, UNDP has provided a bridge between global commitments under the climate convention, Sendai Framework, and other international agreements key to climate change adaptation, and country and local action, including by facilitating access to climate finance. UNDP is a leading global advocate for improved disaster risk reduction and climate action globally, including through a significant platform of support for SIDS, which have played an outsized role in drawing attention to the need to address climate change on the international stage.

Conclusion 2. UNDP has established a considerable body of work and associated expertise in sectors critical for adaptation, including policy mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction, agriculture and food security, environmental protection and ecosystem-based adaptation and water and coastal resilience. UNDP capabilities, strategic positioning and comparative advantage in these sectors and among country offices are uneven, with some aspects of its offer needing further definition.

UNDP has an extensive programme of support for addressing climate-related disaster risks ranging from disaster risk assessments, preparedness and community-based DRM through to recovery and response work, with an emphasis on building back better. Disaster risk reduction work is now split between two bureaux, with the bulk of the funding overseen by the climate adaptation team in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, reflecting success in mobilizing resources from vertical funds for climate change adaptation work. However, substantial underutilized expertise remains in the Crisis Bureau, where there is a major risk it will be absorbed into response activities.

UNDP's efforts to protect biodiversity and prevent deforestation are extensive and reinforce climate adaptation objectives. A continuing challenge in UNDP ecosystem-based adaptation

work is balancing socioeconomic and ecosystem dimensions.

The need for concerted efforts to address climate change and associated extreme weather risk has been well integrated into UNDP programming on water governance.

UNDP carries out a range of adaptation initiatives in agriculture and food security but has not developed a service offer to codify its strengths and desired positioning in this area. Missing from many projects is the need for targeted and effective adaptation measures to support small, poor agricultural producers in risk-prone agroecological zones.

Conclusion 3. There has been progress in integrating vertical funds within the UNDP business model, although much more needs to be done in this area. Mechanisms for collaboration between technical teams – important for countering fragmentation and mainstreaming consideration of climate change across UNDP – are still at an early stage of development.

There is a lack of effective collaboration between technical teams, reflecting the close connection of different advisory cadres to the requirements of their funders. Weaknesses in this area are evident in the fact that UNDP has defined the sphere of its support for climate change adaptation almost entirely in terms of projects funded by vertical funds. The actual scope of UNDP support and climate risks exposures are broader and more diverse. The existence of parallel information systems for vertical fund finance reinforces this separation between different business lines.

Reflecting differences in funding streams, and the impacts of corporate restructuring, UNDP staff capacity in disaster risk reduction has declined, despite significant growth in finance for disaster risk reduction mobilized through vertical funds. The positioning of the UNDP disaster risk reduction team in the Crisis Bureau creates an additional risk that its attention is taken by reactive and short-term demands tied to the cyclical and event-focused nature of crisis programming. Strong measures are needed to counter this risk so that UNDP can effectively promote the merits of prevention and risk informed solutions to face the slow onset crisis of global warming.

Conclusion 4. UNDP has progressively increased the rigour with which it incorporates climate science into the design of adaptation projects resourced by vertical funds.

The absence of reliable meteorological data and long-term projections of climate variability and trends constrain the ability of local communities and authorities to design appropriate adaptation strategies. As a result, even projects that have an explicit focus on adaptation have struggled to incorporate climate science and implications in the design of activities. Addressing this challenge, UNDP has increased its attention to climate risks in design processes associated with the vertical funds, and there has been some improvement in scenario-based project designs. UNDP is also making a significant investment in developing the climate information infrastructure, which will be critical in addressing gaps in the knowledge base.

Conclusion 5. The changing climate has implications for most UNDP development programming, yet climate risk is not being systematically considered and mainstreamed.

UNDP has established screening procedures and standards that aim to ensure all UNDP projects are resilient to climate risk. However, there are significant and longstanding weaknesses in the application of this system, with a bias towards rating projects low risk, increasing the likelihood they will eventually do harm to people and the environment. Recognition of climate risk exposure has been noticeably absent in some of the largest crisis interventions with activities in climate sensitive sectors.

Conclusion 6. With limited resources, it is a struggle for UNDP in many country contexts to leverage the substantial policy and systems changes that will be required for successful adaptation to climate change.

While targeted local initiatives provide valuable tangible results, the key test of UNDP value as a development partner relates to its capacity to

positively influence policy and systems improvements at scale. The extent to which UNDP can address the adaptation needs of partner governments is constrained by contextual factors, short-term project cycles and funding constraints. Given the continuing bias of governments and aid donors towards funding disaster response and recovery means it is difficult to place adequate emphasis on preventative measures focused on disaster risk reduction and medium to long-term adaptation. The short-term funding cycles of many key donors, and lack of predictability around partner government and donor priorities, presents challenges to aligning priorities and resources and to optimizing coordination and collaboration rather than competition. The different emphases and priorities of funding streams for adaptation, which cut across climate, humanitarian and development realms, undermine the objective of developing more integrated responses to climate risk.

In this context, and with some exceptions, UNDP has struggled to ensure that the breadth of its support is equalled by the depth, quality and longevity of engagement necessary to maximize policy and system impacts. The UNDP core challenge is that its resources – technical and financial – are spread thinly across its extensive office network. In many of the contexts in which UNDP works, resources are extremely limited relative to demand, especially in countries that do not attract significant official development assistance, and where fiscal constraints limit prospects for local cost sharing. UNDP success in mobilizing funds for adaptation projects from GCF provides it with an opportunity to step up the scale of its support in many countries. The key to maintaining this momentum will be the ability of UNDP to establish projects and programmes that blend different sources of finance, working in concert with multiple partners.

Conclusion 7. There are some persistent weaknesses in the identification of plausible pathways for leveraging policy and system changes and in systems for supporting learning and accountability.

Regardless of the scale of the finance it can mobilize, there is scope for UNDP to better utilize available levers for influencing policy and systems changes in its adaptation work. There is room to improve strategic clarity regarding intended pathways for influencing policy and systems changes in programme and project designs. UNDP implementation of pilots as a mechanism for policy influence has often lacked strong justification or carefully designed steps to evaluate and communicate results and incorporate lessons in sector programmes, plans and decision-making. Achievement in such cases has usually been limited, with pilot projects not scaled up or replicated. Another tendency has been for UNDP to focus on developing or revising plans, policies or guidelines on paper, without an accompanying focus on the quality and downstream impact of these measures.

Addressing these challenges will require improvements in UNDP results management systems. These do not effectively capture the impact of its investments in promoting adaptation, or the nature and scope of UNDP influence, given contextual enablers and constraints. They are not currently promoting a robust internal discussion about performance, falling short of what is required for effective adaptive management and learning, critical given uncertainty about global emissions pathways.

Conclusion 8. UNDP provides extensive and valued climate change adaptation support for SIDS. However, SIDS vulnerabilities, and the challenges of supporting them through multi-country offices, are not factored into UNDP policies, which constrains its ability to provide tailored support.

Due to their small tax bases and high exposure to natural hazards, SIDS are prominent at the top of economic vulnerability indices. The COVID-19 crisis has again exposed these vulnerabilities, with SIDS economies facing particularly devastating consequences compared to other countries, and many facing an untenable choice between debt service obligations and cuts to basic services.

The challenges UNDP faces in supporting SIDS are more acute than for other countries. SIDS' fiscal constraints reduce the potential for resource mobilization from government partners. ODA to SIDS is

highly concentrated on a small number of countries, which limits resource mobilization opportunities. As is highlighted by the recent IEO evaluation of UNDP development support services for middle-income countries, the UNDP resource allocation model does not account for factors beyond population and per capita income, which are crude measures of need. These factors lead to a dependency on vertical funds, or volatile humanitarian flows, for climate change adaptation programming in SIDS.

Economies of scale limit UNDP capacity to establish an on-the-ground presence in most SIDS, leading to multi-country office operational arrangements that reduce opportunities for effective oversight and policy engagement and increase challenges in tailoring adaptation programme support to country needs.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1. UNDP needs to accelerate its attention to mainstreaming consideration of climate risks across its entire development portfolio.

This will require more rigorous application of the UNDP social and environmental safeguards policy in project formulation and monitoring, and tailored guidance and advice on how to assess and mitigate the risks of climate change and variability in different sectors, with a focus on climate exposed sectors. Periodic spot-checks of the application of climate risk screening policies would then be in order.

This will also require increased clarity in UNDP programmes, based on the scientific evidence, about the magnitude of the medium and long-term risks presented by climate change and actions required to address them. While outcomes of climate change mitigation efforts will determine the profile of these risks and their consequences, scaled up adaption efforts are required now, even under the most optimistic mitigation scenarios.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should establish a system for tracking all investments that have significant climate change objectives, ensuring these are provided with appropriate technical support, oversight and visibility as part of the UNDP adaptation portfolio and as a basis for strengthening internal collaboration.

The objective should be to ensure all projects that have significant adaptation objectives are supported to integrate the best available methods for incorporating climate science into project design and implementation and are recognized as part of a portfolio that cuts across a significant proportion of UNDP business. This would also support better coordination between vertical fund programming and other funding streams, as well as continuing efforts to improve coordination among climate and disaster risk reduction personnel across the UNDP policy and crisis bureaux.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should take steps to reduce fragmentation across its climate change adaptation programming, to more effectively achieve intended benefits at scale.

To address fragmentation and more effectively promote realization of intended benefits at scale, UNDP should look for opportunities to establish larger programmes that blend development and adaptation finance, working in concert with multiple partners. Regardless of the scale of the finance it brings to bear, UNDP should increase attention to scalability in project selection and design and be more explicit in articulating how benefits will be realized beyond pilot project boundaries. UNDP should also seek to build on the success of its GEF international waters model, establishing more multi-phase projects working on the same geographic areas and sites, especially in cases where benefits can only be expected to become evident over longer time frames.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should improve the technical underpinnings of its adaptation service offer in each sector, with special attention given to strengthening capacities in disaster risk reduction.

Given the importance of disaster risk reduction for adaptation efforts, steps should be taken to strengthen UNDP capabilities in this area, capitalizing on the growing allocation of ODA for disaster risk reduction associated with the emphasis on climate change adaptation.

With respect to agriculture and food security, a clearly articulated set of UNDP programme objectives and guidelines would help bring greater strategic coherence to the organization and its regional and country offices, given UNDP comparative advantages. Opportunities include increasing coordination with specialized United Nations and non-United Nations agricultural organizations to help governments design adaptation solutions, and facilitating multi-stakeholder collaborations to generate more transformative innovations for adaptation.

UNDP should seek to increase the rigour of its evaluation techniques across its adaptation portfolio, capitalizing on lessons from the application of impact evaluation techniques in its portfolio of recently established UNDP GCF projects.

UNDP should seek to systematize engagements with academic institutions at the global and regional levels in order to strengthen the scientific underpinnings needed to consider climate risk in the design, implementation and evaluation of UNDP projects and provide iterative feedback on how to strengthen them.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should expand its adaptation support in small island developing states.

Recognizing the specific vulnerabilities and high costs of operating in SIDS, UNDP should prioritize its climate change adaptation support to these countries. This should include giving priority to SIDS in the allocation of existing flexible funding mechanisms, amending the resource allocation policy to enable increased core resource allocation for SIDS, and revising the policy governing funding of differentiated physical presence to reduce expectations for SIDS local office contributions. Such measures are important both in recognition of existing vulnerabilities but also in anticipation of growing vulnerabilities, given the risks posed by global warming.

Action taken on these fronts would be consistent with UNDP Executive Board-accepted recommendations of the recent IEO evaluation of UNDP support services to middle-income countries. It would also be in line with the views of the Secretary-General, expressed in his 2020 report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/75/79), that the United Nations development system should explore new multidimensional ways of assessing country needs that go beyond country typology and national income and take into account vulnerability aspects.

Recommendation 6. UNDP should establish clear priorities for private sector engagement on climate change adaptation.

Private sector engagement and scaling up private finance has a critical role to play in adaptation, and UNDP can benefit from a prioritized strategy for strengthening its engagement in this area. Deepening engagement with the private sector will require significant investment, strong prioritization, careful choices and clear metrics to assess impact. Limitations in the availability of technical and financial resources implies the need to focus on a limited number of priorities, which can be addressed well and provide the basis for progressive expansion.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should strengthen the gender equality dimensions of its policy and capacity-related support in adaptation-related programming.

Attention to strengthening gender mainstreaming should focus on weaknesses in policy and capacity-related support in the environmental protection portfolio. Practical and well-researched objectives should be established in adaptation programming to improve gender equality results. Adopting context-sensitive gender approaches and strengthening the resilience of women to negative impacts of climate change on ecosystems are crucial to the success of environmental programming.

Recommendation 8. To better coordinate across an increasingly complex portfolio of environment projects, including for climate change, UNDP should take steps to upgrade its information management system and avoid running separate/parallel information systems for specific programme portfolios.

The development of a separate information system for the GEF portfolio highlights deficiencies in the UNDP mainstream project management system and suggests that the solution is not to dissolve personnel information management systems but rather raise the capabilities of the corporate information system.

Having two separate project management systems that serve essentially the same purposes is not an efficient use of UNDP resources. It also reinforces continuation of parallel business models, which potentially undermines the objective of better integrating vertical fund finance within UNDP operations.

Other potential efficiencies could be gained by increasing the efficiency of mechanisms for tracking and aggregating results across the UNDP portfolio. This will contribute to addressing a broader challenge with current UNDP systems, which is to ensure requirements are kept simple, in order to ensure there is space for more adaptive and flexible approaches to managing and accounting for results. Currently, reflecting vertical fund and internal requirements, there are a large number of indicators on which UNDP is obliged to collect data. To the extent there is flexibility, UNDP should focus on prioritizing its core information requirements to minimize the reporting burden for staff on the ground, focused on those indicators that best capture the value of its adaptation work.

Chapter 1.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the scope and purpose of the evaluation and its methodology.

1.1 The adaptation imperative

The scientific consensus, reflected in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is that human activities have caused approximately 1.0 degree C of global warming above pre-industrial levels and that warming is likely to reach 1.5 degrees C between 2030 and 2052 if current trends continue.[8] IPCC reports demonstrate this warming trend will have rapid and far-reaching impacts on land, energy, industry, buildings, transport and cities. Impacts will accrue from an increase in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, a trend that is well documented.[9] Beyond extreme events, wide-reaching impacts will accumulate from slow-onset crises caused by increasing temperatures, desertification, land and forest degradation, salinity and ocean acidification.

The most important action the world can take to prevent the worst consequences of climate change from materializing is to reduce the scale of warming. However, even the most optimistic mitigation outcomes will require significant adjustments to the consequences of climate change. Support for adaptation, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable countries, will be a critical part of the global response to global warming.

No country in the world will be insulated from these consequences, but some have a particularly high exposure. This is especially apparent in the case of some small island developing states (SIDS), where rising sea levels pose an existential threat. For many coastal communities, rising seas are already flooding homes and lands, forcing communities to relocate to higher ground. In low-lying island nations, such as Tuvalu and Kiribati, internal migration options are limited. If they cannot afford the engineering measures that will be required to protect exposed communities, migration pathways will be needed for the resettlement of affected communities in other countries.

If smart choices are not made now, climate change will exacerbate and further entrench inequalities between countries. The World Bank has estimated, for example, that developing countries will bear between 75 and 80 percent of the costs of damages associated with climate change.[10] Climate change will also exacerbate and further entrench inequalities within countries. The IPCC has shown that climate change and climate variability worsen existing poverty and exacerbate inequalities, especially for those disadvantaged by gender, age, race, class, caste, indigeneity and disability.[11]

Jurisdictions and communities that anticipate and put in place measures to mitigate the risks of extreme events tend to fare better than those that don't. The past decade has shown that even countries with strong coping and adaptive capacities can struggle to deal effectively with the natural hazards they face. It follows, then, that the challenges in developing countries are especially acute where coupled with fragile health systems, malnourished populations

8 IPCC, 'Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty', 2018.

9 UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, 2020, 'Human Cost of Disasters: An overview of the last 20 years, 2000–2019.'

10 World Bank, 'World Development Report 2010: Development and Climate Change', World Bank, 2009.

11 IPCC, 2014, 'Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability'.

and lack of building codes or of their enforcement, and where poor infrastructure hampers communication with, and assistance to, populations at risk. Events such as the 2008 cyclone in Myanmar, 2017 cyclones in the Caribbean and 2019 cyclones affecting Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe lay bare the difficulties faced when natural hazards strike highly vulnerable countries. Reflecting their high vulnerability, least developed countries (LDCs) and SIDS have been singled out as priorities for adaptation support.

According to the IPCC, "ambitious adaptation including transformative governance" will be required to reduce risk.[12] Underlining the importance of investing in climate resilience, the Global Commission on Adaptation has estimated that every $1 invested in adaptation could result in benefits worth $2 to $10, although returns obviously depend on the quality of the investment.[13] While specific targeted measures and finance will be required to support adaptation, they also need to be integrated with mainstream development decision-making.

1.2 UNDP's support for climate change adaptation

In discussing climate change adaptation, the evaluation adheres to the definition set out in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, also referred to as the climate convention):

> Adaptation refers to adjustments in ecological, social, or economic systems in response to actual or expected climatic stimuli and their effects or impacts. It refers to changes in processes, practices, and structures to moderate potential damages or to benefit from opportunities associated with climate change.

Building from this definition, adaptive capacity is a function or outcome of the web of interrelated economic, social, institutional and technological conditions that facilitate or constrain adaptation measures. It follows, then, that climate change adaptation is a cross-cutting concept, like sustainable development, in that climate risks are relevant for a great many, if not most, public and private decisions.[14]

Based on this broad definition, there is probably no aspect of UNDP development support that does not aim to build adaptive capacity in a generic sense. Having recognized this, UNDP has had a longstanding role in shaping the adaptation agenda and pursuing specific adaptation measures. This involvement dates back to the Earth Summit in 1992, the Rio conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, and the creation of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the (then) principal vehicle for implementing the conventions. UNDP has been a leading implementing agency for the GEF since its establishment and has expanded its role through participation in new funds established under the UNFCCC. These include the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF),[15] Special Climate Change Fund[16] and Adaptation Fund,[17] all established in 2001, and the Green Climate Fund (GCF),

12 IPCC 2014, op. cit.

13 Global Commission on Adaptation, 'Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate Resilience', Global Centre on Adaptation and World Resources Institute, 2019.

14 B. Smit and O. Pilifosova, 'Adaptation to Climate Change in the Context of Sustainable Development and Equity', in: *IPCC : Climate Change 2001: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, 2001.

15 Mandated by the parties to the UNFCCC to provide support to LDCs' climate change adaptation efforts, including preparation of national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs), implementation of NAPA priority projects in LDCs and preparation of the national adaptation plan process in eligible developing countries.

16 The Special Climate Change Fund finances adaptation to climate change in all eligible developing countries party to the UNFCCC, including non-LDCs.

17 Established to finance concrete adaptation projects and programmes in developing countries Party to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

established in 2010.[18] Operating under the framework of the climate convention, and others that are relevant to it, UNDP's support has an important normative dimension.

In addition to funding from convention-related mechanisms, UNDP also receives significant funding from bilateral donors and partner governments for projects that have an explicit focus on adaptation. Beyond areas where climate is an explicit driver or consideration, the implications of climate change will be felt and will need to be addressed across UNDP's development portfolio. Recognizing the interconnectedness of different dimensions of the adaptation challenge, the current UNDP strategic plan (2018–2021) notes the importance of "collaboration across the conflict prevention, governance, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation areas of work, to provide countries with a more integrated and holistic approach to resilience." The strategic plan underscores the importance of strengthening gender equality as a foundation for any resilience-building measures.

The cross-cutting character of climate change adaptation presents significant challenges for defining climate change adaptation assistance. For this reason it is not possible to precisely define the scope of UNDP support in the area.[19] According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has established a system of markers to track climate-related development assistance, UNDP was the channel of delivery for roughly $2.8 billion of climate change adaptation commitments between 2010 and 2018.[20]

OECD data suggest the work UNDP has done with this funding has contributed in several different focus areas. Just over one third has been focused on environmental protection, including policy development, biodiversity protection and flood protection. Other major areas of focus are agriculture, forestry, fisheries and food security, water resource management, disaster prevention, and emergency response and reconstruction (Table 1). These focus areas are broadly consistent with the focus of adaptation finance globally, although UNDP has a greater emphasis on environmental protection compared to official development assistance (ODA) for adaptation globally, which reflects a significant focus on adaptation mainstreaming in support of climate-related conventions.[21] UNDP has identified seven thematic areas that are at the core of its support for climate change adaptation: mainstreaming adaptation; livelihoods; ecosystem-based adaptation; food security and agriculture; water and coastal resilience; urban resilience; and climate information and early warning systems.[22]

The OECD does not capture the non-ODA contributions, which means it excludes finance provided by partner governments to UNDP for the purposes of their own development. Tagging of UNDP internal finance data covering 2018 and 2019 suggests the local cost-sharing contribution for climate change adaptation amounted to $51 million in those years, with 54 percent of this total coming from countries in the Latin America and Caribbean region (about 30 percent of total climate change adaptation [CCA] expenditure in that region).

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18 Established in COP 16 in Cancun to support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing country Parties using thematic funding window.

19 For a good discussion of the nature of these challenges and limitations of tracking systems, see: Overseas Development Institute, 2012, 'Coding and tracking adaptation finance: lessons and opportunities for monitoring adaptation finance across international and national scales'.

20 For purposes of this evaluation, the OECD data are used rather than UNDP's internal programme database, as the OECD data provide a clearer breakdown of the sectoral composition of the work undertaken and an ability to position UNDP in the context of global finance for adaptation. Tagging of internal UNDP data suggests UNDP's climate change adaptation expenditure was around $280 million annually in 2018 and 2019, which is broadly in line with the OECD figures, while not directly comparable to it.

21 Climate Finance Initiative reports suggest that public adaptation finance is strongly focused on three sectors: water and wastewater management (32%), agriculture and land use (24%), and disaster risk management (22%), accounting for almost 80% of total adaption finance. Climate Policy Initiative, 2019, 'Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2019'.

22 See: https://www.adaptation-undp.org/about.

TABLE 1. Official development assistance commitments delivered through UNDP with climate change adaptation as a significant or principal objective, 2010–2018 (Thousands US$)

Sector	Climate change is a…		Total (% share)
	Principal objective	Significant objective	
Environment protection	$379,618	$619,892	$999,511 (36%)
Disaster prevention and preparedness, emergency response and reconstruction	$197,669	$388,251	$585,921 (21%)
Agriculture, forestry and fisheries, food security	$76,314	$333,383	$409,697 (15%)
Other[23]	$118,877	$383,927	$502,804 (18%)
Water supply and sanitation	$107,212	$202,556	$309,768 (11%)
Total	**$879,691**	**$1,928,009**	**$2,807,700**

Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System.

Note: The OECD has established 'Rio markers' to enable tracking of financial flows targeting the objectives of the Rio conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, with data available from 2010 onwards. OECD defines adaptation as an activity to reduce the vulnerability of human or natural systems to the current and expected impacts of climate change, including climate variability, by maintaining or increasing resilience, through increased ability to adapt to, or absorb, climate change stresses, shocks and variability and/or by helping reduce exposure to them. It has a three-tier scoring system: (i) principal (score '2') if the objective is explicitly stated as fundamental in the design of an activity; (ii) significant (score '1') if the objective is explicitly stated but it is not the fundamental driver or motivation for undertaking the activities; (iii) not targeted (score '0') if the activity was examined but found not targeted to the objective in any significant way.[24]

1.3 Evaluation purpose

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP conducted this evaluation to take stock of UNDP's achievements and performance in helping partner countries adapt to new climate conditions created by global warming. The evaluation is part of the IEO workplan (CP/2018/4) approved by the Executive Board in January 2018.

This is the first IEO evaluation that has given a focused and holistic consideration of UNDP's climate change adaptation work. IEO last considered UNDP support to disaster risk reduction (DRR) in 2010,[25] covering all dimensions of UNDP's recovery and prevention efforts including non-climate-related hazards (which are not covered by the current exercise). The IEO last looked at the UNDP climate programme in 2009 through a focused assessment of UNDP's work through the LDCF and SCF. This followed an assessment of UNDP's environment and energy portfolio in 2008.[26] UNDP has since restructured and expanded its DRR and climate change adaptation support. Climate change adaptation financing delivered through UNDP has expanded fourfold since 2010, especially via GEF funding and the launch of the GCF (Figure 1, Chapter 2).

The purpose of the evaluation is to strengthen UNDP accountability to global and national development partners, including the UNDP Executive Board, and to support organizational learning and improved development effectiveness.

[23] The largest share of adaptation-related ODA in 'other' category flows to 'other multisector, government and civil society' (60%), with the remainder spread in small amounts across many sectors.

[24] OECD Development Assistance Committee, 'OECD DAC Rio Markers for Climate: Handbook', https://www.oecd.org/dac/environment-development/Revised%20climate%20marker%20handbook_FINAL.pdf.

[25] UNDP, 'Strengthening Resilience to Disaster Risk Reduction', https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/5146.

[26] UNDP IEO, 2008, 'Evaluation of the role and contribution of UNDP in environment and energy'.

1.4 Evaluation scope

While acknowledging adaptation is a whole-of-society concern, this evaluation had a much narrower scope than is implied by that definition. The determinants of adaptive capacity are so broad, it could be construed that most of UNDP development support aims to build it, and it would not have been practical or useful to cover such a broad scope.

The primary focus of this evaluation is the UNDP activities that directly contribute to climate change adaptation. In practical terms, this encompasses the subset of UNDP's work that has an explicit adaptation objective in project documentation and specific measures that target this objective.[27] Reflecting the focus of UNDP programming, the evaluation assessed climate change adaptation finance channelled through UNDP in four policy domains,[28] namely: (i) agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food security; (ii) disaster prevention and preparedness (including recovery) and emergency response and reconstruction; (iii) environmental protection and conservation; and (iv) water supply and sanitation.

However, recognizing the close links between adaptation and development, the evaluation also considered the contributions UNDP makes to adaptation through interventions that do not meet these criteria but directly or indirectly contribute to adaptation.[29] In looking outside the boundaries of the parts of UNDP's work that have an explicit climate adaptation dimension, the evaluation considered how UNDP is identifying and addressing climate risks across its portfolio.

The evaluation looks across UNDP's climate change adaptation offer but gave special attention to UNDP's support for countries that are especially vulnerable to climate shocks. Reflecting the prominence of SIDS in this category, one chapter of the evaluation specifically addresses UNDP's climate change adaptation support for SIDS.

The scope of the evaluation excluded UNDP's support for climate change mitigation. The exclusion of mitigation support, despite its critical importance, recognizes that there are fundamental differences in the drivers for mitigation and adaptation and the strategies to address them. Logically, international development assistance that is focused on reducing emissions should focus efforts on countries that contribute the most emissions. By way of contrast, adaptation finance should logically focus on those countries that are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, recognizing that providing finance for adaptation is an obligation on developed countries under the UNFCCC. For many of the most vulnerable countries, emissions are not very high, and for some, such as SIDS, they are negligible, and are likely to remain so for some time. At the same time, it is important to recognize that some adaptation measures can also contribute to mitigation, and to what extent UNDP has supported such win-win approaches deserves to be examined.

The scope of the evaluation included aspects of UNDP oversight systems and structures for its adaptation work, but did not address financial management controls or systems. These are the focus of an ongoing performance audit of UNDP's Management of GEF-funded Projects conducted by UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation.

1.5 Evaluation questions

The following overarching questions frame the evaluation:

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27 This approach is consistent with the approach developed by OECD for tracking climate-related finance. See: http://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-topics/climate-change.htm.

28 Not included here is an 'other' category, which groups together a diversity of areas where UNDP's support has been small. The evaluation also considered work undertaken in this category, especially where it had strategic importance.

29 This reflects the fact that in some areas UNDP has pursued 'no regrets' interventions, which are critical in underpinning and complement more targeted approaches to building resilience to climate change. This is the case, for example, in UNDP's multi-hazards approach to disaster risk reduction, which addresses the risk of climate-related events in concert with work to address less frequent geologically driven events such as earthquakes.

Context

- How has global architecture for supporting climate change adaptation evolved over the past decade, considering the evolving science, international agreements and changes in the development landscape? What are the implications for UNDP?

Business model

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of UNDP's business model in positioning UNDP to support adaptation in different contexts?
- Does UNDP's business model strike a clear balance between its 2030 Agenda pledge to "leave no one behind" and "endeavour to reach the furthest behind first" with the objective of maintaining a universal presence, acting as an integrator and serving as the operational backbone in the UN system?
- How do UNDP climate adaptation services internally connect to related practice areas, such as disaster risk reduction, governance and conflict prevention (i.e. climate security) in the pursuance of more coherent or integrated solutions, and structured support for country offices?

Programme design

- Are UNDP's adaptation-focused programmes strategic, in the sense of individually or collectively targeting the most important areas or issues for adaptation?
- Do UNDP's adaptation-focused programmes – either independently or in concert with others – demonstrate a consistent intent to influence policies and systems at scale?
- Are UNDP's efforts on climate change adaptation sustained over enough time to produce higher level results?
- Are there clear differences in UNDP's strategic advice reflecting variations in vulnerability, in terms of positioning on the income spectrum (LDCs through to high-income countries) and other characteristics (crisis/SIDS status)?
- Do UNDP's programmes pay sufficient attention to the best available targeted science on climate variability and change?
- Given that climate change has been affecting all development sectors, and that these are all interdependent, where adverse impacts from climate change or weak management in one sector can lead to negative effects in others, to what extent has UNDP succeeded in achieving its aim of designing integrated adaptation interventions?
- To what extent has UNDP considered gender aspects in its work in support of climate change adaptation?

Partnerships

- Is UNDP collaborating effectively with other United Nations partners in its climate change adaptation support?
- How is UNDP engaging with the private sector to assist countries on climate change adaptation? And to what effect?

Results

- How is UNDP contributing to improved climate change adaptation of partner governments and achievement of their adaptation goals? In what areas are achievements observable and durable? In what areas have results been more elusive?
- Do UNDP's monitoring systems adequately capture the nature and scope of UNDP's influence? Can we be confident about the nature or extent of UNDP's contributions to desired policy and systems changes that reduce climate vulnerability?

The alignment of the key evaluation questions and methods is shown in the evaluation matrix at Annex 1, available online.

1.6 Evaluation methods

A summary of the methods and an assessment of the strength of the evidence they provided is set out in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Methods used in this evaluation

Method	Data source or participants	Analysis	Strength of evidence
Analysis of climate change in UNDP climate change adaptation portfolio	Database of total development finance made available to countries from bilateral providers, multilateral institution and NGOs. Included were all OECD data on ODA marked as having climate change as a principal or significant objective capturing flows from the recipient perspective; UNDP PIMS+ data outlining the scope and focus of adaptation programmes under the oversight of UNDP's adaptation team; and data from UNDP's ATLAS system, tagged as adaptation related using supervised machine learning.	Identification of the size, scope and focus of UNDP's support for climate change adaptation, where UNDP fits in the adaptation finance landscape, and how this is changing over time.	**Good:** Notwithstanding weaknesses in prevailing external and internal definitions of climate change adaptation, a robust picture of the scope and trends of UNDP's assistance can be constructed.
Analysis of perceptions of external stakeholders about UNDP's role and comparative advantages in promoting climate change adaptation	Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 stakeholders from 15 external international organizations that have partnerships with UNDP in key areas for climate change adaptation. UNDP's partnership survey data for 2017 and 2020 were also considered, as well as results of a survey conducted in the UN-wide review of multi-country office structures. Partner government views were solicited in the context of country programme evaluations, which were a key source of evidence for this evaluation. This included ICPEs carried out by evaluation team members of Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, Kosovo,[30] Maldives, Mauritius, Serbia and Seychelles.	Reflection of the contribution of UNDP to climate change adaptation and system-strengthening efforts, and perceived strengths and weaknesses of external partners.	**Good:** A cross-section of the key multilateral actors and partners were consulted. Partnership survey data and ICPEs provided robust evidence of partner views.
Analysis of interviews and roundtable discussion with UNDP staff	44 semi-structured interviews were conducted with key staff in BPPS and the Crisis Bureau, as well across UNDP's five regional bureaux. Roundtable discussions were conducted with key adaptation programme staff in three regional bureaux (RBEC, RBLAC, RBA), and key staff from RBAP and RBAS were interviewed.	Analysis of the perceptions of leading internal experts on the effectiveness of internal collaboration, and integration of adaptation programming with broader UNDP efforts. Identification of key strategic initiatives and exemplars of UNDP's adaptation practice as well as on-the-ground challenges.	**Good:** An appropriate range and number of internal staff were consulted.

[30] References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 (1999).

Table 2 (cont'd)

Method	Data source or participants	Analysis	Strength of evidence
Synthesis of evidence from evaluations	Syntheses considered: 32 ICPEs covering programmes where significant adaptation programmes have been implemented in different domains; and 94 decentralized evaluations covering a cross-section of projects in different areas where adaptation support was provided. This encompassed projects identified internally as part of UNDP's adaptation portfolio, as well as projects that are not, but are in areas where one would expect to see explicit attention paid to climate risks; 18 independent thematic evaluations conducted by the IEO of aspects of the work in the scope of this evaluation, or evaluations by external offices (especially GEF) that have covered UNDP work. (See Annex 2 online for full list of evaluations considered).	Synthesis of multiple sources of evidence to develop a credible aggregate picture of the state of the evidence about UNDP's contributions to longer term or higher level changes in adaptative capacity.	**Good (agriculture, fisheries, forestry, environmental protection), water and sanitation):** While the quality of evaluations varied, a large body of evidence was available covering work included in the scope of the evaluation. **Adequate (disaster risk reduction):** A comprehensive review of the evidence was planned but could not be completed due to the impact of the COVID-19 crisis. For the purposes of the evaluation questions, sufficient evidence in the form of existing syntheses and ICPEs conducted by the main authors were able to compensate for this gap.
Review of current and projected adaptation requirements and adaptation financing landscape	Consideration and summary of key sources of evidence covering adaptation requirements in different domains, and the availability of financing to address adaptation needs.	High-level summary of the state of the evidence about adaptation requirements and progress towards financing adaptation.	**Adequate:** Sufficient authoritative sources were available to present a succinct evidence-based summary of the adaptation landscape.
Analytical case studies of the role UNDP has played in different geographic areas and domains of support	Purposive selection of cases considering geographic balance, feasibility given time constraints, team members' prior knowledge and expertise, and the intended purpose of the case analysis in the context of the evaluation.	Identification of aspects of UNDP's work that can provide insight into more general patterns or problems.	**Adequate:** Given the breadth of the work covered, there was insufficient time to complete a rich textual analysis that would enable cases to fulfil anything other than illustrative purposes.
Consultation on scope, methodology and findings of report	Formal (peer review) and informal consultation and periodic briefings on terms of reference, emerging findings and draft reports with key UNDP policy areas. This included advice from an external advisory panel of experts who reviewed and commented on the terms of reference and draft evaluation report prior to completion.	Iterative review of draft evaluation report, incorporating clarified factual material and perceptions.	**Good:** A proportionately appropriate range of internal staff were consulted along with consideration of views of leading technical experts.

The main limitations of the methodology relate to the challenge of establishing clear evidence of the impact of UNDP's work from the available evaluative evidence. Rigorous analysis and evidence of policy and systems changes from work in capacity development or mainstreaming domains were hard to find. This was also true in relation to UNDP's biophysical interventions, reflecting measurement challenges of assessing changes in physical systems, which standard project-level evaluations (the bulk of the evidence reviewed for this piece of work) are not designed to address.

Much of the body of evidence reviewed by the evaluation team reflects interventions designed at least five years ago, for which credible evidence exists in the form of independent evaluations. However, this does mean that the evaluation is limited in its ability to quantify any improvements in design or implementation. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic limited capacity for primary data collection through field missions. This limited the depth of case study analysis that could be undertaken and capacity for consultation with government partners.

1.7 Report structure

The report is organized as follows.

- **Chapter 2** explains how global attention and action on climate resilience have evolved over the past decade and their implications for UNDP.
- **Chapter 3** examines UNDP's service offering in support of climate resilience, including whether UNDP's results-based management systems promote and support organizational learning on how it can most effectively shape climate resilience.
- **Chapter 4** examines the effectiveness of UNDP's positioning in support of global adaptation efforts.
- **Chapter 5** examines key aspects of the design of UNDP's adaptation support programme and projects.
- **Chapter 6** examines how UNDP has structured its climate resilience support to SIDS, considering their vulnerabilities.
- **Chapter 7** sets out the conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2.

UNDP'S CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION SUPPORT IN CONTEXT

This chapter addresses how global attention and action on climate resilience have evolved over the past decade, and the implications for UNDP.

2.1 Key messages

- Global warming will require a stepwise change in the ability of governments and their partners to anticipate and mitigate climate-related risks. The IPCC has calculated that even 1.5 degrees C of warming, the level targeted by the Paris Agreement, cannot be considered 'safe' for most nations, communities, ecosystems and sectors, and poses significant risks to natural and human systems. Models using emissions based on current climate policies suggest warming will exceed 3 degrees.
- Adaptation costs will be considerable even if the Paris Agreement targets are met, with the Global Commission on Adaptation suggesting a price tag of $180 billion annually from 2020 to 2030. However, existing estimates of the costs of adaptation are likely to be underestimates due to the ways that direct climate change will likely lead to indirect climate change impacts, dramatically amplifying costs in ways that are very difficult for existing models to predict.
- Mitigation and adaptation efforts have expanded substantially in recent years. However, they do not yet approach the scale required to avoid substantial damage to the economy, environment and human health over the coming decades. Financing for adaptation is increasing, but lags well behind demand and projected requirements, and UNFCCC targets. Concessional finance for adaptation has lagged finance for mitigation, where private investment is a major component.
- The COVID-19 crisis is revealing the underlying vulnerability of development gains to external shocks. It offers an insight into the likely impact of future climate-related shocks if the world fails to take the action required to contain warming, and to facilitate effective adaptation.

2.2 Projected impacts of climate change and adaptation requirements

Given remarkable declines in extreme deprivation over the last three decades or more, it is tempting to be lured into the belief that continued progress is inevitable. The coronavirus pandemic should act as a warning about the falsity of such beliefs. Progress is not inevitable. Without substantial and sustained climate mitigation and adaptation action, the world is heading for a stunning reversal of many if not all the achievements of the last half century.

IPCC and other authoritative reports demonstrate that, without substantial mitigation and adaptation, climate change will result in accelerating losses to natural and physical assets and act as a drag on economic growth over this century (Box 1). The IPCC's 2019 assessment highlights the differences in the scale of the likely impacts between 2 degrees and 1.5 degrees C of warming. It shows that even the 1.5 degrees C targeted by the Paris Agreement cannot be considered 'safe' and poses significant risks to natural and human systems.[31]

[31] IPCC, 'IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate', H.-O. Pörtner, D.C. Roberts, V. Masson-Delmotte, P. Zhai, M. Tignor, E. Poloczanska, K. Mintenbeck, A. Alegría, M. Nicolai, A. Okem, J. Petzold, B. Rama, N.M. Weyer (eds.), p. 153, 2019.

BOX 1. Selected findings from research on likely climate change impacts

Extreme hazard events

- Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C would limit risks of increases in heavy precipitation events on a global scale and in several regions, and reduce risks associated with water availability and extreme drought.[32]
- Human exposure to increased flooding is projected to be substantially lower at 1.5 degrees C than at 2 degrees C of global warming, although projected changes create regionally differentiated risks.[33]
- Climate-related disasters are among the main drivers of food insecurity, both in the aftermath of a disaster and in the long run. Drought is a major driver of food insecurity and contributes to negative impacts on nutrition. Floods and tropical storms also affect food security by destroying livelihood assets.[34]
- There has been a sharp increase in reported climate-related disasters including extreme weather events, from 3,656 climate-related events between 1980 and 1999 to 6,681 climate-related disasters in the period 2000 to 2019.[35]

Ecosystems and biodiversity

- We are losing species at a rate 1,000 times greater than at any other time in recorded human history, and 1 million species face extinction.[36]
- 70 percent to 90 percent of coral reefs will be lost at just 1.5 degrees C of warming (a level we may reach in only 11 years), and 2 degrees C of warming will result in the total loss of coral reefs from all of the world's tropical and subtropical regions.[37]

Sea level rise and coastal flood damage

- The IPCC's Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate finds that global mean sea levels will most likely rise between 0.95 feet (0.29m) and 3.61 feet (1.1m) by the end of this century.
- Rising seas increase the likelihood of flood events, including tidal flooding, storm surge and other forms of flooding. The report finds that, "In the absence of adaptation, more intense and frequent extreme sea level events, together with trends in coastal development will increase expected annual flood damages by 2-3 orders of magnitude by 2100."[38]

Agriculture and fisheries

- Climate change and variability are identified as significant drivers for the rise in global hunger over the three previous years (in a 2018 report), returning it to levels from a decade ago and indicating that the world may not meet its Sustainable Development Goal of eradicating hunger by 2030.[39]
- Droughts and floods, after affecting food production in key producing regions, are followed by food price spikes, making it difficult for poor urban and rural consumers, including those whose production was hit by the disaster, to access food. These spikes in affected areas can last for up to nine months.[40]

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32 IPCC, 'Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty', World Meteorological Organization, p. 32, 2018.

33 Ibid.

34 IPCC, 'Food security and food production systems,' in: *Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, pp. 485-533, 2014.

35 UN Office of Disaster Risk Reduction and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, 2020, 'Human Cost of Disasters: An Overview of the last 20 years, 2000–2019.'

36 Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), 'Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services', IPBES secretariat, Bonn, Germany, 2019.

37 See also the reference in the foreword: 'IPCC special report: Global Warming of 1.5 °C', https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/.

38 IPCC, 'IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate', op. cit.

39 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, 'The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2018, Building climate resilience for food security and nutrition', 2018.

40 FAO, 'The impact of disasters and crises on agriculture and food security 2017', 2018.

Box 1 (cont'd)

Differential impacts

- For some 680 million people living in low-lying coastal communities, around 10 percent (65 million) of whom live in SIDS, climate change represents a direct existential challenge.[41]
- Without concrete climate and development action, around 143 million people – or around 2.8 percent of the population across the three regions of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America – could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of climate change.[42]
- Climate change and climate variability worsen poverty and exacerbate inequalities, especially for those disadvantaged by gender, age, race, class, caste, indigeneity and disability.[43] Illustrating this point, a study of 141 disasters between 1981 and 2002 found that when economic and social rights were realized equally for both sexes, disaster-related death rates did not differ significantly for men and women. But when women's rights and socioeconomic status were not equal to those of men, more women than men died in disasters; boys were given preferential treatment during rescue efforts; and, following disasters, women and girls suffered more from shortages of food and economic resources.[44]

Models using projected emissions based on current climate policies suggest warming will exceed 3 degrees C, raising the prospect of even more catastrophic impacts.[45]

As the planet warms, certain types of extreme weather are becoming more frequent and severe, including heat waves, precipitation and drought.

Rising temperatures, extreme heat, drought, wildfire on rangelands and heavy downpours are expected to increasingly disrupt agricultural productivity in most countries. Expected increases in challenges to livestock health, declines in crop yields and quality, and changes in extreme weather events threaten rural livelihoods, sustainable food security and price stability.

Ecosystems and the benefits they provide to society are being altered by climate change, and these impacts are projected to continue. Without substantial and sustained reductions in global greenhouse gas emissions, transformative impacts on some ecosystems will occur; some coral reef and sea ice ecosystems are already experiencing such transformational changes.

Across the world, the quality and quantity of water available for use by people and ecosystems are being affected by climate change. This increases risks and costs to agriculture, energy production, industry, recreation and the environment. Rising air and water temperatures and changes in precipitation are intensifying droughts, increasing heavy downpours, reducing snowpack and causing declines in surface water quality. Groundwater depletion is exacerbating drought risk in many parts of the world, and dependable and safe water supplies for many communities are threatened by drought, flooding and saltwater contamination due to sea-level rise.

The cost of measures required to adapt to these phenomena will be substantial even if the Paris Agreement targets are met. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) estimates that the annual cost of adaptation could range from $140 billion to $300 billion by 2030 and from $280 billion to $500 billion by 2050.[46] A similar estimate has been made by the Global Commission on Adaptation, which puts adaptation costs at $180 billion annually from 2020 to 2030.[47] These costs are likely to be

41 IPCC, 'IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate', op. cit.
42 World Bank Group, 'Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration', The World Bank, 2018.
43 IPCC, 2014, 'Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability'.
44 Eric Neumayer and Thomas Plümper, 2007, 'The gendered nature of natural disasters: the impact of catastrophic events on the gender gap in life expectancy, 1981–2002', *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 97 (3), pp. 551-566.
45 J. Tollefson, 'Can the world kick its fossil-fuel addiction fast enough?', in: *Nature* 556, 422-425, 2018. https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-04931-6.
46 UNEP, 'The Adaptation Finance Gap Report', 2016.
47 Global Commission on Adaptation, 'Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate', 2019.

much higher if mitigation efforts fall short of what is required to meet the Paris targets. One of the most compelling arguments for limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees C is because climate resilience for most systems could be achieved without enormous efforts and widespread transformational adaptation.

2.3 Cascading and compounding consequences

Evidence about the current and likely impacts of climate change in different geographic regions and ecosystems is imperfect but compelling. What is less difficult to predict is the ways in which the indirect impacts of climate change are likely to dramatically amplify costs, ushering in what the former head of the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) has predicted will be known as an era of disasters.[48]

On how this will play out, the IPCC notes limitations in the knowledge base. It observes that "[t]he literature on compound as well as interacting risk at warming of 1.5°C and 2.0°C is limited" but notes that "risks across energy, food, and water sectors could overlap spatially and temporally, creating new and exacerbating current hazards, exposures, and vulnerabilities that will affect increasing numbers of people and regions".[49] Among other factors identified by UNEP, this is a key reason why commonly cited estimates of the costs of adaptation in developing countries are likely to be underestimates. In fact, UNEP has suggested limitations of current estimates make it likely the costs of adaptation could be two to three times higher than the range cited in the literature for the 2020–2030 period and four to five times higher by 2050.[50]

One of the high-profile examples cited of indirect impacts and costs relates to the destabilizing impacts of climate-induced rural-to-urban migration of 1.5 million people in the Syrian Arab Republic in the late 2000s, both within and beyond the country. While the causal links between climate change and conflict are contested, it is sobering to reflect on the prospect of a threefold increase in current levels of climate-induced displacement, which the World Bank has predicted will occur by 2050 if we maintain the current warming trajectory.[51]

2.4 Progress towards adaptation commitments

An important component of the global response to climate change is the commitment by developed country parties to the UNFCCC to mobilize an additional $100 billion of climate finance per year by 2020 to meet developing countries' mitigation and adaptation needs. This commitment was to "assist the developing country Parties that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change in meeting the costs of adaptation".[52]

Notwithstanding the challenge of measuring progress against this commitment,[53] available tracking data show that adaptation finance is increasing, reaching $30 billion in 2019 off the back of increased commitments from development finance institutions.[54] The GCF, established in 2010, has become a leading player among the multilateral environment funds.

This trend is positive. But adaptation finance is still well short of what UNEP has estimated as a $50 billion annual adaptation requirement, identified

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48 R. Glasser, 'Preparing for the Era of Disasters', Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2019.

49 IPCC, 'IPCC Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate', op. cit.

50 UNEP, 'The Adaptation Finance Gap Report 2016', UNEP, Nairobi, Kenya, 2016.

51 World Bank Group, 'Groundswell: Preparing for Internal Climate Migration', The World Bank, 2018. This report estimates that without concrete climate and development action, around 143 million people – or around 2.8 percent of the population across the three regions of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America – could be forced to move within their own countries to escape the slow-onset impacts of climate change.

52 Report of the Conference of the Parties on its fifteenth session, Copenhagen, 7–19 December 2009.

53 T. Shine and G. Campillo, 'The Role of Development Finance in Climate Action Post-2015', OECD Publishing, 2016.

54 Climate Policy Initiative, 'Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2019'. The recent pledge by the World Bank Group to double its commitment to adaptation to $50 billion over 2021–2025 illustrates the key role of development finance institutions in financing climate adaptation. See: World Bank Group, 'The World Bank Group Action Plan on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience', 2019.

by 50 developing countries in their nationally determined contributions. It is still further short of the estimated $180 billion amount suggested by the Global Commission on Adaptation as the likely actual annual requirement.[55] Adaptation finance is also dwarfed by mitigation finance, reflecting the lack of significant private sector investment in adaptation actions compared to mitigation actions. This creates an imbalance that runs counter to the Paris Agreement aspiration to achieve a balance between adaptation and mitigation.[56]

In the absence of a definition of what would constitute 'new and additional' resources, and a baseline against which progress could be judged, it is difficult to assess the extent to which current trends represent progress against the UNFCCC commitment.[57] Adaptation finance is undoubtedly growing, and with it the focus of the development community on likely adaptation requirements. Yet it is possible the observed trend reflects a change in the composition of concessional finance for developing countries, rather than additional resources per se.

Given the probability of continuing gaps, it will be critical for countries to leverage scarce public and other concessional financial resources in a more transformative way. One of the key challenges in this respect will be to redress the imbalance between preventive versus reactive responses to the risks posed by climate change. One area where there is significant scope to do so is in disaster risk management, where funding has typically been highly volatile, ex-post and tiny compared with financing for disaster response. UNDRR has estimated that the $5.2 billion invested by donors in DRR between 2005 and 2017 represents just 3.8 percent of humanitarian financing – less than $4 for every $100 spent.[58] Given the very high returns from preventive measures such as effective early warning systems, shifting the emphasis of humanitarian assistance to preventive measures could provide very large payoffs.[59]

In line with the prevailing bias, UNDP's spending on early recovery assistance after major disasters is more than double its spending on DRR, and more than its combined spending on DRR and climate change adaptation.

2.5 The implications of COVID-19 for adaptation efforts

> COVID-19 – which emanated from the wild – has shown how human health is intimately connected with our relationship to the natural world. As we encroach on nature and deplete vital habitats, increasing numbers of species are at risk. That includes humanity and the future we want.
>
> —UN Secretary-General António Guterres, 22 May 2020[60]

The COVID-19 crisis underlines the vulnerability of development gains to external shocks. It also offers an insight into the likely impact of future climate-related shocks if the world fails to take the action required to contain warming. New estimates by UNDP's Human Development Report Office

55 UNEP, 'The Adaptation Gap Report', UNEP, 2018.
56 Climate Policy Initiative, 'Global Landscape of Climate Finance', 2019.
57 Overseas Development Institute, 'Coding and tracking adaptation finance: lessons and opportunities for monitoring adaptation finance across international and national scales', Overseas Development Institute, 2012.
58 UNDRR, 'Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction', UNDRR, 2019.
59 The Global Commission on Adaptation identified disaster risk management systems as a key adaptation priority, providing extremely high rates of return, and assessed the benefit/cost ratio of investments in early warning systems to be 10:1. Global Commission on Adaptation, 2019, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate*.
60 UN News, 'Build back better and preserve biodiversity after COVID-19 pandemic: UN chief', UN News, 20 May 2020. https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/05/1064752.

suggest that global human development is on course to decline this year, for the first time since the measure was developed in 1990.[61]

Unless it acts as a spur for more decisive global action, the COVID-19 crisis will likely have deep repercussions for global efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. The strain COVID-19 has placed on public financial resources reduces the fiscal space for governments to meet adaptation and mitigation requirements under the Paris Agreement and to find more sustainable pathways towards development.

This reduced fiscal space is having more immediate effects. As seen in the HIV/AIDS crisis years ago, morbidity and mortality from the virus in rural areas can be expected to create a cycle of food production declines, increased hunger and poverty, and less resilience and ability to adapt to climate change and disasters. Legislation, regulation and enforcement are likely to suffer as political attention focuses on economic recovery from COVID-19; evidence is already emerging of increased illegal logging and wildlife poaching.[62] Ecotourism revenue is an important source of funding for conservation in many countries, and especially for SIDS, so the loss of tourism income may increase pressures on natural resources. Biodiversity funding may be affected from shifting priorities by governments and donors. The paradox here is that intact functioning ecosystems, with low rates of conversion from natural habitats, are critical for delivering ecosystem services including regulating zoonotic disease outbreaks.

The COVID-19 crisis also demonstrates that many of the same factors that led to increased vulnerability to climate change also contributed to unsuccessful, weak or ineffective responses to the pandemic.

2.6 UNDP's support for climate change adaptation

Leveraging its strong presence on the ground, UNDP has captured a significant share of increasing adaptation commitments and is well placed to continue doing so (Figure 1). Building on a strong portfolio of projects funded under the GEF Trust Fund, LDCF and Adaptation Fund, there has been significant recent growth arising from major commitments from the GCF since 2016. UNDP garnered roughly 16 percent (30 projects, $1 billion) of the new finance made available through the GCF, becoming the largest accredited entity for approved projects, and the second largest in terms of funding amount. UNDP was particularly successful in mobilizing funds for adaptation projects, which accounted for around 41 percent (21 projects, $646.4 million) of GCF adaptation finance. Adaptation finance mobilized from OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors in 2018 was also double historical levels.

Even with UNDP's significant share of adaptation flows through vertical funds, the scale of the resources UNDP delivers should be kept in perspective. According to data compiled by OECD, UNDP delivered around 2 percent of the $170 billion in ODA commitments made between 2010 and 2018 that were flagged as having climate change adaptation as a significant or principal objective (Table 3). Sixty-eight percent of the climate change adaptation ODA was provided by OECD DAC members, mostly through direct channels. For the multilateral/bilateral component, UNDP was the channel of delivery for about 7 percent of DAC member funding channelled through multilateral organizations, which amounted to around $1.4 billion between 2010 and 2018. UNDP accounted for a higher share (12 percent) of funding provided by vertical funds (classified as 'other multilaterals' in Table 3).

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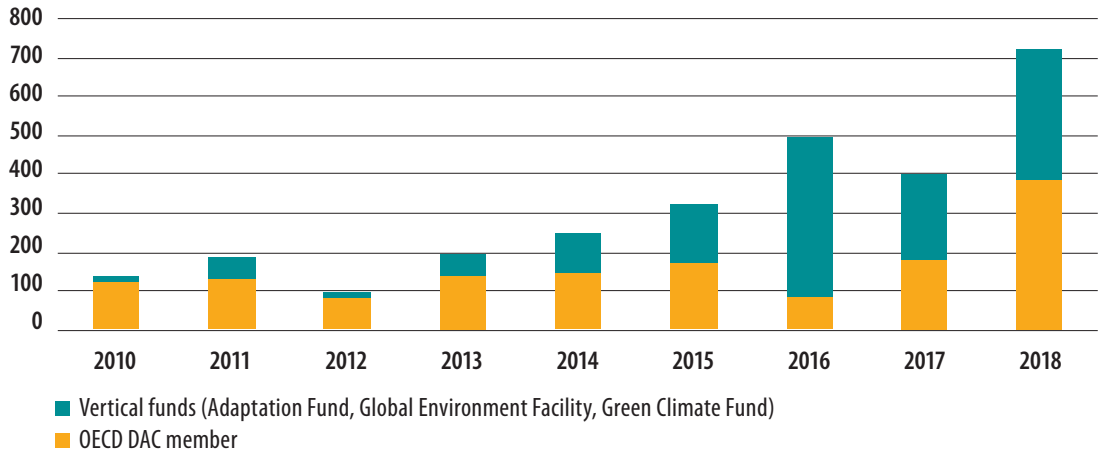
[61] UNDP, 'COVID-19 and Human Development: Assessing the Crisis, Envisioning the Recovery', UNDP, New York, 2020.

[62] J. Spring, 'Illegal Loggers Uncowed by Coronavirus as Deforestation Rises in Brazil', Reuters, 10 April 2020. https://uk.reuters.com/article/us-brazil-environment/illegal-loggers-uncowed-by-coronavirus-as-deforestation-rises-in-brazil-idUKKCN21S1I1. Rare Bird Alert, 'Wildlife Criminals talking advantage of COVID-19 Crisis', Rare Bird Alert, 13 April 2020. https://www.rarebirdalert.co.uk/v2/Content/Criminals_taking_advantage_of_COVID_19_crisis.aspx?s_id=690721291; https://www.conservation.org/press-releases/2020/04/21/conservation-international-reports-increase-in-poaching-and-tropical-deforestation-due-to-covid-19-restrictions.

FIGURE 1. ODA commitments to climate change adaptation channelled through UNDP, 2010–2018 (Millions US$, 2018 constant price)



Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System

TABLE 3. UNDP's support for climate change adaptation in context, 2010–2018, ODA commitment, 2018 constant (Millions US$)

Components	Adaptation
Development Assistance Committee members	**116,989**
of which provided through multilateral organizations	21,629
of which provided through United Nations agency fund or commission	8,759
of which provided through UNDP	1,445
Multilateral development banks	**41,705**
Non-DAC donors	**589**
of which provided through United Nations agency fund or commission	11
of which provided through UNDP	0
Other multilaterals	**10,981**
of which provided through United Nations agency fund or commission	2,157
of which provided through UNDP	1,362
Private donors	**535**
TOTAL	**170,800**
of which provided through UNDP	2,808

Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System

Additionally, government co-financing contributions to UNDP's climate change adaptation projects funded by vertical funds are estimated at $1.1 billion between 2010 and 2019.

Chapter 3.

UNDP CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION SERVICE OFFER

This chapter examines UNDP's service offer in support of climate change adaptation and how well internal policies, people and structures position it to support global adaptation efforts.

3.1 Key messages

- UNDP has captured a significant share of increasing finance for climate change adaptation. It implements an extensive portfolio of programming that stands out for its geographic and sectoral breadth compared to support provided by other development partners.
- The growth in the adaptation portfolio has enabled UNDP to develop strong expertise in several of the sectors that are critical for adaptation through expansion of its vertical fund portfolio. UNDP has made progress integrating this expertise into its business model in the formulation of the Global Policy Network.
- Building on these achievements, there is room to clarify and strengthen roles, responsibilities and structures for technical support and oversight of the adaptation portfolio, and collaboration with other key areas of UNDP.
- Uncertainty about global emissions pathways and the impact of different outcomes will require the development of adaptation strategies that place a premium on learning by doing and adaptive management. UNDP's results management systems and culture fall well short of what is needed for this to happen consistently and well.

3.2 Alignment of resources with strategic plan objectives

3.2.1 Programming resources

Finding 1. UNDP has captured a significant share of growth in finance devoted to climate change adaptation. It implements an extensive portfolio of work that stands out for its geographic and sectoral breadth compared to support provided by other development partners. However, this work is highly fragmented and divided into distinct funding streams with their own distinct emphases, funding criteria and rules. UNDP's limited funding flexibility constrains its capacity to develop more holistic and integrated responses to climate risk at the country level.

UNDP has leveraged its technical expertise and office network to achieve an increase of more than 50 percent in resources committed to climate change adaptation, with particular success in capturing new finance made available through the GCF (Figure 1, Chapter 2). UNDP's success reflects the advantage of its strong country presence, which enables a timely and effective response to government requests for assistance in navigating access to finance. It also reflects UNDP's ability to provide high-quality technical support, including expertise in project development.

A key challenge for UNDP's adaptation support is that funding streams for adaptation finance are fragmented between climate, humanitarian and development realms. This makes it challenging for UNDP country offices to develop more holistic and integrated responses to climate risk. The close connection between DRR funding and humanitarian budgets means it is often perceived as a humanitarian agenda and is short term and event

focused. Development programmes often fail to focus enough on the structural causes of vulnerabilities to hazards, a deficit that may grow larger as climate-related risks are magnified. GEF funding, a source of a significant amount of UNDP's adaptation-related support, is tied to the goals of the environmental conventions (biodiversity, land degradation and the UNFCCC) it was established to support. Climate funds are restricted to measures that can be shown to complement but remain distinct from mainstream development assistance – a difficult line to draw given the close relationship between adaptation and development.[63]

There are no easy answers to this situation. Interviews with staff revealed they were conscious of these challenges and actively pursuing more integrated and long-term solutions. This includes through vehicles like the GCF, which allow UNDP to promote adaptation on a bigger scale than is typically possible with other vertical funds. Staff were also conscious of the need to build stronger links between different service offers, so mechanisms to facilitate connections and cross-team collaboration will be important for this objective (see further discussion on this point in Finding 2). UNDP will also need to strengthen its abilities to access and deliver blended finance, which will require stronger engagement with public and private financial institutions, both domestic and international.

The challenge of navigating these complexities is exacerbated by the fact that most country offices have access to very limited flexible funding for programming that is outside the timeline or scope of ongoing projects. This reflects an inability to establish significant flexible funding sources that could be used to supplement funding mobilized for specific projects. Resilience and DRR sub-windows in UNDP's funding windows have received less than $2 million in contributions over the last four years. Base funding is limited by a resource allocation model that focuses the lion's share of UNDP's own resources on low-income and least developed countries.[64]

UNDP's Climate Promise Programme provides some potential to bolster and enhance policy dialogue and support, especially where it can be used in concert with project-level resources, although this is spread thinly and is not a long-term mechanism. This also helps to connect country-level work with the significant contributions UNDP makes to global advocacy and knowledge production on climate change adaptation.

3.2.2 Technical capacity

Finding 2. UNDP has established a strong cadre of technical experts in key climate change adaptation sectors through expansion of its vertical fund portfolio and has made progress integrating this expertise into its business model. There is room for improvement in clarifying roles, responsibilities and structures for technical support and oversight of the adaptation portfolio and strengthening collaboration with other key areas of UNDP.

While UNDP is not a specialist agency, global polls show it is a thought leader on global development issues. This reputation has been built on the back of an extensive cadre of international and national technical experts and engagement in diverse policy forums.[65] Through its success in mobilizing resources from vertical funds, UNDP has established a strong and extensive network of experts in different sectors covered by its adaptation portfolio with very little corporate investment. This network

63 World Resources Institute, 'Deploying adaptation finance for maximum impact', 2018.

64 As is addressed by the IEO's evaluation of UNDP's support for middle-income countries, there are good arguments for prioritizing low-income countries and LDCs on grounds of UNDP's focus on "leave no one behind" and endeavouring to "reach the furthest behind first". However, it is also important to recognize that per capita income is a very crude indicator of vulnerability, especially when the likely impacts of climate change are considered (for further detailed discussion of this in relation to SIDS, see chapter 6). The understandable concern to focus resources on the poorest countries also needs to be balanced against the expectation that UNDP will maximize its presence on the ground, to act as the operational backbone of the UN system and as an 'integrator' of countries and United Nations partners' efforts to realize the 2030 Agenda. Playing a substantive role in strengthening norms and standards and fostering collective action on cross-boundary challenges such as climate change implies the need to include different criteria.

65 See S. Custer, M. DiLorenzo, T. Masaki, T. Sethi and A. Harutyunyan, 'Listening to Leaders 2018: Is development cooperation tuned-in or tone-deaf?' Williamsburg, VA: AidData at William & Mary, 2018.

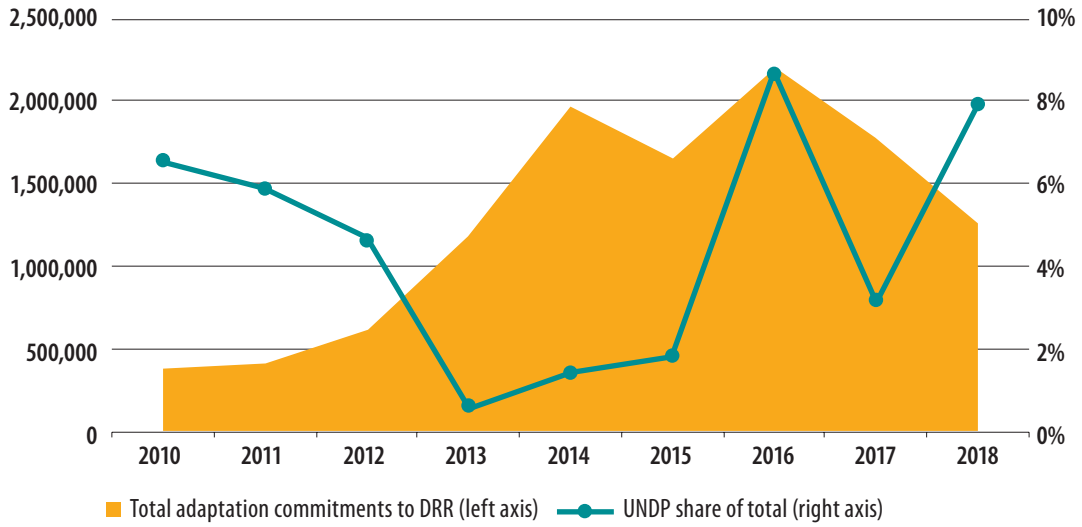
is the biggest grouping of experts UNDP has. It is well structured and organized to take advantage of resource mobilization opportunities and oversee and support country office portfolios, especially for vertical fund resources. In some respects, it provides a model for the Global Policy Network, a network of thematic experts who advise country offices and programme countries.

One evolving aspect of this network is that its development has been very closely tied to the requirements of supporting countries to access finance under global environment conventions. This is reflected in the fact that the team was previously called the global environmental finance team, and until recently roughly half of its staff had job titles denoting the source of funding for their position, rather than simply their area of specialization.

One of the achievements of the Global Policy Network realignment was to confirm that the focus and scope of the support from this team now extends beyond accessing global environmental finance. Therefore, the unit's name has been changed to the nature, climate and energy unit. This more accurately reflects the full scope of the unit's work and role within UNDP, as it coordinates and provides strategic leadership to all UNDP policy and programme work in nature, climate and energy, including work outside of the vertical fund portfolio. This is an important first step.

Operating from the current platform, the challenge will be to systematize oversight and technical support structures for the entire climate change adaptation portfolio, including resources not sourced from vertical funds. While there is a well-organized structure for technical oversight and support of the vertical fund portfolio, with clear benefits for pipeline development and oversight, the same cannot be said for projects and programmes funded from other sources. It is even difficult to identify these in UNDP's systems. Moreover, UNDP's technical experts are already stretched thinly across many different countries, practice areas and projects.[66] This will make it difficult for them to expand their oversight and support beyond the vertical fund portfolio.

FIGURE 2. Adaptation ODA commitments channelled through UNDP for DRR purposes in context, 2010–2018 (Commitment, Millions US$, 2018 constant price)



Source: OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System

[66] The ongoing performance audit of UNDP's management of GEF-funded projects by UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation, for example, has assessed that one adviser had 60 GEF projects to monitor, 6 advisers had more than 30 and 21 advisers had more than 20.

Another challenge will be to ensure appropriate structures for technical support and oversight over the DRR component of UNDP's climate change adaptation portfolio. Recent restructuring has seen a loss of technical specialists in DRR, and access to specialists outside of RBAP is not strong, reflecting an imbalance in the size of the portfolio in RBAP, compared to other bureaux.[67] The impact of multiple restructures and loss of capacity of the DRR and recovery team in UNDP is evident in resource mobilization performance. There has been a significant growth in the allocation of ODA for DRR over the past 10 years, marked by donors as supporting climate change adaptation. However, it has only been since 2016 that UNDP has had significant success in capturing a commensurate share of that increase, with GCF projects accounting for this recent growth (Figure 2). By value, this situation means that the UNDP climate change adaptation (CCA) team in BPPS now oversees a larger DRR portfolio than that managed by the DRR and recovery team in the Crisis Bureau.

UNDP advised that post-disaster recovery and foundational DRR capacities for emergency responses are still the responsibility of the DRR and recovery team, but most of the risk reduction work is now under the adaptation portfolio. Given the significant overlaps between the work undertaken in these areas, it will be important to ensure appropriate mechanisms for coordination and collaboration are established.

3.3 Effectiveness of internal collaboration

Finding 3. UNDP has struggled to develop effective models for cross-team collaboration that would form the basis for the design of more integrated solutions for climate change adaptation and climate proofing of UNDP's development portfolio. Important steps have been taken to address this in the formulation of the Global Policy Network.

Development of integrated solutions and models of internal collaboration that support them in UNDP is a work in progress.[68] UNDP has experimented with different structures to improve the integration of different funding streams and improve internal collaboration in supporting climate change adaptation. As part of the restructuring process started in 2014, UNDP established a climate change and disaster risk reduction cluster in the expectation that it would enable a more integrated service to help national and local governments mitigate and respond to climate change-related shocks.[69] This structure was then disbanded when a separate Crisis Bureau was re-established in August 2018, incorporating the disaster risk reduction team.

Given the need to settle existing structures, the evaluation does not advocate further structural changes. However, within the current configuration it will be important to ensure that the work on risk-informed approaches to development needed to adapt to climate change does not get marginalized by the intense and immediate demand for assistance in preventing and responding to rapid disaster events. In this context, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement emphasize the importance of increasing attention to slow-onset hazards and integrating this into DRR planning.

Another risk that needs to be managed in the current structure relates to the continued lack of integrated oversight of climate change adaptation finance and climate risk in UNDP. Only 4 of the 125 projects identified by UNDP as specifically focused on climate change adaptation involve bilateral funding; the remainder are funded through the environmental vertical funds (GEF, GCF, etc.). No projects involving

[67] Over half of all commitments to disaster risk reduction channelled through UNDP recorded by OECD as for the purpose of climate change adaptation between 2010 and 2018 were to countries covered by RBAP.

[68] The midterm review of the current strategic plan reflects on progress as follows: "UNDP is gradually building the institutional capacity needed to provide the quality of collaboration its partners expect, but this is not easy. Real challenges exist in dismantling long-standing siloes and developing a new organizational culture. Not all the country support platforms are yet truly transformative; some are more akin to rebranding. There is much more to do to improve the connection between country offices, support platforms, the Global Policy Network and the Accelerator Labs to share lessons and scale successes."

[69] UNDP, 'Management response to Strategic Plan Evaluation', United Nations Development Programme, 2017.

local cost sharing are included in this list. This suggests that the attention of the UNDP adaptation team, as seen through its internal structures and oversight mechanisms, is squarely on its vertical fund work.

Data derived from donor reporting to the OECD on the extent to which ODA principally or significantly targeted climate change adaptation as an objective suggests the scope of UNDP's adaptation assistance is much wider than its vertical fund portfolio.[70] According to data compiled by the OECD, bilateral funding of UNDP's programmes is equally if not more significant than funding accessed from vertical funds. A significant number of bilaterally funded investments are surprisingly absent from systems established to track and profile UNDP's climate change adaptation work publicly. This includes, for example, major long-standing programmes in agriculture and food security, projects funded through the European Union's Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative, major urban resilience initiatives and a wide array of work on climate information and early warning systems funded through small and large DRR initiatives.

Similarly, data from an internal tagging exercise conducted to identify projects that state climate adaptation as an objective presents a much more expansive picture than can be found by looking at the portfolio of projects directly overseen by the UNDP adaptation team. These data suggest most of UNDP's adaptation work is undertaken outside of the oversight of the adaptation team and is focused on a wider array of domains than articulated in the climate change adaptation service offer.[71]

Both the OECD- and adaptation-tagged UNDP data also indicate the broader sphere of UNDP's adaptation-related work is supported by a much wider array of donors than the portfolio managed by the CCA team. Unlike the CCA team portfolio, which is almost completely dependent on vertical funds, the broader sphere of UNDP's adaptation work is undertaken with more diverse contributions, and connects to more of the Sustainable Development Goals (Table 4). These other funders are European Union and bilateral sources (around 50 percent of funding), partner governments (14 percent) and UNDP regular resources (14 percent).

TABLE 4. Contributions of UNDP's climate change adaptation portfolio to SDG achievement, 2018–2019 (Millions US$)

	UNDP oversight responsibilities	
Sustainable Development Goals	**CCA team**	**Others**
Goal 1: No poverty	43.7	159.0
Goal 2: Zero hunger	–	10.1
Goal 3: Good health and well-being	–	2.8
Goal 4: Quality education	–	3.1
Goal 5: Gender equality	–	0.2
Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation	–	0.2
Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy	–	8.3
Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth	–	5.8
Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	–	10.1
Goal 10: Reduced inequality	13.2	54.3
Goal 13: Climate action	73.3	78.1

[70] Specifically, under the OECD system ODA should be classified as adaptation related if it "intends to reduce the vulnerability of human or natural systems to the current and expected impacts of climate change, including climate variability, by maintaining or increasing resilience, through increased ability to adapt to, or absorb, climate change stresses, shocks and variability and/or by helping reduce exposure to them."

[71] UNDP's climate change adaptation service offer identifies seven thematic areas of support: mainstreaming adaptation; livelihoods; ecosystem-based adaptation; food security and agriculture; water and coastal resilience; urban resilience; climate information and early warning systems.

Table 4 (cont'd)

Sustainable Development Goals	UNDP oversight responsibilities	
	CCA team	Others
Goal 14: Life below water	1.1	32.8
Goal 15: Life on land	1.9	17.8
Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	–	41.3
Goal 17: Partnerships for sustainable development	–	3.7
Unspecified	–	0.2
Total	**133.202**	**428.041**

Source: UNDP climate-tagged ATLAS data.

Note: UNDP does not currently have in place a system for tracking the extent to which climate change adaptation is an objective for projects. To address this, UNDP has completed a tagging exercise using machine learning to identify whether adaptation is a focus for project outputs based on coding of output descriptions. Data available from this exercise cover 2018 and 2019. These data are not comparable to OECD data referred to elsewhere in this report.

These disconnects reflect the fact that adaptation is a cross-cutting consideration,[72] the scope of which goes beyond the service offers for which UNDP's climate change adaptation team is responsible. However, it also reflects weaknesses in systems for tracking projects that have climate change adaptation objectives, or are exposed to climate risk, across UNDP. A separate, parallel information system has been established at some expense to support oversight and management of the requirements of policies on environmental vertical funds (GEF, GCF). This reinforces a narrow view of UNDP's climate adaptation programming and reduces scope for more integrated oversight. Weaknesses in climate risk screening, a key part of project design, are addressed in chapter 5.

3.4 Adequacy of systems for organizational learning

Finding 4. UNDP's systems do not effectively capture the results and impact of its investments in promoting climate change adaptation, or the nature and scope of UNDP's influence beyond project boundaries.

UNDP plays a constructive and significant role in promoting climate action and has achieved some notable results. However, looking across a body of project evaluations covering a broad cross section of UNDP's adaptation support, it is difficult to identify compelling evidence about outcomes and impacts. Two thirds of the project evaluations reviewed in the environmental protection area cited this as a major limitation.

One key dimension of this problem relates to the challenge of measuring or assessing policy influence, reflecting the fact that UNDP is largely not in control of higher level intended outcomes. This makes it difficult if not impossible to determine the significance of UNDP's influence over cited results. At the portfolio level, aggregate measures provide a sense of the scale and reach of UNDP's work, but have significant limitations as evidence of impact.

As one example, UNDP has reported that, as a result of its support between 2014 and 2017, 1,388 disaster reduction and adaptation plans were put into place at national and subnational levels in 62 countries. This measure is useful in that it captures the breadth of UNDP's support. However, it is hard to assess the significance of this measure in the absence of accompanying evidence about the quality and impact of those plans and the extent to which UNDP's involvement in them contributed to meaningful changes on the ground. Accompanying measures of the quality and impact of plans, regulations, legislation, reports or guidelines are unfortunately very difficult to find.

[72] The OECD data include major donor-funded humanitarian programmes in Afghanistan, Iraq and South Sudan, to name a few, as well as major donor initiatives in areas of forestry, international waters, disaster risk management and biodiversity conservation.

Another dimension of this challenge derives from the complexity of rigorously measuring adaptation and resilience.[73] Inherent uncertainties surrounding the world's emissions pathway mean any assessment of impact is only as good as the assumptions on which it is based. Many evaluations face a difficult if not impossible task of assessing likely long-term outcomes at the end of only one cycle, when activities have barely been completed, and affording them little ability to test the veracity of these assumptions. Working in both human and biophysical systems, uncertainties abound about cause and effect.

In meeting the accountability requirements and needs of different funding partners and delivery targets, it is hard to create space and resources for more intelligent narratives about UNDP's contributions.

There are no simple or straightforward answers about how to overcome these challenges. However, an understanding of their many dimensions reinforces the importance of establishing more effective results management systems and more intelligent forms of accountability than those that currently exist in UNDP (Box 2).

BOX 2. Challenges in improving UNDP's results-based management architecture

IEO's evaluations and others have extensively analysed UNDP's results management architecture. What these say is that UNDP has a relatively weak culture of results-based management, characterized by compliance with policies and expectations and a lack of robust internal discussion about performance. This is well captured by the IEO's evaluation of the last strategic plan, which reported that:

- Improved transparency has generated a proliferation of overly demanding, even counter-productive, compliance monitoring and reporting tools and requirements. These measures are not sufficiently focused on course correction, learning or knowledge management. Country offices pointed to a perverse process in which more energy and time are put into dashboards and poorly integrated reporting systems than into delivering development results.[74]
- IEO independent country programme evaluations (ICPEs) conducted since this observation was made do not suggest the situation has improved. They include consistent criticisms of the quality of internal progress reporting, a symptom of weak results-based management. They point out a common problem of weak results frameworks, which drive the reporting of large amounts of information that provides minimal insights about outcomes. Exemplifying this, country programmes routinely compile and report on outcome indicators over which UNDP cannot credibly claim to have any measurable influence.
- Evidence of weaknesses in results-based management is borne out in UNDP partnership surveys, especially in the perspective of bilateral donors and the European Union, who account for over half of UNDP's funding through non-core contributions. Unfortunately, the most recent (2020) partnership survey does not suggest there has been much progress since the IEO's strategic plan evaluation.

The survey reveals that less than half of bilateral donors are currently satisfied with the quality of UNDP's reporting, a decline from the 2017 result. This is a direct reflection of weak monitoring and evaluation systems; around one in five respondents had unfavourable views in both years. Weak reporting is undoubtedly a major factor behind donors' low confidence in UNDP's value proposition as revealed by the survey. Almost as many bilateral donors relayed unfavourable views (25 percent) about whether UNDP ensures maximum value of investments as did favourable ones (27 percent). Almost half of the responses were neutral. Just 33 percent of UNDP's partners and 13 percent of bilateral donors feel strongly that UNDP delivers high-quality programmes and projects. (Corresponding figures in the 2017 survey were 38 percent and 13 percent).[75] Twelve percent of bilateral donors disagreed with this proposition, and 37 percent were neutral.

[73] This is acknowledged by the recently issued UN Resilience Guidance (2020), which states that the measurement of resilience is a new and rapidly developing area of research and practice. Although the document provides links to examples of resilience-building monitoring tools and frameworks, off-the-rack tools are not available and have to be designed case by case. This is a conceptually challenging and time-consuming task that will have to be factored into the time taken for project preparation.

[74] Similarly, the 'Joint Assessment of the Institutional Effectiveness of UNDP', by IEO and Office of Audit and Investigations (2017) concluded that: "RBM continues to be associated more with compliance-driven practices to satisfy reporting requirements, with a limited focus on learning from evidence to enhance knowledge management for decision-making and improved performance with targeted financial allocations. In order to effectively institutionalize RBM, UNDP has yet to find the balance between compliance for reporting and learning for improved results and institutional effectiveness."

[75] The question asked was, "How much does this describe UNDP: 'Delivers high quality programmes through effective project design, planning, monitoring and evaluation'."

In looking to address this challenge, UNDP has some significant strengths to draw from in the sphere of its support for climate adaptation. In the area of evaluation, UNDP has incorporated application of impact evaluation techniques into the design of 10 UNDP GCF projects, to understand the projects' impact on communities' livelihoods and resilience. This will provide a significant source of learning about how to apply rigorous evaluation techniques, which can be leveraged to strengthen approaches to impact measurement across the portfolio. Operating at the scale that it typically does, UNDP's ability to leverage wider impacts depends greatly on its ability to generate compelling information about the efficacy and scalability of interventions. Establishing mechanisms that will bolster the rigour of design and the ability to measure results and impact will increase the potential for learning that will promote the uptake of effective models at scale.

To strengthen the scientific underpinnings for the consideration of climate risk in the design, implementation and evaluation of UNDP's projects, and providing iterative feedback on how to strengthen this technical area, UNDP can draw from an extensive network of academic partnerships and a body of work.[76] The key will be to find mechanisms for systematizing these engagements at the global and regional levels so they can become institutionalized as a core part of UNDP's climate change adaptation practice. The IEO recognizes that resource constraints limit UNDP's flexibility to establish significant new initiatives or workstreams. This reinforces the importance of pursuing measures that will increase the efficiency with which existing resources are used.

[76] A good example is the Economics of Climate Change Adaptation in Asia project, which combined training of policymakers in target countries with research on adaptation as a training tool for the policymakers, with mentoring by professors from universities in Africa (University of Pretoria, South Africa), Asia (University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka; University of Economics, Vietnam; and Peking University, China); and the US (Yale University). See: https://www.adaptation-undp.org/resources/datasets/capacity-building-programme-economics-climate-change-adaptation-ecca.

Chapter 4.

STRATEGIC POSITIONING

This chapter examines whether UNDP's adaptation-focused programmes are strategic, in the sense of individually or collectively targeting the most important areas or issues for adaptation in the domains that have been the focus of programming.

4.1 Key messages

- UNDP provides extensive support across domains and geographic regions where adaptation will be central to ensuring development gains are not eroded by climate change. Without exception interventions considered by the evaluation were relevant to national priorities and global policy frameworks. A strength of UNDP's work is its long-standing and important role supporting developing countries to meet their commitments under the international conventions that underpin global cooperation of climate change.
- The extent to which UNDP has been able to target core adaptation priorities in sectors where adaptation will be crucial has varied, with some gaps and persistent challenges identified. These point to the need to continue refining UNDP's articulation of its service offers, how these intersect with its broader development programming and how they complement the work of UN partners and other development actors.
- UNDP has a broad range of external collaborations with key UN actors in climate change adaptation and has sought to formalize cooperation with them and break down inter-agency competition. With a few exceptions, there are currently limited mechanisms to fund joint efforts, which is constraining efforts to deepen cooperation.
- There is scope to deepen engagement with the private sector in promoting adaptation. Successful expansion of capabilities in new areas, such as introduction of new financing mechanisms or scaling up of support for insurance, will require strong prioritization and careful choices.

4.2 Environmental protection

Finding 5. UNDP has played an important role as a bridge between global commitments under the climate convention and other international environmental agreements vital to climate action, and it has facilitated access to climate finance. UNDP global efforts to protect biodiversity and prevent deforestation reinforce climate adaptation objectives. An ongoing challenge in UNDP's ecosystem-based adaptation work is balancing socioeconomic and ecosystem dimensions.

UNDP's environmental protection portfolio includes a focus on mainstreaming consideration of climate risks in policymaking and the importance of biodiversity conservation for both climate change mitigation and adaptation. On the ground, elements include a large portfolio of ecosystem-based adaptation projects, focused on restoring and protecting mangroves, riparian vegetation and native forests. Such initiatives recognize the importance of these natural assets for tackling the climate crisis. While not necessarily motivated by adaptation objectives, protected area management – a long-standing focus for UNDP – provides ecosystem services that can increase resistance and resilience and can reduce the vulnerability of livelihoods to climate change. Similarly, UNDP's focus on reducing emissions from deforestation potentially provides significant adaptation benefits in the form of protection for watershed, coastal and marine assets and more sustainable livelihoods.

UNDP has been integral to global policy processes surrounding climate change adaptation. Building on a history of support for national adaptation programmes of action in LDCs, UNDP is the foremost UN agency supporting 70 countries to develop the national adaptation plans (NAPs) established under the Cancun Adaptation Framework in 2010. Under the global support programmes for NAPs, the UNDP-UNEP collaboration has informed the global discussion on adaptation planning through sharing of experiences and best practices as well as through regional technical trainings in the Asia-Pacific, Arab States, Africa, Central Europe and Latin America regions. Through this, and work under the GCF readiness programme, UNDP has played a valued role in facilitating access to adaptation finance made available through global environment funds.[77]

Under the Climate Promise Programme, UNDP is encouraging scaled-up climate action in nationally determined contributions in over 100 countries. It has provided capacity development support for countries to meet their commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, which are key components of the global response to climate change alongside the UNFCCC.

While evidence of the downstream impacts needs improvement, policy mainstreaming is a clear area of strength for UNDP, with successes evident in a diverse mix of countries and all sectors. In Rwanda UNDP helped the Government to mainstream environment, climate change and DRR into 15 development sectors and 30 district development plans. In Uruguay UNDP contributed technical assistance for the development of regulations and instruments for mitigation, adaptation and resilience in key economic sectors such as agriculture, industry and urban mobility, and supported national and subnational institutions on adaptation to climate change and DRR. In Armenia, UNDP was successful in engaging partners and generating the institutional buy-in that led to the establishment of a national task force on wildfire management to draft and review a national programme on wildfire management.

Ecosystem-based adaptation, a major workstream within UNDP's climate change adaptation portfolio, has both on-ground and policy mainstreaming components. These have been effective in promoting the restoration and protection of natural habitats such as mangroves, riparian vegetation and native forests (Box 3). Ecosystem-based adaptation has been promoted as a low-cost adaptation option; for instance, ecosystem-based flood defence can be more sustainable and cost-effective than conventional flood defences. It has the additional benefits of improved water quality, carbon sequestration, food security, livelihood diversification and biodiversity conservation.[78]

While there are numerous success stories, the difficulty of balancing socioeconomic and ecosystem dimensions is evident in documentation reviewed for the evaluation. This analysis suggests around a third of interventions failed to strike an effective balance between these two dimensions. This was notable in a lack of clarity about expected ecosystem or biodiversity benefits, lack of delivery of ecosystem components or realization of ecosystem benefits. When they were quantified (usually in terms of hectares reforested/protected) this came with significant concerns about sustainability.

Again, advocacy for and learning from the pursuit of these relatively new approaches is a critical tool in promoting greater understanding of the importance of biodiversity and ecosystem benefits as key

[77] Together with UNEP it assisted 48 LDCs in initiating their NAP process through workshops and indirect technical assistance and provided direct assistance to 15 countries in the first stages of their NAP process. UNDP has worked with UNEP and the World Resources Institute to support nine countries to access new finance available through the GCF. UNDP has also supported 31 countries in preparing and submitting their NAPAs to the UNFCCC, the basis for access to finance from the LDCF.

[78] S. Temmerman, P. Meire, T.J. Bouma, P.J.J. Herman, T. Ysebaert and H.J. De Vriend, 'Ecosystem-based coastal defence in the face of global change', *Nature*, 504, pp. 79-83, 2013; R. Munang, I. Thiaw, K. Alverson, M. Mumba and M. Rivington, 'Climate change and ecosystem-based adaptation: a new pragmatic approach to buffering climate change impacts', *Curr. Opin. Environ. Sustain.* 5, pp. 67-71, 2013.

BOX 3. UNDP's contributions to restoration and protection of natural habitat

UNDP successes in the restoration and protection of natural habitat are numerous. In Nepal about 54,500 multiple-use trees were planted in degraded land and 31 traditional water sources were conserved. Bio-engineering interventions were applied in 72 vulnerable sites protecting 120 hectares. In Peru, pasture and vicuña management measures were implemented and hydrological infrastructure restored. In Uganda, river micro-catchment re-vegetation, soil and water conservation and livelihood improvement interventions involved 850 landowners, who planted 220,000 trees and put 63 hectares under improved land management. Other notable restoration efforts include 9,000 hectares of mangroves in Bangladesh and 1200 in Gambia, and 57 hectares of reforestation in Armenia. In Guatemala over 500 hectares of natural forest were conserved and over 5,000 further protected through integrated fire management and training. In Ethiopia pilots established 43 community-based organizations involving 8,243 households, and these protected almost 34,000 hectares of land.

assets for climate adaptation.[79] This will also require a focus on capturing and quantifying the socioeconomic benefits of conservation outcomes, which is a key weakness of most nature-based solutions.

Climate adaptation has not been the primary motivation for UNDP's workstream on protected area management. However, given that protected areas form the bedrock for the resilience of ecosystems to climate change, UNDP's role in achieving measurable impacts on the integrity of protected areas can be justly highlighted as one of its more significant contributions to adaptation.[80]

4.3 Disaster risk reduction

Finding 6. UNDP is an important global advocate for improved disaster risk reduction, and a leader in this area in the UN system. At the country level, UNDP can point to examples of sustained focus on DRR that delivered significant outcomes. Overall, UNDP's DRR interventions have often had modest resources and short time frames, frequently in the context of response efforts, thus decreasing the likelihood of sustained achievements.

UNDP's disaster risk reduction portfolio included support for setting up or maintaining national loss and damage accounting systems, disaster risk assessments and preparedness, and community-based disaster risk management action, with an emphasis on working with local government entities. UNDP has provided extensive support for drafting and updating disaster risk management plans, policies and strategies and associated laws and regulations at national and local levels – a key milestone for the Sendai Framework. Since 2008, UNDP estimates it has helped establish more than 680 automated weather stations and 185 early warning systems across 57 countries, improving access to climate information for 13.2 million people. UNDP has a significant role in completing post-disaster needs assessments and is active in recovery programming, much of which has an emphasis on building back better.[81]

UNDP accounts for around 25 percent of resources channelled through the UN for DRR and is equal with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as the most significant provider, standing out for the breadth of its support.[82] In seeking to expand the impact of that support, UNDP confronts a significant ongoing constraint from the continuing bias among governments and aid donors to fund response and recovery efforts rather than preventive measures focused on DRR and adaptation. Reflecting this, UNDP's DRR spending is often concentrated in the period after major disasters have occurred (Table 5).

[79] In a review of National Adaptation Plans of Action, Pramova et al. (2012) showed that only 22% included ecosystem components. Seddon et al. (2016) found 53% of Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs) recognized the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem degradation as issues that justified adaptation planning but less than a third recognized 'biodiversity' as a distinct sector at risk due to climate change. The most common adaptation measures were the conservation or restoration of ecosystems and agroforestry. Ecosystem-based adaptation was explicitly mentioned in 17% of INDCs.

[80] GEF IEO, 'Impact Evaluation of GEF Support to Protected Areas and Protected Area Systems', 2016.

[81] UNDP, 'Project Document for Global Programme: Disaster Risk Reduction, Recovery and Resilience' (unpublished), 2020.

[82] United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, 'Review of the Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Work of the United Nations System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2019.

TABLE 5. Climate-related disasters by country and year

Disaster year	Disaster name	Country	The bulk of the spending occurred in
2012	Typhoon Haikui	China	2013
2014	Southeast Europe floods	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2014-2016
2015	Floods	Malawi	2016
2015	Drought	Zimbabwe	2016
2017	Hurricanes Maria and Irma	Caribbean	2018

There are some advantages to engaging in DRR in the wake of specific events, as this is when political will to strengthen risk-informed development is usually highest. There have been some good examples at country level in which a strategic shift was taken from recovery to resilience. This was evident in the evolution of UNDP support from flood recovery to resilience in the wake of the 2014 floods in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Box 4). In Bangladesh, one of the planet's most disaster-prone countries, UNDP's sustained contributions over decades have had a real impact on the country's shift from relief and response to risk reduction over the last 15 years.

The significance of this shift can be understood by contrasting the 14 deaths from Cyclone Fani in 2019 with the 147,000 deaths from Cyclone Gorki in 1991, both category four events.[83] The difference reflects improved capacity for risk-informed private and public investments and post-disaster recovery coordination. Similarly, in the Philippines, UNDP's suite of interventions has helped strengthen the links between local government and community-level risk reduction approaches to national policy frameworks.[84]

BOX 4. Bosnia and Herzegovina: From flood recovery to climate resilience

In 2014 Bosnia and Herzegovina experienced devastating floods, resulting in a 15 percent reduction in GDP compared to 2013. With government and international partners, UNDP implemented the largest flood recovery programme in the country's history, helping over 16,000 people and restoring 5,000 homes.

In addition to effectively and efficiently administering the relief programme, UNDP has also sought to support a systemic shift in the country from emergency response to climate- and disaster-informed development, thus providing a full spectrum of disaster-related assistance. This support has been multifaceted, including strengthening climate risk management policies and early warning systems and scaling up innovative risk reduction software solutions. Additionally, UNDP led the establishment of a joint UN DRR framework, which informs the entire UN effort on DRR in the country.

UNDP's own DRR projects have addressed technology transfer for climate-resilient flood management in the Vrbas River Basin, municipal economic and environmental governance, urban resilience building and resilience improvement of several cities. The project for the Vrbas River Basin, for example, has developed a hydrological model for the basin integrating climate change models and a methodology for flood hazard and risk mapping. Adopted by all relevant institutions, the methodology has been a starting point for shifting the focus from recovery to flood resilience.

Finally, in partnership with other UN agencies, UNDP in 2019 began implementing a joint programme on DRR for sustainable development to support the most vulnerable groups and high-risk communities to prepare for disasters in various development sectors. According to the ICPE (2020) for the country, the initiative is the most comprehensive DRR project to be launched in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Source: Independent Country Programme Evaluation: Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2020.

[83] UNDP IEO, 'Independent Country Programme Evaluation: Bangladesh', 2019.
[84] UNDP IEO, 'Independent Country Programme Evaluation: Philippines', 2017.

More usually, UNDP's interventions focusing on DRR systems, either as follow-ups to extreme weather events or as stand-alone projects, have had modest resources and short time frames. This makes it more challenging to institutionalize achievements, although there are good examples where these challenges were overcome. Limited resources have constrained UNDP's ability to extend the focus of its work to local authorities to engage on issues such as improving spatial planning, which are crucial to current and future climate risk exposures.[85]

In the Maldives for example, where sea-level rise and disasters pose serious threats, UNDP provided support to the National Disaster Management Centre through a two-year project. While it made real contributions to improving community response capacity, enhancing early warning systems and improving data collection on disasters, it was short term and small in scale, and it lacked funds for further support. In another disaster-exposed country, Indonesia, the 2019 ICPE noted the small scale of past efforts and inability to sustain support through the current programme cycle.[86]

4.4 Agriculture and food security

Finding 7. UNDP's role in agriculture and food security is limited compared to some other UN partners, yet covers a wide range of initiatives. This appropriately reflects the importance of agricultural development to poverty reduction and rural livelihoods. While there are good practice examples in the portfolio, there is a pattern of vagueness about what is needed for targeted and effective CCA for small, poor agricultural producers in risk-prone agroecological zones.

UNDP's climate change adaptation projects in agriculture and food security have included activities supporting smallholder farmers in building climate-smart agriculture, incorporating new techniques in water harvesting, diversifying crops and income, developing markets for climate-resilient crops, improving land management and providing access to weather insurance. Early warning systems and collection of climate information have also been a focus. UNDP has also had projects supporting the management of coastal fisheries, given the importance of fisheries to provide food and protein in coastal populations and the impact of climate change on this resource.

Relative to other UN partners, UNDP's engagement in agriculture and food security is modest. UNDP accounted for just 5 percent of the bilateral climate-related ODA channelled through UN entities, although it has had greater success with vertical funds, garnering close to 40 percent of resources captured by UN entities from that channel.[87]

The agency's interventions for CCA cover countries and their vulnerable populations in the Asia-Pacific, Central Europe and Latin American regions, including SIDS, but the geographic focus of UNDP's agriculture and food security work has been predominantly in Africa under RBA and RBAS. This reflects the centrality of sustainable agricultural development to UNDP's aim of "leaving no one behind", especially since smallholders in the region have been particularly vulnerable to climate change and climate variability. Owing to the nature of climate change and variability impacts in many sub-Saharan African countries, UNDP has appropriately seen DRR as being synonymous with adaptation in the short and medium term, an approach also evident in support for SIDS.

The evaluation identified some instances of best-practice approaches to counter the adaptation challenges in the agriculture and food security sector (Ethiopia, Niger, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Many of the resilience measures undertaken in UNDP programmes and projects for DRR and CCA in agriculture and food security, such as income diversification, are important strategies. However, in many cases, both vertical-fund and donor-funded projects fell short of targeting the real

[85] UNDP, 'Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance: UNDP Support during the HFA Implementation Period 2005–2015', New York, 2015.
[86] UNDP IEO, 'Independent Country Programme Evaluation: Republic of Indonesia', 2019.
[87] OECD DAC, Creditor Reporting System.

measures the IPCC and other bodies have identified as central to adaptation to the projected short-term and long-term impacts of climate variability and climate change on agriculture and food security.[88] In particular, the evaluation identified a pattern of vagueness about what has been needed for targeted and effective CCA for small, poor agricultural producers in risk-prone agroecological zones.

But a central feature of UNDP's efforts in the agriculture and food security sectors is that the emphasis on disaster prevention has not been accompanied by long-term adaptation measures, which are equally necessary to address gradual adverse climate impacts on livelihoods and natural resources. They will require drought-tolerant seed in agriculture and other climate-smart practices as well as measures for all the dimensions of food security – availability, access, utilization and stability, and an understanding of it as nutritional security as well – when UNDP's efforts have been almost entirely on availability. In practice, UNDP has tended to conceptualize resilience as helping beneficiaries and governments to withstand and recover from disasters. In some areas, interventions have taken overly simplistic approaches to addressing complex underlying issues (Box 5).

BOX 5. The need for more sophisticated solutions to adaptation challenges: UNDP support for coastal fisheries

Small-scale coastal fishers are among some of the poorest population groups in the developing world, and in many cases they rely significantly on fisheries for their own food and protein needs. In Pacific SIDS, the analysis of the fisheries sector and the challenges of climate change to it has been quite superficial, as have the proposals for remedying these complex issues. The solutions have also been too small in scale to result in any discernible outcomes.

Climate change is bringing increasing ocean temperatures, sea-level rise and acidification, and this is causing complex interactions that are resulting in the movement of fish stocks and the decline of coral reefs globally, including in the Pacific. Aside from climate change, however, in Pacific SIDS and elsewhere pollutants have been degrading coral reefs, leading to the reduction of fish and other marine species. This has reduced the availability of coastal species of fish as a source of food, protein and critical nutrients for the region's populations.

In Tuvalu, coral reefs in coastal zones have been degraded and fish abundance has declined, making subsistence fishing more difficult. To address this, UNDP supported a governance project (see sources below) initially planned to pilot aquaculture schemes to provide an alternative supply of fish for human consumption. But based on previous negative experience with introducing certain fish species, all aquaculture schemes were abandoned. Eventually, the project only supported the construction of traditional canoes for near-shore fishing, which would not have significantly met the needs for fish. The interventions did not address the deeper, real and projected climate change impacts on the sector and food security. Aquaculture development, needed to shift from a reliance on capture fisheries resources, seems to be a necessary 'transformative adaptation' step for Pacific SIDS, given projections of climate change impacts on fisheries and the need to meet food and nutritional needs of the population.

Sources: UNDP, 'Effective and Responsive Island-Level Governance to Secure and Diversify Climate Resilient Marine-Based Coastal Livelihoods and Enhance Climate Hazard Response Capacity Project-Terminal Evaluation Report', 2019; J.E. Johnson, et al., 2020, 'Impacts of Climate Change on Marine Resources in the Pacific Island Region', in L. Kumar, ed., *Climate Change and Impacts in the Pacific*, Springer, Singapore; Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research, 2019, 'Improving Community-based Aquaculture in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa and Vanuatu', ACIAR; J. Barnett, 2020, 'Climate Change and Food Security in the Pacific Islands', in J. Connell and K. Lowitt, eds., *Food Security in Small Island States*, Springer, Singapore.

[88] Some of these practices are climate-smart agriculture, including soil management, new crop technologies and livestock breeds (for temperature, drought, saline intrusion and floods) that also improve nutrition, crop diversification and the use of indigenous varieties, mixed farming systems and risk insurance.

BOX 6. The complex threats to food security in Pacific SIDS

The climate-related threats to SIDS in the Pacific are drought, extreme weather events, coastal flooding, sea-level rise and saltwater intrusion. But coupled with these are linked socioeconomic and natural resource trends that climate change has been exacerbating: declining land availability for food production; declining farmer incentive to remain in local food production in some countries or islands; heavy household dependence on subsistence agriculture combined with reduced availability of local foods; soil degradation; decreasing food diversity; lack of transport and markets in outer islands to enable food access; and reliance on imported food of poor nutritional quality, which has led to increases in non-communicable diseases. In supporting adaptation for agriculture and food security in these countries, UNDP will need to consider these complex, interrelated issues, see nutrition as integral to food security, and move, as experts suggest, towards enhancing soils and water availability and engaging specialized organizations.

Sources: 'Enhancing Resilience of Communities in Solomon Islands to the Adverse Effects of Climate Change in Agriculture and Food Security--Strogen Waka lo Community fo Kaikai (SWoCK) Mid-Term Evaluation', 2014; D.M. Hidalgo, I. Witten, P.D. Nunn, S. Burkhart, J. Bogard, H. Beazley and M. Herrero, 2020, 'Sustaining Healthy Diets in Times of Change: Linking Climate Hazards, Food Systems and Nutrition Security in Rural Communities of the Fiji Islands', *Regional Environmental Change* Vol. 20, No. 73; V. Iese, S. Halavatau, A. De Ramon N'Yeurt, M. Wairiu, E. Holland, A. Dean, F. Veisa, S. Patolo, R. Havea, S. Bosenaqali and O. Navunicagi, 2020, 'Agriculture Under a Changing Climate', in L. Kumar, ed., *Climate Change and Impacts in the Pacific*, Springer, Singapore; S. McCubbin, T. Pearce, J.D. Ford and B. Smit, 2017, 'Social-ecological change and implications for food security in Funafuti, Tuvalu', *Ecology and Society* 22(1):53.

UNDP implemented several agriculture and food security interventions in Pacific SIDS. However, in Samoa and the Solomon Islands and through a regional programme the interventions reflected only a very rudimentary understanding of the multiple and complex challenges posed by climate change, along with existing social, behavioural, economic and natural resource phenomena (Box 6). Therefore, the solutions, in the form of crop pilots and input banks, were quite limited in supporting longer term resilience, including through more transformative strategies.

Given the diversity of specialist and non-specialist UN and non-UN entities with a strong focus on these issues, there should be no expectation that UNDP address the full range of required measures in every instance. However, there would be value in greater clarity both internally and externally about the scope of UNDP's support and expertise.[89] A gap in the agency's CCA efforts for agriculture and food security has been the absence of a service offer for these sectors. Reflecting this, UNDP's presentation of its efforts in the area as a signature programme seeks more to capture what UNDP offices globally have been doing than to provide guidance, criteria and objectives to shape relevant and effective CCA projects for agriculture and food security. A clearly articulated set of UNDP programme objectives and guidelines would help bring greater strategic coherence to the agency's approach in this area.

4.5 Water

Finding 8. The need for concerted efforts to address climate change and associated extreme weather risk has been well integrated into UNDP programming on water governance.

UNDP's portfolio of programmes focused on water governance is coordinated through its global water and ocean governance programme, active in over 100 countries. UNDP implements a significant portion of the GEF International Waters Programme and runs a series of governance-related programmes. These include Cap-Net UNDP, the UNDP-SIWI Water Governance Facility and the UNDP Goal-Waters Programme. At the country level UNDP also provides an array of support services for small-scale water supply and conveyance systems, including hydropower and well-refurbishment projects.

[89] An exception is UNDP's Food and Agriculture Commodity System Strategy, which aims to support climate change adaptation, among a number of goals. The strategy highlights UNDP's role as an integrator and the need to leverage the expertise of specialized agencies.

It should be noted that UNDP's water-related programming is primarily normative and related to capacity development. On a global scale, UNDP is not a significant actor in the financing, design, construction and operation of major water conveyance systems, treatment works or water impoundment structures. However, UNDP's adaptation portfolio includes 54 projects amounting to $764 million in 42 countries focusing on climate-resilient water resources and coastal management. The bulk of this finance reflects new GCF projects, which have predominantly focused on integrated water resource management, substantially increasing the scale of UNDP's work in this area.

Climate change adaptation is an important consideration within the work UNDP carries out under the GEF International Waters Programme. The focus is on regional transboundary efforts to protect vital freshwater (including aquifers) and marine ecosystems. Programme design for these projects follows well-established GEF methodology for transboundary diagnostic analyses, leading to multi-government strategic action plans that address shared water quality, availability and use. The transboundary diagnostic analysis (TDA) guidance was updated several years ago, setting expectations for all projects to identify the cross-cutting risks posed by the changing climate and associated extreme weather.

Guidance for developing strategic action plans encourages partners to develop management actions that are robust in the face of climate change. The international waters TDA-strategic action plan process is notable in its sequenced approach, with transboundary water systems receiving support spanning multiple projects and decades. A case in point is the work of the GEF and UNDP on the Drin River basin in the Western Balkans (Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia). Two connected projects on integrated water resources management for the White Drin and extended Drin Basin include climate considerations. They were developed in 2015 to harmonize with ongoing donor projects, including a climate change and flood risk management project in the region funded through German development cooperation GIZ. Further efforts are now under way, with a new Adaptation Fund project approved in 2019.[90]

4.6 External collaboration

4.6.1 Partnerships with other United Nations agencies

Finding 9. UNDP's country offices, backed by expertise in regional and global offices, are an important platform for partnerships supporting the key international frameworks for action on climate change. There is scope for UNDP to further systematize its relationships with other partners, grounded in a deeper understanding of respective strengths and limitations of the key agencies involved.

As indicated by IEO evaluations and regular partnership surveys, UNDP has a strong reputation with government counterparts. UNDP obtains a high degree of ownership from partner governments by working through national implementation modalities that enable government ministries to carry out the agreed efforts. It builds its country office staff largely from national experts and former government officials and hires most of its external consultants locally, thus remaining well connected. UNDP country offices are substantially funded by partner governments, so in one sense government ownership is hard-wired into UNDP's business model.

UNDP's extensive network of country offices and its broad mandate have established a basis for effective cooperation and partnerships with different entities in the UN system. A range of large and small

[90] The project, 'Integrated climate-resilient transboundary flood risk management in the Drin River basin in the Western Balkans', seeks to prepare for the increased frequency and intensity of floods and droughts, increased water scarcity, intensified erosion and sedimentation, increased intensity of snow melt, sea-level rise and damage to water quality and ecosystems as a result of changing climatic conditions. The project prospectus notes that climate change impacts on water resources will have cascading effects on human health and many parts of the economy and society, as various sectors directly depend on water, such as agriculture, energy and hydropower, navigation, health and tourism – as does the environment. https://www.adaptation-fund.org/project/integrated-climate-resilient-transboundary-flood-risk-management-drin-river-basin-western-balkans-albania-former-yugoslav-republic-macedonia-montenegro/.

global, regional and country-level initiatives point to active and ongoing efforts to collaborate within and beyond the UN system. Partners interviewed for the evaluation highlighted the current and potential value that UNDP brings to collaborations with international actors within and outside the UN system.

A key strength of UNDP's work is its longstanding, important and active role in advocacy on UNFCCC negotiations as they affect developing countries, and in supporting these countries to fulfil their commitments under the international agreements. These include nationally determined contributions, NAPS and, before that, national adaptation programmes of action (NAPAs). These strategies have been important in helping countries identify priority climate actions and mainstream these actions into economic and sector development plans and budgets. This will be central to ensuring that development gains are not eroded by climate change.

In the context of these frameworks UNDP has had an effective partnership with UNEP to assist with country-driven processes to advance NAPs. The joint project team was able to coordinate its activities efficiently and manage a large group of project partners who demonstrated a comparative advantage in specific contexts (WHO, FAO, IFAD, GIZ, UNFCCC, GEF, UNDRR and UNITAR). UNDP has also completed a significant joint global programme with FAO to promote substantive consideration of agricultural concerns in adaptation planning, reflecting the vulnerability of agriculture sectors to climate change and climate variability (see below).

UNDP has been an important source of support for development and implementation of the Sendai Framework.[91] UNDP sits alongside FAO as the largest provider of support for DRR in the United Nations system, and with other UN entities it provides crucial support for UNDRR, which has only regional or subregional offices.[92] UNDP has also been an important source of support for the Convention on Biological Diversity and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, two other key parts of the international architecture for addressing climate change. Broader yet, UNDP has a major workstream on supporting mainstreaming of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes a significant focus on climate and DRR.

While there are many good examples of cooperation, there are well-established countervailing pressures that work against more effective collaboration. Joint programming is resource intensive, and it is not always clear that the benefits outweigh the costs. A competitive dynamic still exists with other UN agencies including specialized agencies (i.e. IFAD, FAO) and other funds and programmes with a more focused mandate (i.e. UNEP, WFP). This dynamic is most pronounced in contexts where resources are scarce, forcing agencies to compete for similar funding opportunities. This dynamic is reflected in relatively low levels of satisfaction from UN partners of UNDP's contributions to the UN development system in areas such as coordinated resource mobilization and integrated development solutions.[93]

Given the requirement to maintain a universal presence, UNDP has a strong incentive in such locations to take advantage of all available funding opportunities in response to recipient government preferences. There is also an understandable desire by partners to be able to choose among partners with different capabilities or value propositions, which encourages competition. In this sense, UNDP is rightly responding to recipient government requests, in accordance with its broad mandate. To mitigate the risks of unhelpful competition and waste, it is important that agencies establish a structured basis for managing cooperation. UNDP has established a good foundation for this in the form of partnership agreements with FAO and

91 UNDP IEO, 'Evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan and Global and Regional Programmes', 2017.

92 United Nations Joint Inspection Unit, 'Review of the Integration of Disaster Risk Reduction in the Work of the United Nations System in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2019.

93 2020 UNDP Partnership Survey. Almost as many UN agency respondents reported dissatisfaction (43%) with UNDP's contribution to the UN development system in 'Pursuing coordinated resource mobilization with other UN Country Team members' as reported satisfaction. Of UN agency respondents, 39% reflected dissatisfaction with UNDP's role in 'Providing integrated development solutions in collaboration with other stakeholders'.

UNDRR, which identify areas of comparative advantage and opportunities for collaboration.

4.6.2 Private sector engagement

Finding 10. UNDP strategies recognize the importance of private sector finance for bridging the adaptation finance gap. While progress on these public/private partnerships has so far been limited, initiatives are under way to introduce new instruments, including partnerships to expand insurance cover against disaster and climate shocks.

It is well recognized that the private sector will be crucial in bridging the financing gap for adaptation. However, conceiving of the best entry points for doing so is difficult in that adaptation often involves a different and more diverse set of actors than mitigation.[94] As is acknowledged by the GCF:

> [T]here are currently very limited robust and well-defined business models or products to promote adaptation activities in the private sector, with possible exceptions of insurance, the built and physical environment, corporate industry, the agriculture sector and supply chain. Yet even these are not widely used or available in countries or groups most vulnerable to climate change.[95]

UNDP has diverse engagements with the private sector, primarily focused on improving the enabling environment for the private sector to contribute to SDG achievement. Although the intention to do so was flagged in private sector strategies in 2016 and 2018, UNDP has thus far not developed instruments that would enable financial support for the private sector directly.[96] Recognizing the potential of such instruments to encourage greater private sector contributions to adaptation and respond to the directions of funding partners, UNDP's adaptation team has developed a paper that canvasses options for a phased strategy to expand the ways it can work with and support the private sector.[97] This paper strongly emphasizes the importance of updating UNDP's policies and procedures to support the deployment and use of alternative financial instruments beyond grants, and signals an intention to do so.

The evaluation found no evidence of new and approved policies and procedures showing progress with this agenda. However, UNDP advised the evaluation team that it had made some progress with upgrading existing policies to support a broader range of approaches. These include an on-granting policy, performance-based payment policy and draft guarantee policy.[98]

Another important area for potential expansion of UNDP's engagement with the private sector is the establishment of an initiative to make insurance

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94 R. Klein, L. Schipper and S. Dessai, 2005, 'Integrating mitigation and adaptation in climate and development policy: Three research questions', in: *Environmental Science & Policy*, 8:579–588. Mitigation primarily involves the energy and transportation sectors in industrialized countries, and the energy and forestry sectors in developing countries. Such actors are generally well organized and linked closely to national planning and policymaking.

95 GCF/B.23/18: Matters related to GCF support to adaptation.

96 UNDP's 2018 strategy identified a number of internal priorities for reform including: "[p]roviding instruments that facilitate the co-creation and co-development of solutions with private businesses for joint pursuit of the SDGs," "[e]nabling direct grants to enterprises through competitive challenge funds, matching grants, performance-based and cost-sharing mechanisms," and "[d]eveloping new instruments for loans and guarantees and social impact bonds for blended financing specifically for vertical funds." UNDP's 2016 strategy identified a wide range of activities, which included "[u]sing innovative instruments such as challenge funds, impact investing and development bonds to support value chain development." UNDP, 2018, 'UNDP's Private Sector Development and Partnership Strategy (2018-2022): Making Markets Work for the SDGs'; UNDP, 2016, 'UNDP's Private Sector and Foundations Strategy for the Sustainable Development Goals, 2016–2020'.

97 UNDP-GEF, Strategy Note: 'Engaging the Private Sector in the Context of Climate Change Adaptation'.

98 An example of CCA projects adopting these mechanisms is the recently established Adaptation Fund-UNDP Innovation Small Grant Aggregator programme. It uses a challenge fund model to provide milestone-based small grants to early and growth-stage organizations operating at the front line of developing countries. The idea is that with the benefit of grants and support some of these organizations will eventually become investment ready. UNDP then will work with external partners to provide investment brokering services to these organizations to facilitate concessional/commercial scale-up capital.

and risk financing central to development, which is currently in the design stage. The tripartite agreement with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Insurance Development Forum aims to deliver risk finance solutions to 20 high-priority countries by 2025. This includes sovereign risk insurance for countries vulnerable to climate change, with the industry committing $5 billion of risk capital. It represents an opportunity to scale up UNDP's role and capabilities in an area that will be critical to the quality of adaptation outcomes achieved.[99]

While UNDP's engagements with the private sector are extensive, limitations were evident in the depth of these engagements. This was apparent, for example, in UNDP's work in the agriculture sector (Box 7).

Whether UNDP is able to deepen and expand its capabilities and engagements in any of these areas will depend on its ability to prioritize internally and ensure dedicated resources are allocated to the task of developing the necessary policy, guidance and training that will be required. Given how thinly spread UNDP's technical experts are, and the limited availability of flexible funding to expand capabilities, there are clear risks in attempting to develop capabilities across too many fronts simultaneously.

BOX 7. Private sector engagement in UNDP adaptation projects focused on agriculture and food security

Creating systems to increase agricultural productivity and food security and make them climate-resilient requires going beyond a focus on developing government strategies for adaptation. It calls for an exploration of how the private sector can provide required agricultural inputs and knowledge and market climate-adaptive and nutritionally enriched crops.

A review of UNDP's adaptation portfolio in the agriculture and food security sector revealed that there has been very little engagement with the private sector for adaptation in the agricultural sectors. Generally, UNDP's efforts reflect a lack of appreciation for the importance of markets for climate-adapted crops. This was the case, for example, in Zambia, where small farmers lacked incentive to fully adopt climate-smart practices because limited markets were available for their products. Although a new GCF project in Zambia intends to avoid this mistake, it aims to ensure a market by engaging WFP as a buyer rather than developing local and national private market actors.

[99] At country level, UNDP has had some (though limited) experience in supporting climate and disaster-risk insurance. In the Philippines, the agency was successful in supporting a pilot for the scale-up of risk transfer mechanisms for vulnerable agricultural communities in Mindanao. It introduced a weather-index-based insurance system covering over 2,000 farmers and helped formulate national legislation mandating access to weather-index-based insurance coverage. The pilot will likely be upscaled across the country but also requires follow-up support. UNDP had less traction in supporting the establishment of national weather-index insurance to benefit more than 45,000 small producers in Sudan. At the midterm stage of this effort, little progress has been made. A limitation of this work is that the project paid the insurance provider to cover the costs of the producers' premiums, rather than establishing a market-based insurance system with affordable premiums for producers, thus ensuring its sustainability, or obtaining government and NGO resources to fund the premiums on a pilot basis.

Chapter 5.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

This chapter examines key aspects of the design of UNDP's adaptation support programme and projects.

5.1 Key messages

- UNDP has progressively developed more rigorous methods for incorporating climate science into project designs. These include climate modelling and comparative analysis of alternative options, consideration of historically observed trends and robust scientific and field research. New funding modalities through the Green Climate Fund, and in concert with other, larger actors, should yield opportunities for greater influence and impact at scale.
- There is scope for UNDP to improve the quality of designs and position itself to obtain more influence and impact in a number of areas. Two areas require urgent attention: First, UNDP needs to be more systematic and rigorous in its consideration of climate risk across its development portfolio and accelerate the adoption of more rigorous methods for incorporating climate science into project designs. Second, UNDP needs to be clearer about how its programmes and projects will leverage policy and system changes at scale, something that is often missing from current efforts.
- Other areas that will require sustained attention and efforts in design are: establishing projects that can be sustained over multiple programme cycles; proactively breaking down internal silos that prevent the establishment of more integrated solutions to climate-related vulnerabilities; and ensuring there are concrete and well-researched objectives to improve gender equality across the adaptation portfolio.

5.2 Intent to influence policies and systems at scale

Do UNDP's adaptation-focused programmes – either independently or in concert with others – demonstrate a consistent intent to influence policies and systems at scale?

Finding 11. UNDP programming for climate change adaptation seeks to influence policies and systems at scale, yet achievement is often limited, with pilot projects not scaled up or replicated. New funding modalities through the Green Climate Fund, and in concert with other, larger actors, should yield opportunities for greater influence and impact at scale.

UNDP's climate change adaptation investments generally mirror the ambition exhibited by the UNDP strategic plan, with its focus on leveraging structural transformations to address poverty and find more sustainable development pathways. In seeking to leverage policy and systems changes at scale, UNDP has often faced the challenge that (a) the scale of its support has usually been small relative to the operations of governments and other donors and (b) the interventions typically have defined and relatively short-term implementation windows, which is not consistent with the size of the problems being addressed. While there are some important exceptions to this general pattern, where UNDP has been able to operate at a more significant scale, such cases are in the minority.

Within these constraints, projects have usually focused on development and implementation of 'pilot projects' intended to test solutions, with the expectation that successes will be replicated elsewhere or taken to scale. Programmes such as the GEF Small Grants Programme, for example, have demonstrated the effectiveness and value for money of relatively small-scale interventions, and there are many cases where small pilots have generated large impacts (Box 8).

BOX 8. Scaling results through the GEF Small Grants Programme: What is the evidence?

The Small Grants Programme (SGP), operating since 1992, is a GEF corporate programme that is implemented by UNDP. Its focal areas include biodiversity, capacity development, chemicals and waste, climate change, climate change adaptation, international waters and land degradation.

The objective is to strengthen and build the capacities of local civil society and community-based organizations through small grants, averaging $50,000. Since its pilot phase, SGP has awarded about 23,991 community-based projects valued at around $652 million. It has attracted around $833 million co-financing in cash and in kind. Currently, around 5 percent of SGP grants are climate change adaptation projects, amounting to 146 projects estimated at $4.6 million and co-financing of $3.36 million. CCA partnerships were also established, such as the Small Island Developing States Community-Based Adaptation Programme/ Mekong Asia Pacific Community-Based Adaptation Programme and the Community Based Adaptation Programme supported by the Government of Australia.

The 2015 evaluation of SGP mentioned that, "In addition to having direct impacts through individual projects, the SGP can be seen to contribute to broader impacts at local, regional and country scales. Broader adoption occurs when SGP achievements are mainstreamed, upscaled or otherwise replicated and the associated costs covered by another source." The 2019 evaluation of GEF's Support to Scaling Up Impact mentions that the SGP is useful in transmitting knowledge and ideas to be scaled up.

The pilot model can and does produce good results. However, it has often lacked carefully designed steps to evaluate results from pilots, communicate them to policymakers and other relevant staff and stakeholders, and (if warranted) establish mechanisms to support inclusion of lessons in sector programmes, plans and decision-making. At times, it has not been clear why UNDP sought to pilot new practices, such as for agricultural adaptation, when there have been a range of tested and successful climate-smart approaches developed by other specialized agricultural knowledge organizations, such as the CGIAR, that could have been used and scaled up from the start.[100]

Another common problem with the piloting model is that it has often been unrealistic about the scalability and impact of such micro-interventions. This suggests a lack of imagination about alternatives and opportunity costs (Box 9). Some of this is tied to insufficient upfront investment in ensuring government engagement and commitment from the outset, which can lead to 'tick the box' type solutions. This is made difficult by the fact that UNDP often has little financial leverage to secure a seat at the table with the government and well-resourced major donors or to induce other UN agencies to coordinate and collaborate.

These examples point out the need for UNDP to be more considered about when and in what contexts the pilot model is likely to be effective. It also points to the importance of establishing partnerships that enable it to work on a larger scale than it can through GEF or Adaptation Fund projects. As a grant-based agency, the key to this will be to develop efficient and effective models of working with development finance institutions that are able to operate at a much larger scale.

Another important window for UNDP to influence policy and systems change at scale has been through engagement in national policy development and capacity development, often working under the framework of climate-relevant conventions. While this is clearly important work in underpinning and strengthening implementation of key international conventions, the evaluation observed a tendency in these efforts to focus on developing or revising the formal climate change plans, policies or guidelines on paper, without a strong focus on the quality and downstream impact of these measures. IEO analysis

[100] Many of these climate-smart practices, which development organizations have been promoting over the last decade, achieve not only adaptation and improved livelihoods but also climate mitigation, which supports adaptation in the long term.

BOX 9. Challenges with pilot model identified by 2019 independent country programme evaluations

Bangladesh: "UNDP piloted a planning and budgeting methodology to address climate risk at the local level and financed some micro-scale adaptation initiatives. This approach is currently only happening at a very small scale, focused on just two of Bangladesh's 4,500+ unions, the lowest tier of the local government system, and generating livelihoods activities that provide a short-term benefit to a very small number of people. There is no credible strategy in place evaluating the value for money, or potential for scaling up, of any aspect of this pilot."

Ethiopia: "[D]espite some attempts to deliver targeted but holistic responses at the downstream level, notably in the area of resilience, the small scale and fragmented nature of UNDP's downstream interventions do not favour sustainability as it limits, to some extent, the comprehensiveness of responses in tackling the multidimensional challenges faced."

Mozambique: "At the community level, DRR and resilience initiatives were insufficient and poorly designed as to ensure sustainability."

Maldives: "[T]he investment component of the project, which was designed to provide concrete benefits to local communities and for the small grant component to support communities to learn by doing, was not well thought through. Solar systems were installed in 11 schools but could not be connected to the grid and were still not operational more than 18 months after installation. Waste management plants, while desperately needed, were established without a disposal arrangement in place, meaning that again, the expected benefits are at risk. The other major investment component, which funded rainwater harvesting systems, was appreciated by the local authorities. However, it is not clear how these systems will be managed in the long term, and there is a risk they will undercut current efforts to establish a sustainable water supply system, based on getting more people to pay for water. There may have been some learning benefits for local communities involved in the grant component, but these are difficult to quantify, and given the lack of follow through, there is a real possibility they undermined rather than built community confidence."

Guinea-Bissau: "UNDP supported the piloting of small-scale climate change adaptation techniques for water, agriculture and livestock management in fourteen villages in the Gabu region, the semi-arid rural area of eastern Guinea-Bissau. Various sustainable environmental management techniques, resilient to climate change, were disseminated at community level for agricultural production (e.g. adapted seeds, use of the Zaï technique, water management, transverse tillage, crop rotation) and livestock (e.g. adapted forage, water retention ponds, animal drinking fountains)… Community interviewees pointed out that, although they were consulted, local knowledge was not adequately considered in the design of activities. Communities reported an increase in agricultural production thanks to some of the new agricultural techniques, but access to water did not increase and remains insufficient to respond to increasing desertification and water scarcity. The pilot did not manage to demonstrate efficient water use in crop production systems and water resource management. The evaluation team observed in field visits that the construction of water fountains with pumps and water reservoirs was not successful. There was very limited water available in the reservoir built by UNDP compared to the natural water reservoirs available close by. The quantity of water coming from the water fountains built by UNDP was extremely limited compared to the others available in the villages. Successful innovations in terms of agricultural and livestock practices (i.e. Zaï technique and adapted forage) were not scaled-up beyond the pilot to address knowledge gaps in different country contexts."

Uganda: "UNDP's upstream and downstream approach relies heavily on piloting new initiatives to be scaled up and to formulate public policies. Given the budget cuts, pilot projects are too small and scattered in nature to create meaningful impact at the local level in terms of natural resource management. It is essential to concentrate resources in one area and showcase successes of ecosystem-based options for mitigation/adaptation to climate change, which can be scaled out to other areas."

of terminal evaluations covering 13 capacity-building and adaptation-mainstreaming projects reveals a systemic challenge in identifying compelling evidence of policy and systems changes arising from such efforts. This was the conclusion, for example of several recent IEO country programme evaluations:

> *Barbados and Eastern Caribbean ICPE, 2020: The… project succeeded in supporting the submission of three National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and two Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions (NAMAs) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change… At the time of drafting, the ICPE could find few examples of policy changes attributable – at least to some extent – to the… project.*

> *Uganda ICPE, 2019: UNDP has successfully supported the development of legislative and institutional climate change frame-works, important instruments to meet the country's international commitment to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. However, institutional weaknesses and a lack of funding in the country remain a challenge to the effective implementation of these policies at both national and sub-national levels.*

While some of these challenges reflect underlying weaknesses in monitoring systems (see discussion in Chapter 3), this points to a need to more carefully consider available levers for influencing change beyond production of plans, policies and legislative changes, which tend to be a major focus for country offices. Effective mainstreaming of climate risk in policymaking is a serious long-term challenge. It will require persistent and politically informed advocacy on where and how policies and institutions need to be reformed.

The introduction of the Green Climate Fund has enabled UNDP to increase its share of projects that are able to pursue adaptation objectives at a significant scale. This will be an important test of UNDP's capacities to operate at a scale that it has not yet been able to in many countries.

5.3 Consideration of climate threats and risks

Do UNDP's programmes pay sufficient attention to the best available targeted science on climate variability and change?

Finding 12. UNDP is not systematically considering climate risk across its development portfolio.

Recognizing the increasing exposure of development investments to climate-related risks, there has been increasing attention to climate risk screening among leading development actors (Box 10).

To facilitate a structured approach to consideration of climate risks during project design and implementation, UNDP established screening procedures and standards that aim to ensure all UNDP projects are resilient to climate change risks. Specifically, project proponents are asked to consider the vulnerability of intended project outcomes to potential impacts of climate change or the potential of the project to increase social and environmental vulnerability to climate change (maladaptive practices).

Significant weaknesses in the application of this system were highlighted by a review conducted in 2017. The review estimated that social and environment screening of 42 percent of projects was insufficient, due to poor quality application of the procedure, incorrectly applied exemptions (around half of exemptions were not done correctly) and a failure to upload or complete risk assessments.[101]

It thus revealed a significant bias towards rating projects low risk, increasing the likelihood they will lead to harm to people and the environment, with inadequate assessments and management measures in place. Though no projects were rated high risk, and just 16 percent were rated moderate risk, the review suggested the number of moderate and high-risk projects was more than double the number identified in screening (45 percent).

[101] UNDP, 'Data Analysis and 'Quality Spot Check' of Completed Social and Environmental Screenings and Related Exemptions for UNDP Projects', 2017.

BOX 10. Increasing focus of development actors on climate risk screening

In 2017, the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) analysed a sample of GEF-5 and GEF-6 projects. It found that: climate information was often misinterpreted, misused or missing; risk assessments were often for the duration of the project, rather than the lifetime of the expected global environmental benefits; assessments were often done late in the project cycle, well after the design and objectives had been developed; and, where climate impacts were mentioned, there was rarely a plan for their amelioration.[102]

Subsequently, STAP applied the World Bank and USAID climate risk screening tools to 24 GEF-6 project identification forms and projects endorsed by its chief executive officer. While some projects demonstrated innovative strategies for addressing climate risk, many did not provide sufficient future climate information to enable identification of appropriate risk mitigation measures, covering a minimum 30-year period from the planned project start date. In 2018 STAP issued clarified and codified screening guidelines:

(i) How will the project's objectives or outputs be affected by climate risks over the period 2020 to 2050, and have the impact of these risks been addressed adequately?

(ii) Has the sensitivity to climate change, and its impacts, been assessed?

(iii) Have resilience practices and measures to address projected climate risks and impacts been considered? How will these be dealt with?

The GEF secretariat and STAP are currently working with GEF agencies to promote learning, compare screening efforts and strengthen practices where needed. This recent interest in strengthening climate risk screening is not limited to GEF projects. For instance, the Asian Development Bank released a handbook titled 'Principles of Climate Risk Management for Climate Proofing Projects' in July 2020.[103] UNDP is currently developing guidelines for application of its own risk screening procedures.

These weaknesses are evident in the consideration of climate risk. A common problem, confirmed by this evaluation, is the assumption often expressed by project proponents that, since projects aim to provide benefits or improve the environment, there would be no risk of adverse impacts. In projects where adaptation is an explicit objective, this assumption is evident in the declaration that the potential outcomes of the project would not be sensitive or vulnerable to potential impacts of climate change as an expression of confidence in the project design.

More concerning are cases where climate risks are simply dismissed as irrelevant, especially where activities are planned in climate-sensitive sectors. Noticeably absent in some of UNDP's largest crisis interventions has been a recognition of the climate risk exposure of activities that are a common feature of such projects, in areas such as agriculture, fisheries and water.

An example here is the Iraq Stabilization Facility,[104] which did not identify climate change as a risk for the impact or sustainability of interventions. This was despite the prominence of water projects in reconstruction activities, and the concurrent implementation of major climate change adaptation projects. This was also the case in the initial phase of the Yemen Emergency Crisis Response

[102] See: GEF STAP, 'Guidance on Climate Risk Screening', GEF/STAP/C.56/Inf.03, 2019.

[103] Asian Development Bank, 'Principles of Climate Risk Management for Climate Proofing Projects', Sustainable Development Working Paper Series No 69, July 2020. https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/publication/621021/sdwp-69-climate-risk-climate-proofing-projects.pdf.

[104] http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/adr/iraq.shtml.

Project,[105] before there was a significant reappraisal and more comprehensive consideration of project risks during implementation.[106]

The design and evaluation of projects such as the South Sudan Peace and Community Cohesion project[107] have highlighted the importance of scarcity of natural resources as a major source of conflict, along with activities in climate-sensitive areas. But they have not identified climate risks as having a significant impact on those activities. In Ethiopia, which has suffered major impacts from climate variability and change, there was one project for reducing the risks of climate-induced disasters in agriculture. But climate change adaptation was not mainstreamed in the other relevant projects for the country, in agriculture, the forest sector or agrobiodiversity. Adaptation mainstreaming in Cuba was similarly mixed.

Weak attention to social and environmental screening is also evident in UNDP's decentralized evaluations. Recent analysis by the GEF Independent Evaluation Office shows that consideration of the application of safeguards by terminal evaluations of UNDP-implemented projects is weak, both in absolute terms and compared to other GEF implementing agencies (Table 6).

Given the extent of the challenges identified and the risks involved, this evaluation assesses that the corporate response to the gaps identified in 2017 has been slow. It has taken around 2.5 years to develop a credible and resourced plan to address the deficiencies brought to management attention in early 2018. While a sound plan has now been approved by the Organizational Performance Group,[108] there is a clear need for sustained corporate attention to the roll-out of this plan and building of institutional capacities for assessing and mitigating social and environmental risks.

Finding 13. For climate change adaptation projects funded through vertical funds, UNDP has been progressively developing more rigorous methods for incorporating climate science into project designs. These include climate modelling, comparative analysis of intervention options under different scenarios, review of available trend data and robust scientific and field research.

The IEO's review of evaluations covering a cross-section of climate change adaptation interventions reveals that they were often weak in their consideration of climate science and the implications for design of activities. This was true even in the subset of UNDP's projects that have explicit

TABLE 6. Percentage of terminal evaluations that report on social and environmental safeguards

Terminal evaluation discusses whether…	UNDP	Others	World Bank
Safeguards applied during preparation	17%	35%	96%
Safeguards applied during implementation	17%	43%	100%
Number of observations	18	37	25

Source: Adapted from Table 11 in GEF Independent Evaluation Office, 2020, 'Annual Performance Report, 2020'.

[105] As an example, the initial design included the following assessment: "The project aims to rehabilitate or construct a total of 500,000 m3 of water supply (including water catchments, reservoirs and maintenance of clean water supply etc.), which are relatively small-scale. Overall, the associated risks are low."

[106] https://www.ye.undp.org/content/yemen/en/home/library/crisis_prevention_and_recovery/environmental-and-social-management-framework--esmf--.html.

[107] https://open.undp.org/projects/00102663.

[108] The approved implementation plan includes comprehensive consideration of the lessons from the original 2015 launch of the social and environmental standards, including the independent review findings. It includes actions to: clarify roles, responsibilities and accountabilities throughout the organization; target capacities to deliver identified roles and responsibilities; deliver practical guidance and resources; ensure dedicated expertise exists in each of the regional bureaux and to meet corporate accountability functions; and track performance and inform further investment actions.

climate change adaptation objectives and are part of UNDP's defined adaptation portfolio. Reflecting this, the evaluation identified a blurry line between climate change resilience and business as usual, as found in terminal evaluations of several projects. For example:

> *Climate-resilient is used loosely, almost gratuitously in two outcomes and elsewhere in the Prodoc text without explanation, and this should have been better defined…Climate change is referred to throughout the Prodoc, including under Risks and Mitigation, but it is never dealt with in sufficient detail to make it a prominent part of project implementation.*[109]

> *…[T]here was a fairly low level of differentiation of climate change adaptation in the community-based interventions, compared to the "business as usual" activities that have been implemented earlier to varying extent in these areas. Even though adaptation measures are often cross-cutting with other developmental approaches, e.g., water resource management, the degree of additionality, through clear adaptation strategies, was not entirely evident.*[110]

> *The project's goal is quite general and gives way to incorporation of many diverse activities in the project as long as they contribute to increased resilience. It would help if the term "resilience" has been defined and its meaning in the context of Maldives explained.*[111]

To a significant degree, this challenge is tied to the profound uncertainty created by the absence of reliable meteorological data and projections of long-term climate variability and trends, which constrain the ability of communities and authorities to design their adaptation actions and strategies. However, this also reinforces the importance of external donors' projects in modelling how this can be done through techniques such as scenario planning, downscaling and filling in gaps in data (an area where UNDP has been particularly active).

It was noted in interviews that design standards from the GCF and GEF are driving increased attention to climate risks in design processes associated with the vertical funds and that there had been some improvement in scenario-based project designs. The IEO confirmed evidence of this in the designs for recent or pipeline UNDP GCF projects for agriculture in Zambia and Zimbabwe. These exhibit a much stronger tailoring of approaches to present and projected future climate change and climate variability than do past GEF projects. In cases where access to data is limited, UNDP advised that it strives to support countries with at least 'no-regret' options and at best 'risk-informed' designs along with capacity for adaptive management as climate risks evolve.

5.4 Ability to sustain attention over the time frames required to see results

Are UNDP's efforts on climate change adaptation sustained over enough time to produce higher level results?

Finding 14. The time frames for implementation of adaptation projects are often unrealistic given stated ambitions and the complexity of the issues addressed. The variability of biophysical conditions that many adaptation projects aim to influence, which are exacerbated by the unpredictable and unfolding effects of climate change and the short duration of most projects, means it is often impossible to make confident conclusions about their likely impacts.

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109 UNDP IEO, 'Terminal Evaluation of Integrated Land and Ecosystem Management to Combat Land Degradation and Deforestation in Madhya Pradesh (PIMS3512)', 2016.

110 UNDP IEO, 'Terminal Evaluation Report of Strengthening Vulnerable People's Capacity to Address the Risks and Impacts of Climate Change and Extreme Weather Events (PIMS 3771)', 2014.

111 UNDP IEO, 'Terminal Evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Project Integration of Climate Change Risks into Resilient Island Planning in the Maldives (PIMS 4093)', 2016.

Consistent with other major reviews of adaptation assistance,[112] a common problem across the sampled projects was that implementation time frames were too often unrealistic given stated objectives and the complexity of the issues addressed. This was compounded by the fact that many of the projects reviewed would require long lead times to complete baseline or vulnerability assessments, compressing time available for implementation of planned subprojects.[113] It was further compounded by the fact that targeted benefits from a large proportion of the projects reviewed could not be realistically expected to be realized within the standard project time frames. In the case of ecosystem-based adaptation projects, longer time frames are crucial in demonstrating the longer term and larger scale benefits that can be obtained from such approaches.[114] Given these constraints, terminal evaluations can be limited in the conclusions they can reach about the success of interventions.

The challenge of achieving longer time horizons is a notable problem in UNDP's DRR work. In this area, UNDP is noteworthy for its emphasis on building capacities of recipient governments at all levels to strengthen disaster preparedness. However, because disaster prevention measures have so often been tied to disaster response projects, it has been a challenge for UNDP to maintain a sustained focus on the root causes of the disastrous impacts of natural hazards. Compared to other sectors where UNDP provides a significant amount of climate-related support, UNDP's DRR portfolio is characterized by large numbers of small, relatively short-term projects that also rely more heavily on core funding.[115] This mirrors the situation UNDP often encounters on the ground, where partners' DRR work is often funded through emergency budgets, making long-term planning difficult.

A notable exception to this problem is in UNDP's GEF international waters work. A unique characteristic of this initiative is the multi-phase sequencing arrangement – initial transboundary diagnostic analysis projects build into multi-phase strategic action programme projects and hive off into subbasin programmes. Complex transboundary systems, such as the Danube-Black Sea, the Yellow Sea, the Kura-Aras and others, have seen concerted international support, and multiple GEF projects, lasting decades.

Overall, the evidence reviewed suggests that UNDP is striving to better coordinate with host governments, funders and other actors to design and implement larger scale, longer term programmes and projects for climate change adaptation that can achieve transformational objectives. In doing

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[112] The Sixth Comprehensive Evaluation of the GEF observed, for example, that "Building institutional capacity often takes several years beyond a typical project implementation period for new knowledge and processes to be adopted. In cases where GEF support to build institutional capacity was mainstreamed and scaled up, this support was provided over a period longer than the typical project length. Continuous support – which in some cases extended over more than a decade – allowed national governments to build sufficient capacity over time to gradually mainstream GEF-supported interventions into their regular operations." See also: GEF IEO, 'Evaluation on Mainstreaming Biodiversity', 2019; FAO, 'Evaluation of FAO's contribution to Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Final Report', 2015.

[113] In the Ecosystem Based Adaptation for Mountain Ecosystems Project (Nepal, Peru and Uganda), the country governments wanted implementation quickly and were of the view that conducting vulnerability and impact assessments would delay implementation. The vulnerability and impact assessments, which should have determined the scope of the community-based adaptation, were delivered late. This led to the implementation of measures in Uganda that were later found not to be cost-effective and beneficial, such as promoting tree planting among households with small landholdings. The Implementation of Climate Change Adaptation Measures in Coastal Areas of Uruguay project faced a slow start due to the need to generate basic scientific information and present this information in a way that decision-makers and communities would understand. A capacity-building project in Costa Rica identified the problem nicely – that due to financial or time constraints, baselines must be constructed or identified during the project design, not its implementation.

[114] This can be a challenging message to convey to local constituents whose support is critical to success. For example, villagers who might consider investing in the rehabilitation of mangroves need assurance that they will reap the benefits in the long term. As it takes about 6–10 years for mangroves to mature, the time needed to benefit from such an investment is probably around one generation (33 years). A longer time frame may be critical for protected area work too, particularly when new protected areas are created. A protected area is autonomous (with an advanced degree of technical, organizational and financial capacity) only after 10 to 15 years.

[115] While UNDP has provided DRR support to over 130 countries and around 30 SIDS, much of this support is relatively shallow. In 45 of the countries, average annual expenditure between 2012 and 2017 was less than $150,000.

so, UNDP will need to sharpen its advocacy for longer term and more sustained efforts to adapt to cascading climate risks, noting that the risks, and the costs to address them, will only continue to rise, with dire consequences for people and the planet. To support this, it is critical that UNDP properly resource its country offices' monitor and sustain policy dialogue outside of project cycles.

5.5 Ability to address interdependencies

Given that climate change has been affecting all development sectors, all of which are interdependent, and that adverse impacts from climate change or weak management on one can lead to negative effects on others, to what extent has UNDP succeeded in achieving its aim of designing integrated adaptation interventions?

Finding 15. Whole-of-government approaches are enshrined in UNDP programming, and UNDP promotes mainstreaming of climate change and DRR in national and subnational development planning and budgeting. The highly project-focused nature of finance tends to limit UNDP efforts to break down institutional silos that inhibit integrated solutions to climate risk.

The cross-sectoral nature of climate risk implies the need for effective whole-of-government collaboration that includes engaging lower levels of government and civil society. This is challenging to achieve even in well-governed contexts. The ability to take a whole-of-government approach is embedded in UNDP's vision and is seen as a comparative advantage. Exemplifying this, UNDP has been very active in promoting mainstreaming of climate change and DRR in national and subnational development planning and budgeting. In playing this convening role, UNDP is recognized for its capacity to facilitate cooperation among development partners. This role is well suited to the typically limited funding of many UNDP interventions.

Unfortunately, reflecting the size and complexity of the challenges just noted, it is difficult to identify strong examples in which this convening work has delivered significant and tangible reform outcomes. Progress from efforts to support countries to adequately plan for and adapt to the effects of climate change has been evident, but it is slow and uncertain.[116] The experience of a flagship initiative to ensure that the risks of climate change for agricultural sectors is given adequate attention in NAPs (Box 11) is at least illustrative of this problem.

BOX 11. Incorporating agricultural sectors in NAPs—the NAP-Ag programme

The programme 'Supporting developing countries to integrate the agricultural sectors into National Adaptation Plans' (NAP-Ag, 2015–2019) was led by UNDP. This was due to its prior work on CCA policy with ministries of environment, which usually are the national designated authority for the UNFCCC, partnering with FAO. The programme covered 11 countries and was highly relevant considering the climate change risks for the agriculture sector and many countries' inclusion of agriculture as an adaptation priority.

The project faced a steep challenge in seeking to meaningfully inform the large and complex adaptation planning process and obtain strong government ownership. A further challenge was that it was made up of small, discrete and disconnected activities, and country arrangements in some cases. As a result, the programme tended to focus more on supporting the adaptation plan of the country's agriculture sector than on engaging in the full NAP to ensure it reflected the agriculture sector's adaptation needs.

While the project had relatively modest success, the experience underscores the valuable role UNDP has played in lifting the focus on the agriculture agenda in global discussions. With the end of the programme, there remain huge needs in the developing world for adaptation in the agriculture and food security sectors and for integrating these sectors into national adaptation planning.

Source: Midterm review of 'Supporting developing countries to integrate the agricultural sectors into National Adaptation Plans Programme', 2018.

[116] UNEP, 'Terminal Evaluation of the UNEP/UNDP/GEF Project: "Assisting non-LDC developing countries with country driven processes to advance national adaptation plans" and GEF ID 5683 (2016-2019)', 2020.

Beyond brokering and convening, UNDP faces significant hurdles in trying to coordinate and underwrite substantive improvements in whole-of-government action on climate change adaptation. The very high transaction costs in pursuing such approaches usually go well beyond typical UNDP project budgets. Moreover, governments themselves are failing to integrate climate change adaptation and DRR into core social and development planning, although that is beginning to change in some countries in response to the increasing frequency and impact of climate-related disasters.

For these reasons, substantive cooperation has usually only been possible with one or a limited number of national partners. Illustrating this, a stocktaking in 2015 found that over 90 percent of UNDP's disaster risk governance projects focused on strengthening the leadership of national disaster management agencies. This prompted a concerted effort to engage national planning departments in leading interventions that aim at strengthening DRR mainstreaming into development planning.[117]

Similarly, UNDP's environment projects typically engage environment ministries, which are mandated to lead on climate policy development and host the UNFCCC focal points. While this is often unavoidable, environment ministries tend to be in weak positions relative to other actors in government. There is a resulting risk that projects fail to go beyond organizational silos or feed into interministerial rivalries, rather than fostering whole-of-government collaboration. Added to this is the challenge of extending engagement to subnational actors who sometimes lack capacity, and over whom national counterparts may have limited authority. While many of UNDP's climate projects are conscious of these challenges and work to counteract them, resource limitations seriously constrain the scope of such efforts.

Unlike many of the other interventions in UNDP's DRR portfolio, which have focused on response and recovery, the Pacific Risk Resilience Programme has worked to address the humanitarian-development divide and improve risk-informed development through risk governance measures. Implemented in four countries – Fiji, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu – the programme has achieved progress in integrating disaster risk into national and subnational plans and policies, according to its 2016 midterm review. Yet, as with UNDP's other climate adaptation and DRR interventions, the quality of risk integration in the plans and policies has varied and was identified as an issue (as discussed earlier). Characteristic of these interventions, comprehensive assessments of the governance and institutional arrangements were generally not conducted at the outset of the programme to identify the most strategic entry points for improving risk governance. Nor was the programme meeting the regional need for support for implementation of the risk-informed plans, policies and processes that were developed.

An area that has potential for future programming to engage greater cross-government collaboration is highlighted in the Paris Agreement, which encourages alternative "policy approaches, such as joint mitigation and adaptation approaches for the integral and sustainable management of forests". Given UNDP's prominent role in the United Nations Programme on Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (UN-REDD), there are strong grounds to better promote adaptation benefits under UN-REDD and to capture existing adaptation benefits.

Discussions with UNDP staff reveal that the organization has yet to complete REDD+ projects that seek to explicitly pursue mitigation and adaptation. However, two promising projects that integrate adaptation benefits are in the pipeline in northern Ghana: one for the Shea landscape and another that promotes low-emission and climate-resilient practices in the soy and cattle ranching sectors. These projects represent a good example of internal collaboration between UNDP's climate change adaptation and climate and forests teams.

[117] UNDP, 'Strengthening Disaster Risk Governance: UNDP Support during the HFA Implementation Period 2005–2015', UNDP, New York, 2015.

5.6 Mainstreaming gender equality

To what extent has UNDP considered gender aspects in its work in support of climate change adaptation?

Finding 16. Given the added risks climate change poses to women, support for climate change adaptation provides a crucial entry point for pursuing gender equality. OECD data on climate change adaptation ODA confirms this strong connection and shows that UNDP is on par with or ahead of its peers for its focus on gender equality in its adaptation work. Yet UNDP has struggled to identify concrete and well-researched objectives to improve gender equality in some aspects of its adaptation programming, providing scope for improvement.

Climate change is having and will have a disproportionate impact on the poorest and most vulnerable people, placing women on the front lines of the climate crisis. Declines in agricultural productivity, for example, are increasing the burden of food provision on women during lean periods. This is exacerbated by the increased seasonal or permanent migration of men searching for alternative livelihoods. Increasing water scarcity requires greater time for water collection, a role typically played by women in rural areas.[118] Gender inequality and differences in roles mean women often have higher exposure to natural hazards than men, and in some contexts, higher rates of death and injury. Not having access to the same resources, women face steeper challenges in recovering from disasters and face escalated risks of gender-based violence.[119]

The flip side of these dynamics is that women have been proven to be key agents of change whose contributions and knowledge improve adaptation initiatives and lead to increased resilience for their communities.[120] Another take-away is that investments in improving natural resource and environmental management in the context of climate variability and climate change provide significant opportunities to empower women, and to strengthen their contributions to community cohesion and stability.[121] This contention is supported by data compiled by the OECD on ODA commitments identifying climate change adaptation as a significant or principal objective. Figure 3 shows that adaptation-focused ODA (blue and grey lines), has a much greater focus on promotion of gender equality than other ODA (orange line).[122]

Figure 3 also suggests that UNDP's focus on gender equality in investments marked as having an adaptation objective is in line with if not ahead of the OECD average. This has also improved as a result of large new commitments made through the GCF since 2016, which reflect its intention to integrate gender-based perspectives from the outset of its operations.[123] This mirrors an improving trend in the extent to which UNDP programmes and projects are marked as principally or significantly focused on gender equality.[124] It is also supportive of the assessment under the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, in which UNDP has been assessed as meeting or exceeding expected requirements on most counts.

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118 UNDP, 'Filling Buckets, Fuelling Change: Ensuring Gender-Responsive Climate Change Adaptation', 2016.

119 UNDRR, 'Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction', Geneva, Switzerland, 2019.

120 For discussion see for example: L. Aguilar, M. Granat and C. Owren, 2015, 'Roots for the future: The landscape and way forward on gender and climate change', Washington, DC: International Union for Conservation of Nature and the Global Gender and Climate Alliance.

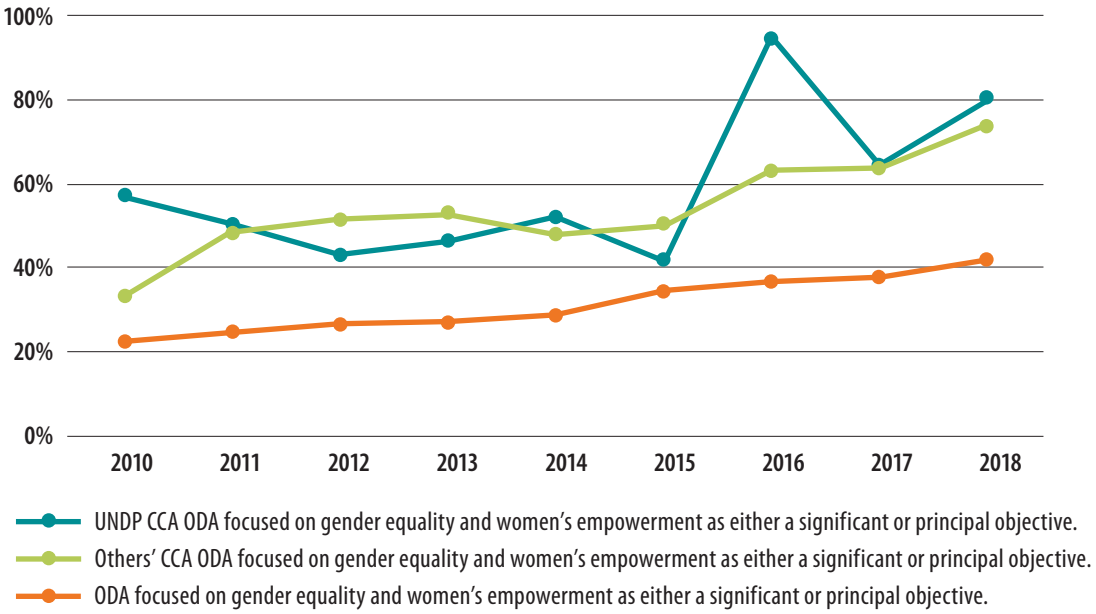
121 UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and the UN Department of Political and Peacekeeping Affairs/Peacebuilding Support Office, 'Gender, Climate and Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change', 2020.

122 This result is mirrored by UNDP's own data, which show 71 percent of climate change adaptation expenditures in 2018 making significant contributions to gender equality or having gender equality as a principal objective. This is significantly higher than the 51 percent figure for UNDP's overall expenditures in the same years.

123 GCF, 'Mainstreaming Gender in Green Climate Fund Projects', first edition, Global Climate Fund, Incheon, Republic of Korea, 2017.

124 UNDP, 'Progress in the implementation of UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021', Annual session of the UNDP Executive board, New York, 4 June 2019.

FIGURE 3. Gender equality focus of ODA with an adaptation objective versus other ODA, including UNDP component, 2010–2018



Source: OECD DAC creditor reporting system data

While the overall picture and trend are positive, there are areas that would benefit from continued attention. One challenging area for gender mainstreaming is capacity development and policy work, including in areas such as biodiversity projects marked by donors as having significant adaptation objectives.[125] The evaluation reviewed documentation covering 12 climate change adaptation projects focused on cross-cutting capacity development and policy work, finding weaknesses in this area.[126] However there is also evidence that UNDP has worked hard to address this in more recent projects, and in flagship initiatives such as the NAP-Ag project (described in Box 11).[127] This underlines the importance of establishing explicit and well-researched objectives for policy influence in the context of such investments. Without a clear and sustained commitment to thinking through how and why adaptation plans and policies should be reformed to better promote gender equality, there is a risk that gender mainstreaming in such contexts will amount to little more than good intentions.

[125] GEF IEO, 'Evaluation of Gender Mainstreaming in the GEF', 2018.

[126] Of the 12 projects, only 3 included gender equality objectives in results frameworks. Only 7 of the terminal evaluations of these projects considered their effectiveness in mainstreaming or promoting gender equality. Of these, only 5 evaluations were able to report any evidence of gender equality results, none of which addressed the root causes of gender inequality.

[127] As evidenced by the midterm review, the evaluation has given serious attention to promoting gender equality including through the production of a significant body of knowledge and guidance products.

Chapter 6.

SUPPORT FOR SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

This chapter examines how UNDP has structured its climate resilience support to SIDS, considering their known vulnerabilities.

6.1 Key messages

- While small island developing states are diverse, they exhibit some common characteristics that make them highly vulnerable to environmental and economic shocks, and they face disproportionately higher risks of adverse consequences from global warming.
- UNDP's operational footprint and position within the United Nations system provides it with some advantages in helping island states adapt to climate change. This has enabled it to capture a significant share of funding made available through environment funds, including for the purposes of adaptation.
- The scope for country offices to strengthen their support for SIDS is constrained by several factors, including:
  - The high-income status of many SIDS, which constrains their access to concessional finance;
  - The economic vulnerability of island states and high indebtedness of many, which constrains the willingness of governments to enter cost-sharing arrangements with UNDP;
  - Donor preference for bilateral cooperation and the high volatility of funding for SIDS, given the bias of aid donors in funding response and recovery efforts, rather than preventive measures focused on DRR and adaptation;
  - Lack of evident progress in growing the pool of resources allocated by donors to SIDS despite their long-standing agreement to provide 'new and additional' finance to cover the costs of global warming;
  - Lack of human resource capacity given SIDS' small populations and in some cases weak education systems;
  - Lack of recognition of SIDS' vulnerability in UNDP's resource allocation policies.

6.2 SIDS' structural challenges

Climate change is dramatically amplifying the known vulnerabilities of SIDS and poses an existential threat to some. There has been long-standing recognition of the need for specific consideration of SIDS' vulnerabilities in climate action, including in the UNFCCC (1992) and the Paris Agreement (2015).

The vulnerability of SIDS to climate change is accelerating rapidly and represents an existential threat to some. Reflecting this, the UNFCCC refers to "the specific needs and concerns of developing country Parties arising from the adverse effects of climate change … especially on: (a) Small Island countries; (b) Countries with low-lying coastal areas…".[128] This has carried through to the Paris Agreement, which singles out island states (with LDCs) as a focus for capacity development support and scaled-up financial resources, among other things.[129]

[128] UNFCCC, 1992, https://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/conveng.pdf.
[129] UNFCCC, 2015, Paris Agreement, https://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/background_publications_htmlpdf/application/pdf/conveng.pdf.

While they are diverse, SIDS share a specific set of social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities deriving from their size and geography, small tax base, high costs of service delivery and high exposure to natural hazards. The challenges of delivering effective support for SIDS are well known, but worth reiterating. SIDS suffer from very high costs for service delivery due to their small and highly dispersed populations, lengthy supply chains, high production costs and dependence on imports. The OECD has shown, for example, that SIDS need to spend significantly more of their budgets on health and education than countries at comparable income levels, and in some cases multiples more.[130]

An outcome of low population size is stretched human resource capacities, especially when it comes to accessing specialized expertise. Constraints in access to skilled labour can be exacerbated by deficiencies in some SIDS' education systems, brain drain or both. SIDS do not have the economies of scale that exist in larger economies, challenging the capacity of government officers, who need to wear multiple hats, and thus struggle to cover all aspects of their mandates equally well.[131]

Climate change is increasing the risks of environmental and economic shocks, and for some SIDS, such as low-lying atoll nations, it poses an existential threat. Climate adaptation costs are among the highest in the world for SIDS when measured as a proportion of national output. Even high-income SIDS can be overwhelmed by the cost of recovering from weather-related disasters. Between 1998 and 2017, for example, 9 of the top 10 climate-related disaster losses as a percentage of GDP affected SIDS.[132] SIDS bear particularly high economic losses from natural hazards, ranging from 1 percent to 9 percent of GDP annually. These are concentrated at the top of the list of countries that suffer the highest relative losses.[133] The world risk index suggests that 8 of the 15 countries with the highest exposure levels worldwide are island nations. The impact of COVID-19 on SIDS underscores their vulnerability to shocks (Box 12).

Some major multilateral institutions, including the World Bank and Asian Development Bank, have taken action to give preferential treatment to island states in their aid allocation policies.[134] Similarly, there are efforts to reflect the vulnerabilities of SIDS in the reforms OECD is undertaking to enable reinstatement of ODA eligibility for countries or territories affected by humanitarian crises that were precipitated by the economic impact of the 2017 Caribbean hurricane season.[135]

6.3 UNDP support for SIDS

Finding 17. UNDP is a key source of support for SIDS and has by far the biggest presence in SIDS of all UN agencies. Yet UNDP faces several notable challenges in delivering effective support to SIDS, deriving from these countries' structural challenges and access to finance and configuration of UNDP country offices.

SIDS' vulnerability to climate change makes them a key constituency for UNDP in driving climate action and supporting adaptation to new and emerging climate risks. UNDP's support for SIDS is delivered through its presence across all SIDS in the Pacific, Caribbean, Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea. This takes place through a network of eight multi-country offices as well as stand-alone country offices in Bahrain, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Maldives, Papua New Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Timor-Leste.

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130 OECD, 'Making Development Co-operation Work for Small Island Developing States', 2018.

131 Ibid.

132 UNISDR and Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters, 'Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2017', 31 pp, 2018.

133 IPCC, 'Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation', a special report of Working Groups I and II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, C.B. Field, V. Barros, T.F. Stocker, D. Qin, D.J. Dokken, K.L. Ebi, M.D. Mastrandrea, K.J. Mach, G.-K. Plattner, S.K. Allen, M. Tignor and P.M. Midgley (eds.), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, and New York, NY, USA, 582 pp, 2012.

134 These changes are delivering significant increases in resources to Pacific island nations expected from: (i) the Asian Development Bank (from about $400 million per year to up to $750 million/$800 million by 2020); (ii) the World Bank (under IDA 18 resource allocations will increase from about $200 million per year to up to $450 million by 2020).

135 OECD, 'Official Development Assistance (ODA)', Development Co-operation Directorate, April 2020. https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/What-is-ODA.pdf.

BOX 12. COVID-19 impact on SIDS

The economic ramifications of COVID-19 for SIDS are deep. The Economic Vulnerability Index – a measure of the structural vulnerability of developing countries to economic and natural shocks – shows that SIDS are markedly more vulnerable than other countries at similar income levels, a pattern that is most pronounced in the upper-middle-income category. Reflecting this, SIDS suffered significantly higher economic losses from the 2008 global financial crisis compared to other developing countries.[136]

This pattern is repeating itself with the COVID-19 crisis. The impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector is a cause for concern given the heavy economic reliance on tourism of a large proportion of SIDS. Of the 30 most tourism-dependent countries in the world, 23 are SIDS. Their tourism-related revenues range from 14 percent of GDP (Mauritius) to 73 percent (Turks and Caicos Islands). The hole left in government budgets by the collapse of tourism-related revenues for island states will leave governments weighing the merits of two bad choices: Do we cut spending and the government services it supports? Or do we take on more debt and risk downstream problems with debt distress (which is already a problem for many island nations)?

UNDP's commitment to maintaining a universal presence is evident in its coverage of SIDS. It has by far the biggest presence in SIDS of all of the UN agencies, as measured by both the number of personnel and the number of countries where personnel are stationed. According to the recent UN review of multi-country offices, UNDP has around 400 personnel spread across 33 SIDS, roughly double the number of personnel and country presence of the next most significant UN entity. Unsurprisingly, a survey of key government counterparts in the same review shows UNDP is the most well-known partner to SIDS in the UN system.[137]

Leveraging its boots on the ground, UNDP has played an important role in facilitating countries' access to finance through vertical funds. This includes five major GCF adaptation projects in Maldives, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Timor-Leste and Tuvalu, representing a step-up in scale compared to most of UNDP's previous efforts.

As evidenced by project, country and thematic evaluations, and regular progress reporting, UNDP's support for SIDS is generally effective and well managed. UNDP's support mirrors support provided across its development portfolio, but its relevance is particularly high given the nature of the climate threat. Support has included, for example:

- Extensive work on disaster risk governance, including improved early warning and climate information systems;
- Support for disaster recovery efforts, including an emphasis on building back better and strengthening construction standards, such as in the response to Hurricanes Maria and Irma in the Eastern Caribbean in 2017;
- A significant body of work on coastal protection, emphasizing the importance of nature-based solutions such as protection and restoration of mangroves and coral reefs. This includes the establishment of a major joint initiative with UNEP, the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation to address the coral reef funding gap and the fragmented, project-by-project nature of interventions;
- Significant focus on improved sustainable management of ocean ecosystems and shared fisheries resources, key to the economic health of many SIDS;
- Measures to secure freshwater resources for vulnerable communities, including new large-scale GCF- funded interventions in the Maldives and Marshall Islands to address vulnerability of resources to saline intrusion and changed rainfall patterns;

[136] OECD, 'Making Development Co-operation Work for Small Island Developing States', 2018.
[137] United Nations, 'United Nations Multi-Country Office Review', 2019.

- Measures to support adaptation of agriculture and coastal fisheries to climate threats.

UNDP has played a smaller but important role in supporting SIDS to engage in international climate negotiations and advocacy for climate action. This has included capacity development support for the Association of Small Island States, support for the midterm review of the SAMOA Pathway and support for the UN review of multi-country offices.[138] UNDP is recognized as a strong partner for OHRLLS[139] and the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which have responsibility for mainstreaming SIDS issues across the UN system.

Policy leadership and global advocacy are anchored in the leadership of a small team in BPPS, which has articulated a SIDS offer. This offer reflects the criticality of climate action, the blue economy and access to finance and digital innovation as a basis for UNDP's support to SIDS. In response to the unique needs of SIDS in the context of COVID-19, UNDP has also developed a specific response with emphasis on long-term recovery, placing climate action at the centre of SIDS development needs.

6.4 Constraints on effectiveness

6.4.1 Challenges of oversight and engagement through multi-country offices

Given their small size, most SIDS do not meet thresholds for the minimum programme size required to fund a physical presence (currently $12 million over a four-year programming cycle).[140] This means UNDP's programmes are managed under multi-country office arrangements for most of the island states it supports. Island states in the Pacific are managed out of either Fiji (10 countries) or Samoa (4 countries), and those in the Caribbean are split between Barbados (10 countries), Jamaica (5 countries) and Trinidad and Tobago (5 countries).

Multi-country offices face substantial challenges in ensuring effective oversight and engagement from senior management and technical specialists and delivery of tailored solutions on the ground. Constraints include:

- High costs of travel for management, monitoring and representation purposes, restricting opportunities for policy dialogue and implementation support;
- Managing procurements efficiently given limitations in the size and capability of local markets to supply goods and services, and high costs of delivering goods and services to remote locations;
- High transaction costs for addressing the independent needs and interests of multiple sovereign governments while adhering to UNDP policy requirements, especially given the small size of offices serving SIDS;
- Unreliable and irregular transportation between islands and within the same country;
- Lack of data and of a centralized hub for country data.

The impact of these operating constraints is very well documented in IEO and UNDP and in other evaluations. Analysing the performance of multi-country projects, which are often the only feasible vehicle for supporting SIDS, the 2020 IEO evaluation of UNDP's programme in Barbados and the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States observed that:

[138] General Assembly resolution 72/279 on the UN development system repositioning called for a review of "the configuration, capacity, resource needs, role and development services of multi-country offices, in full consultation with the countries involved," to improve the contribution of the offices to country progress in achieving the 2030 Agenda. This mandate followed and reiterated the call in the 2016 Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review, which also asked to "consider, where possible and appropriate, limiting the number of countries under the coverage of each multi-country office."

[139] United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

[140] See DP/2013/45, 'Funding of differentiated physical presence'.

While UNDP has been able to ensure delivery, despite the logistical challenges and high costs, limited resources have at times been spread too thin across activities and countries, reducing the ability to tailor the support at country level and effectively engage with national counterparts. Across portfolios, and independently of the number of countries covered, projects were often too ambitious in their design and did not adequately take into account national capacity constraints. With few exceptions, inadequate attention has been paid to result pathways and sustainability in the design.

On this basis, the evaluation concluded that in multi-country projects, the "number of countries covered appears to be inversely proportional to their effectiveness and sustainability".[141] Similarly, the last IEO evaluation of UNDP's work in the Pacific identified major concerns about "managerial efficiency involving timeliness of approval of projects, timely procurement of inputs, and recruitment of technical experts/consultants, disbursement of funds. The perceptions from a majority of the countries and counterparts were negative. Although fund disbursal has improved significantly over the years, the perception of inefficiencies remains. The approval of management and financial issues from the two MCOs [multi-country offices] for outlying country projects was mostly considered slow or sluggish. UNDP's procedures, regulations, paper trail, and reporting requirements are not always understood at project level. The geographical coverage and challenges of administering programmes in remote countries and locations, and the centralized nature of UNDP MCO administrations, leave the project offices with limited authority of resource allocations, recruitment and procurement. Sometimes weak competence of national project staff, staff turnover at national level and lack of handing-over procedures also contribute to delays and inefficiencies."[142]

The impact of SIDS characteristics on performance has been empirically demonstrated by GEF's Independent Evaluation Office, which concluded in its 2014 performance review that "[E]valuations of projects implemented in SIDS were twice as likely to have lessons highlighting weaknesses in project management or oversight as evaluations of projects implemented in non SIDS."[143] Similarly, the 2018 evaluation of the Adaptation Fund highlighted for SIDS, "complex operating environment and costs that were not appropriately factored into project formulations, especially in the Pacific."[144]

In this context, it is unsurprising that partners served by multi-country offices express a clear preference for UN agencies including UNDP to establish a physical presence, which would enable more regular and ongoing interactions and more tailored support. The question is how this can be paid for and operationalized, given existing policy settings.

6.4.2 Resource mobilization challenges

A final constraint on UNDP's capacity to support SIDS relates to the availability and predictability of programming resources.

Resource mobilization opportunities are constrained for UNDP in many SIDS. There are 35 SIDS that are eligible for ODA, but just 5 countries received 61 percent of ODA in the five years between 2014 and 2018.[145] While strong commitments have been made to grow the pool of concessional finance and other avenues for support to SIDS in key international agreements such as the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for

[141] UNDP IEO, 'Independent Country Programme Evaluation: Barbados and Eastern Caribbean', unpublished, 2020.
[142] UNDP IEO, 'Assessment of Development Results: Pacific Islands', 2012.
[143] GEF IEO, 'GEF Annual Performance Report 2014', 2015.
[144] Adaptation Fund, 'Overall Evaluation of the Adaptation Fund', 2018. The evaluation notes that: "All available evaluation reports for SIDS describe complex and high-cost operating environments due to geographic spread, which was not adequately considered in project design."
[145] Cuba, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste. Source: OECD Creditor Reporting System.

development,[146] there is little evidence that global aid allocations currently account for the known vulnerabilities of small island states. Rather, adaptation aid allocations tend to closely match donor aid allocations, suggesting SIDS' status may have a greater effect on the composition rather than the volume of development assistance.[147]

External financial flows to SIDS are significantly more volatile compared to flows to other countries.[148] This is also true of ODA, in part reflecting the importance of humanitarian flows as a component of ODA to SIDS. Discounting major humanitarian efforts in Haiti (2010) and Cuba (2016), ODA to SIDS overall has been flat, and has declined to upper-middle-income and high-income SIDS, reflecting global trends.[149] This trend has increased the importance of resource mobilization from vertical funds such as GEF, which allocate a significant share of their resources to upper-middle-income and high-income countries – in the case of GEF, 40 percent of funds.

Fiscal constraints also affect SIDS' ability or willingness to make expected contributions to local office costs (differentiated by income levels). These are key to UNDP's ability to maintain a presence on the ground and to its effectiveness. This is illustrated by Table 7, which shows that arrears in government contributions are much higher for SIDS than for other countries served by UNDP at equivalent income levels.[150]

The one area from which UNDP has been able to mobilize resources has been vertical environment funds. While use of resources mobilized from these funds is limited to specific purposes related to environmental conventions, they address a set of core economic issues for SIDS, including climate change adaptation. However, the lack of flexible funding and of sources outside of environment funds severely constrains UNDP's ability to step up its engagement on economic and policies issues not covered within the time-bound and issue-specific scope of vertical fund engagements. UNDP's engagements on the crucial task of strengthening disaster risk governance are difficult to maintain, given the time-bound and event focus of much of the bilateral assistance to SIDS.

The extent to which this is the case is illustrated by Figure 4, which underscores the heavy reliance on vertical funds by many UNDP country offices servicing SIDS to justify their operational footprint. In 17 of the 30 SIDS supported by UNDP, vertical funds account for over 60 percent of programming resources, and in 10 of these, vertical funds exceed 85 percent of programming resources. Of the 43 countries that derive over half of their resources from vertical funds, over half are SIDS, including countries in all income levels.

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[146] The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 2015, for example, states that: "We, the international community, acknowledge that small island developing states are a special development case given their size, vulnerability and narrow economic base… We will meet these challenges. We will find new ways to help small island developing states finance their development needs in an affordable and sustainable way. We will use successful approaches like the World Bank's small island states exception to find new concessional finance pathways for these states. We will work with international financial markets to develop more innovative financing mechanisms, and to develop better debt instruments that limit debt distress when economic, social, and natural shocks strike. We will develop better risk management frameworks and help improve access to resources from climate-linked finance mechanisms as a way of investing in more resilient infrastructure. We will provide more of our aid for trade, and help small states integrate more effectively with global markets. We will help these states invest in knowledge and capacity to maintain their rich marine biodiversity."

[147] Available empirical analyses have shown SIDS are more likely to receive adaptation aid and tend to receive higher levels of adaptation aid per capita than other countries. However, there is little evidence that they receive higher amounts of assistance overall. See M. Dornan and S. Robinson, 2017, 'International financing for climate change adaptation in small island developing states', in: *Reg Environ Change* 17:1103–1115.

[148] OECD, 'Making Development Co-operation Work for Small Island Developing States', 2018.

[149] According to the OECD, ODA to upper-middle-income countries halved between 2005 and 2017, and the share of ODA going to them decreased from 29 percent to 9 percent over the same period.

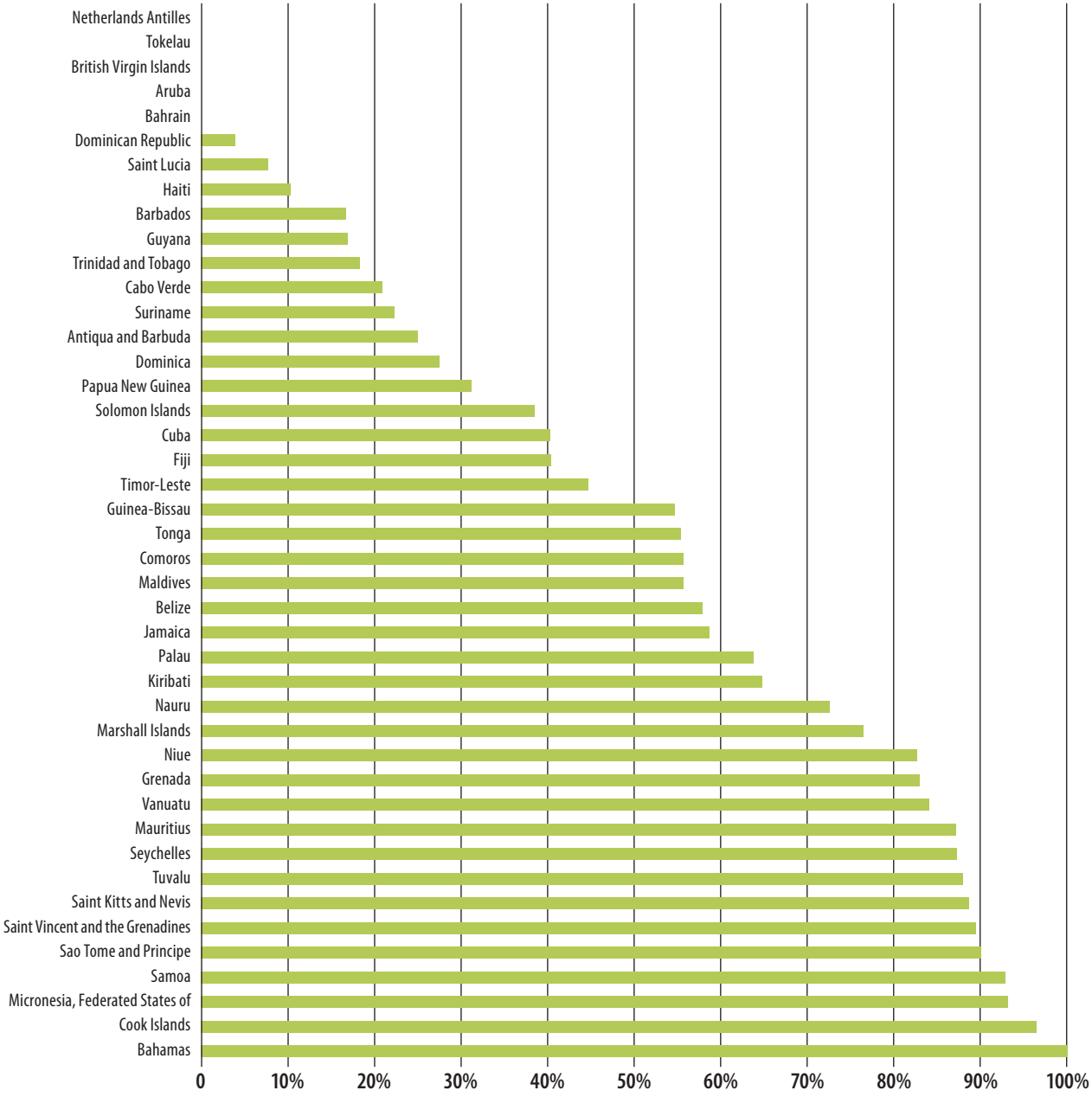
[150] SIDS' fiscal constraints and economic vulnerability limit the potential of UNDP's local cost-sharing model, which has been a feature of partnerships with countries at the upper end of the income spectrum, especially in Latin America. The evidence shows this strategy is unlikely to provide a durable basis for UNDP operations in SIDS. Cost-sharing contributions from SIDS from 2012 to 2017 came to under a third of 1 percent of UNDP's funding in climate and disaster risk-related areas and came from just three countries. SIDS' limited capacity to mobilize domestic resources, reliance on external debt to finance public investment, high unit costs for service provision and vulnerability to environmental and economic shocks suggests UNDP will continue to face significant headwinds in mobilizing cost-sharing contributions from them, compared to other countries. According to an internal review of the Barbados and Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States multi-country programme, this dynamic 'almost discards' government cost-sharing as a mobilizable source of funding.

TABLE 7. Arrears in government contribution: Outstanding obligation as a percentage of cash targets, SIDS versus others

	% outstanding	
Income category	**SIDS**	**Others**
Low-income country	63%	41%
Lower-middle-income country	50%	26%
Upper-middle-income country	56%	22%

Source: Government Local Office Contribution Performance PowerBi report

FIGURE 4. Vertical funds as a proportion of country office expenditure in SIDS, 2017–2019



Source: UNDP PowerBi

Chapter 7.

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

This chapter presents the evaluation's conclusions on UNDP's support for climate resilience, recommendations and the management response.

Governments are increasingly focused on the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change. However, adjustments are not enough to keep pace with the scale of the changes that are coming. The COVID-19 crisis is revealing the underlying vulnerability of development gains to external shocks. It offers an insight into the likely impact of future climate shocks if the world fails to contain warming and to support required adaptation measures.

Global warming will require a stepwise change in the ability of governments and communities to anticipate and mitigate climate risk. The IPCC has calculated that even 1.5 degrees C of warming, the level targeted by the Paris Agreement, cannot be considered 'safe' and poses significant risks to natural and human systems. Models projecting emissions based on current climate policies suggest warming will exceed 3 degrees.

Adaptation costs will be considerable even if the Paris Agreement targets are met – the Global Commission on Adaptation suggests a price tag of $180 billion annually from 2020 to 2030. Such figures are likely to be underestimates because climate change will produce indirect impacts, dramatically amplifying costs in ways that are impossible for models to predict.

Mitigation and adaptation efforts have expanded in recent years. However, they are not yet enough to avoid substantial damage to the economy, environment and human health over the coming decades. Financing for adaptation is increasing but lags well behind demand, projected requirements and UNFCCC targets. Concessional finance for adaptation has lagged finance for mitigation, of which private investment is a major component, despite the commitment to ensure a balance between the two.

COVID-19 is exposing vulnerabilities. The International Monetary Fund was ringing alarm bells about debt risks in emerging and frontier market economies prior to the crisis.[151] Declining exports and revenues and capital flight have now left more than half of low-income countries in debt distress, or at high risk of debt distress. The Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States has estimated the GDP of SIDS will shrink by 4.7 percent in 2020, compared to the predicted global contraction of around 3 percent. This reflects the high dependence of many SIDS on tourism.[152] Rising debt servicing obligations will raise untenable choices for governments: Do we cut budgets for health, education and safety nets or default on our debt obligations?

How to address debt levels is likely to become an increasingly important part of the conversation about financing adaptation costs. This is especially true considering the likely downstream implications of burgeoning COVID-19 crisis deficits for future concessional financing from developed to developing countries – including those made under the Paris Agreement.

[151] International Monetary Fund, 2019, 'Global Financial Stability Report: Lower for Longer', October.
[152] https://www.un.org/ohrlls/content/covid-19-sids.

7.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP has been effective at using its country presence to capture a significant share of increasing adaptation commitments channelled through vertical funds. UNDP has developed a comprehensive climate change adaptation service offer, providing extensive support across geographic regions and sectors that are exposed to climate risk. This provides UNDP with a solid platform to work from in driving home the need for an accelerated and scaled up response to climate risk.

While UNDP is a small provider of climate change adaptation services in the context of global finance for adaptation, it has two notable strengths.

First, UNDP has captured a significant share of the growth in adaptation finance channelled through vertical funds and is notable for the geographic and sectoral breadth of its support compared to other development actors, within and outside of the United Nations. Since 2010 UNDP has mobilized over $2.8 billion for projects across some 100 high, middle and low-income countries, including 43 least developed countries and 16 SIDS, touching the lives of over 82 million people. UNDP ecosystem-based adaptation projects promote understanding of the importance of natural assets such as mangroves, reefs, riparian vegetation and native forests for tackling the climate crisis. Programmes focused on biodiversity and protected area management and reducing emissions from deforestation provide adaptation benefits in the form of watershed, coastal and marine asset protection and sustainable livelihoods. Transboundary and country-level efforts protect vital freshwater and marine ecosystems threatened by climate change. Agriculture and food security work reflects the importance of this area to poverty reduction, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and its high exposure to climate risks. UNDP accounts for around one quarter of the resources channelled through the United Nations for disaster risk reduction and is one of the top two United Nations providers of this support.

Second, UNDP utilizes its global presence as a ballast for the normative work of the United Nations and international cooperation on climate action, working cooperatively with leading United Nations actors such as UNFCCC, UNDRR, UNEP and FAO. In doing so, UNDP has provided a bridge between global commitments under the climate convention, Sendai Framework, and other international agreements key to climate change adaptation, and country and local action, including by facilitating access to climate finance. UNDP is a leading global advocate for improved disaster risk reduction and climate action globally, including through a significant platform of support for SIDS, which have played an outsized role in drawing attention to the need to address climate change on the international stage.

Conclusion 2. UNDP has established a considerable body of work and associated expertise in sectors critical for adaptation, including policy mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction, agriculture and food security, environmental protection and ecosystem-based adaptation and water and coastal resilience. UNDP capabilities, strategic positioning and comparative advantage in these sectors and among country offices are uneven, with some aspects of its offer needing further definition.

UNDP has an extensive programme of support for addressing climate-related disaster risks ranging from disaster risk assessments, preparedness and community-based DRM through to recovery and response work, with an emphasis on building back better. Disaster risk reduction work is now split between two bureaux, with the bulk of the funding overseen by the climate adaptation team in the Bureau for Policy and Programme Support, reflecting success in mobilizing resources from vertical funds for climate change adaptation work. However, substantial underutilized expertise remains in the Crisis Bureau, where there is a major risk it will be absorbed into response activities.

UNDP extensive efforts to protect biodiversity and prevent deforestation are extensive and reinforce climate adaptation objectives. A continuing challenge in UNDP ecosystem-based adaptation work is balancing socioeconomic and ecosystem dimensions.

The need for concerted efforts to address climate change and associated extreme weather risk has

been well integrated into UNDP programming on water governance.

UNDP carries out a range of adaptation initiatives in agriculture and food security but has not developed a service offer to codify its strengths and desired positioning in this area. Missing from many projects is the need for targeted and effective adaptation measures to support small, poor agricultural producers in risk-prone agroecological zones.

Conclusion 3. There has been progress in integrating vertical funds within the UNDP business model, although much more needs to be done in this area. Mechanisms for collaboration between technical teams – important for countering fragmentation and mainstreaming consideration of climate change across UNDP – are still at an early stage of development.

There is a lack of effective collaboration between technical teams, reflecting the close connection of different advisory cadres to the requirements of their funders. Weaknesses in this area are evident in the fact that UNDP has defined the sphere of its support for climate change adaptation almost entirely in terms of projects funded by vertical funds. The actual scope of UNDP support and climate risk exposures are broader and more diverse. The existence of parallel information systems for vertical fund finance reinforces this separation between different business lines.

Reflecting differences in funding streams, and the impacts of corporate restructuring, UNDP staff capacity in disaster risk reduction has declined, despite significant growth in finance for disaster risk reduction mobilized through vertical funds. The positioning of the UNDP disaster risk reduction team in the Crisis Bureau creates an additional risk that its attention is taken by reactive and short-term demands tied to the cyclical and event-focused nature of crisis programming. Strong measures are needed to counter this risk so that UNDP can effectively promote the merits of prevention and risk informed solutions to face the slow onset crisis of global warming.

Conclusion 4. UNDP has progressively increased the rigour with which it incorporates climate science into the design of adaptation projects resourced by vertical funds.

The absence of reliable meteorological data and long-term projections of climate variability and trends constrain the ability of local communities and authorities to design appropriate adaptation strategies. As a result, even projects that have an explicit focus on adaptation have struggled to incorporate climate science and implications in the design of activities. Addressing this challenge, UNDP has increased its attention to climate risks in design processes associated with the vertical funds, and there has been some improvement in scenario-based project designs. UNDP is also making a significant investment in developing the climate information infrastructure, which will be critical in addressing gaps in the knowledge base.

Conclusion 5. The changing climate has implications for most UNDP development programming, yet climate risk is not being systematically considered and mainstreamed.

UNDP has established screening procedures and standards that aim to ensure all UNDP projects are resilient to climate risk. However, there are significant and longstanding weaknesses in the application of this system, with a bias towards rating projects low risk, increasing the likelihood they will eventually do harm to people and the environment. Recognition of climate risk exposures has been noticeably absent in some of the largest crisis interventions with activities in climate sensitive sectors.

Conclusion 6. With limited resources, it is a struggle for UNDP in many country contexts to leverage the substantial policy and systems changes that will be required for successful adaptation to climate change.

While targeted local initiatives provide valuable tangible results, the key test of UNDP value as a development partner relates to its capacity to positively influence policy and systems improvements at scale. The extent to which UNDP can address the adaptation needs of partner governments

is constrained by contextual factors, short-term project cycles and funding constraints. Given the continuing bias of governments and aid donors towards funding disaster response and recovery means it is difficult to place adequate emphasis on preventative measures focused on disaster risk reduction and medium to long-term adaptation. The short-term funding cycles of many key donors, and lack of predictability around partner government and donor priorities, presents challenges to aligning priorities and resources and to optimizing coordination and collaboration rather than competition. The different emphases and priorities of funding streams for adaptation, which cut across climate, humanitarian and development realms, undermine the objective of developing more integrated responses to climate risk.

In this context, and with some exceptions, UNDP has struggled to ensure that the breadth of its support is equalled by the depth, quality and longevity of engagement necessary to maximize policy and system impacts. The UNDP core challenge is that its resources – technical and financial – are spread thinly across its extensive office network. In many of the contexts in which UNDP works, resources are extremely limited relative to demand, especially in countries that do not attract significant official development assistance, and where fiscal constraints limit prospects for local cost sharing. UNDP success in mobilizing funds for adaptation projects from GCF provides it with an opportunity to step up the scale of its support in many countries. The key to maintaining this momentum will be the ability of UNDP to establish projects and programmes that blend different sources of finance, working in concert with multiple partners.

Conclusion 7. There are some persistent weaknesses in the identification of plausible pathways for leveraging policy and system changes and in systems for supporting learning and accountability.

Regardless of the scale of the finance it can mobilize, there is scope for UNDP to better utilize available levers for influencing policy and systems changes in its adaptation work. There is room to improve strategic clarity regarding intended pathways for influencing policy and systems changes in programme and project designs. UNDP implementation of pilots as a mechanism for policy influence has often lacked strong justification or carefully designed steps to evaluate and communicate results and incorporate lessons in sector programmes, plans and decision-making. Achievement in such cases has usually been limited, with pilot projects not scaled up or replicated. Another tendency was for UNDP to focus on developing or revising plans, policies or guidelines on paper, without an accompanying focus on the quality and downstream impact of these measures.

Addressing these challenges will require improvements in UNDP results management systems. These do not effectively capture the impact of its investments in promoting adaptation, or the nature and scope of UNDP influence, given contextual enablers and constraints. They are not currently promoting a robust internal discussion about performance, falling short of what is required for effective adaptive management and learning, critical given uncertainty about global emissions pathways.

Conclusion 8. UNDP provides extensive and valued climate change adaptation support for SIDS. However, SIDS vulnerabilities, and the challenges of supporting them through multi-country offices, are not factored into UNDP policies, which constrains its ability to provide tailored support.

Due to their small tax bases and high exposure to natural hazards, SIDS are prominent at the top of economic vulnerability indices. The COVID-19 crisis has again exposed these vulnerabilities, with SIDS economies facing particularly devastating consequences compared to other countries, and many facing an untenable choice between debt service obligations and cuts to basic services.

The challenges UNDP faces in supporting SIDS are more acute than for other countries. SIDS' fiscal constraints reduce the potential for resource mobilization from government partners. ODA to SIDS is highly concentrated on a small number of countries, which limits resource mobilization opportunities. As is highlighted by the recent IEO evaluation of UNDP

development support services for middle-income countries, the UNDP resource allocation model does not account for factors beyond population and per capita income, which are crude measures of need. These factors lead to a dependency on vertical funds, or volatile humanitarian flows, for climate change adaptation programming in SIDS.

Economies of scale limit UNDP capacity to establish an on-the-ground presence in most SIDS, leading to multi-country office operational arrangements that reduce opportunities for effective oversight and policy engagement and increase challenges in tailoring adaptation programme support to country needs.

7.2 Recommendations and management response

Recommendation 1.

UNDP needs to accelerate its attention to mainstreaming consideration of climate risks across its entire development portfolio.

This will require more rigorous application of the UNDP social and environmental safeguards policy in project formulation and monitoring, and tailored guidance and advice on how to assess and mitigate the risks of climate change and variability in different sectors, with a focus on climate exposed sectors. Periodic spot-checks of the application of climate risk screening policies would then be in order.

This will also require increased clarity in UNDP programmes, based on the scientific evidence, about the magnitude of the medium and long-term risks presented by climate change and actions required to address them. While outcomes of climate change mitigation efforts will determine the profile of these risks and their consequences, scaled up adaption efforts are required now, even under the most optimistic mitigation scenarios.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation acknowledging that it is important to apply climate risk-screening to assess climate exposure and design strategies to mitigate risks. UNDP is already undertaking significant efforts to screen such risks. In particular, within the adaptation offer, rigorous analysis of climate risks and interventions has been applied, informed by scientific data, analysis, and detailed climate risk and vulnerability assessments. UNDP notes that availability of climate data and modelling is still nascent in many countries and UNDP strives to support countries with at least 'no-regret' options and at best 'risk-informed' designs, along with capacity for adaptive management as climate risks evolve.

Climate assessment and climate-risk screening are essential parts of the updated social and environmental standards (SES) and screening procedures (SESP), effective 1 January 2021. Both aim at early detection of climate-related risks and impacts and finding appropriate mitigation measures if avoidance is not possible. The scope of standard 3 (climate change and disaster risk) has been broadened to allow for better integration of disaster risks and to encompass provisions to respond to climate-induced impacts. UNDP is building a cadre of experts in the regional hubs to advise on SES standard 3 and on providing training and capacity building on climate-related topics to UNDP staff and implementing partners.

Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1 Include additional guidance on climate assessment and climate-risk screening in the updated SES toolkit	Q4 2020	BPPS		Complete
1.2 Build a cadre of experts on standard 3 (climate change and disaster risk) in the regional hubs to advise country offices during project preparation and implementation	Q1 2021	BPPS		

Recommendation 2.

UNDP should establish a system for tracking all investments that have significant climate change objectives, ensuring these are provided with appropriate technical support, oversight and visibility as part of the UNDP adaptation portfolio and as a basis for strengthening internal collaboration.

The objective should be to ensure all projects that have significant adaptation objectives are supported to integrate the best available methods for incorporating climate science into project design and implementation and are recognized as part of a portfolio that cut across a significant proportion of UNDP business. This would also support better coordination between vertical fund programming and other funding streams, as well as continuing efforts to improve coordination among climate and disaster risk reduction personnel across the UNDP policy and crisis bureaux.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that it has invested in strengthening capacity to analyse its investments to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan, 2018-2021, through its results-linking platform and introduction of a range of project markers. UNDP has completed a mapping of ongoing projects in the adaptation portfolio, which was incorporated in the portfolio analysis dashboard, an internal monitoring tool for organizational lessons learning and knowledge management. UNDP will utilize its project marker or other robust tracking systems to capture projects with significant climate change objectives. This will ensure that project design and implementation can be effectively supported and monitored in a coordinated manner across the organization. It will also enable UNDP to analyse the degree to which climate change objectives cut across UNDP programmes and projects.

Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
2.1 Introduce a mechanism to track ongoing and pipeline projects with significant climate change objectives to enable the provision of coordinated technical support and oversight across the organization	Q2 2022	BPPS, BMS		

Recommendation 3.

UNDP should take steps to reduce fragmentation across its climate change adaptation programming, to more effectively achieve intended benefits at scale.

To address fragmentation and more effectively promote realization of intended benefits at scale, UNDP should look for opportunities to establish larger programmes that blend development and adaptation finance, working in concert with multiple partners. Regardless of the scale of the finance it brings to bear, UNDP should increase attention to scalability in project selection and design and be more explicit in articulating how benefits will be realized beyond pilot project boundaries. UNDP should also seek to build on the success of its GEF international waters model, establishing more multi-phase projects working on the same geographic areas and sites, especially in cases where benefits can only be expected to become evident over longer time frames.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that this shift is already in progress. The UNDP adaptation portfolio is consolidated under its specific **CCA offer**. The offer reflects the globally accepted definition and application of adaptation strategies and solutions across the key domains, including agriculture/food, water resource management, coastal resilience, ecosystem-based adaptation, and climate information/early warning. Emergent domains include urban resilience, resilient infrastructure, health, and climate security. Moreover, UNDP domain expertise across adaptation is strong and has not only a track record of success in programming (combined resources, including co-financing, of about $4 billion mobilized, supporting over 90 countries) but also a reputation as thought leader on the global stage.

Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Adaptation finance, under the UNFCCC mechanism, as well as that channelled through bilateral donors, is primarily project-bound. Over the last few years, with adaptation finance and related mandates maturing towards scale, the UNDP adaptation offer has evolved to support transformative, high-impact, at-scale programming by countries and communities. Since 2015, there has been a deepening of the adaptation portfolio's scope, scale up/replication, paradigm shift and transformation. UNDP is increasingly building on pilot projects that laid out foundational capacities and generated an evidence base for further replication and upscale (through GCF and leveraged finance).

UNDP has partnerships across the United Nations system and with multilateral development banks and is working together with them to advance adaptation action, exemplified by joint programming with ADB, EIB, FAO, UNEP, UNICEF, WFP, and the World Bank, among others. Furthermore, UNDP is exploring regional and programmatic approaches to adaptation, in collaboration with a variety of partners, with strong emphasis on integrated approaches to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals through adaptation action.

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
3.1 Develop regional and programmatic approaches for integated solutions on adaptation	Q4 2022	BPPS		
3.2 Consolidate and communicate adaptation offers in key domains (agriculture, food, water, ecoystsems)	Q4 2021	BPPS		

Recommendation 4.

UNDP should improve the technical underpinnings of its adaptation service offer in each sector, with special attention given to strengthening capacities in disaster risk reduction.

Given the importance of disaster risk reduction for adaptation efforts, steps should be taken to strengthen UNDP capabilities in this area, capitalizing on the growing allocation of ODA for disaster risk reduction associated with the emphasis on climate change adaptation.

With respect to agriculture and food security, a clearly articulated set of UNDP programme objectives and guidelines would help bring greater strategic coherence to the organization and its regional and country offices, given UNDP comparative advantages. Opportunities include increasing coordination with specialized United Nations and non-United Nations agricultural organizations to help governments design adaptation solutions, and facilitating multi-stakeholder collaborations to generate more transformative innovations for adaptation.

UNDP should seek to increase the rigour of its evaluation techniques across its adaptation portfolio, capitalizing on lessons from the application of impact evaluation techniques in its portfolio of recently established UNDP GCF projects.

UNDP should seek to systematize engagements with academic institutions at the global and regional levels in order to strengthen the scientific underpinnings needed to consider climate risk in the design, implementation and evaluation of UNDP projects and provide iterative feedback on how to strengthen them.

Management Response:

UNDP partially accepts the recommendation and recognizes the complementarities and potential for synergies across the CCA and DRR domains. A coherent, joint effort is being advanced to ensure UNDP DRR and CCA work complement each other in support of a shared objective of integrated risk management and vulnerability reduction for greater impact. These efforts will build on existing joint efforts related to the application of risk information across time-scales in risk assessments, loss and damage accounting, early action and early warning, strengthening the coherence of DRR/CCA policy instruments, and fostering institutional coordination arrangements. Emerging work on its risk-informed development offer, which includes the DRR/CCA mainstreaming strategy tool, will facilitate better coordination and cohesiveness in implementing DRR/CCA considerations in development planning, programming and budgeting. UNDP will also develop a resilient recovery offer as part of its DRR portfolio that will integrate considerations around climate mitigation and adaptation within country offices' support to affected governments' efforts to build back better, smarter and greener.

Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

In relation to the recommendation that UNDP develop clearly articulated programme objectives and guidelines for agriculture and food security, UNDP considers that its climate change adaptation programmes in agriculture and food security follow globally advocated, country-driven approaches focused on adaptive capacities, climate risk management, resilient technologies/practices, access to finance/markets, and planning incorporating climate risks. The UNDP approach to agriculture/food security explicitly targets the most vulnerable smallholder producers, subsistent farmers, herders and fishers. It takes a food system, farm-to-fork approach to help achieve food and nutrition security in the face of climate change and reduce risks of losses across all stages of complex food systems. UNDP supports cross-sectoral work (beyond the ministries of agriculture and sectoral actors) and a whole-of-government approach both horizontally and vertically (linking national actors and national and local actors). UNDP has strong partnerships with FAO, IFAD, UNEP, WFP and others to advance collaborative adaptation action across this domain.

UNDP will continue to expand its impact evaluation efforts initiated under the GCF portfolio, including in collaboration with academic institutions, highlighting recent efforts in collaboration with Columbia University, Tufts University, the University of Cantabria and others.

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
4.1 Articulate a resilient recovery offer under DRR that integrates green and adaptive considerations, linked to UNDP climate change adaptation offer	Q2 2021	CB/BPPS		Initiated November 2020
4.2 Design joint programming and normative guidance for DRR/CCA projects	Q2 2022	BPPS/CB		
4.3 Design programmatic investments for agriculture/food security in collaboration with other partners, including United Nations system organizations	Q2 2022	BPPS		

Recommendation 5.

UNDP should expand its adaptation support in small island developing states.

Recognizing the specific vulnerabilities and high costs of operating in SIDS, UNDP should prioritize its climate change adaptation support to these countries. This should include giving priority to SIDS in the allocation of existing flexible funding mechanisms, amending the resource allocation policy to enable increased core resource allocation for SIDS, and revising the policy governing funding of differentiated physical presence to reduce expectations for SIDS local office contributions. Such measures are important both in recognition of existing vulnerabilities but also in anticipation of growing vulnerabilities, given the risks posed by global warming.

Action taken on these fronts would be consistent with UNDP Executive Board-accepted recommendations of the recent IEO evaluation of UNDP support services to middle-income countries. It would also be in line with the views of the Secretary-General, expressed in his 2020 report on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system (A/75/79), that the United Nations development system should explore new multi-dimensional ways of assessing country needs that go beyond country typology and national income and take into account vulnerability aspects.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation and recognizes the special challenges of SIDS alongside the real potential to turn the most pressing challenges into opportunities and SIDS' collective commitment towards transformational change and global action. Through its SIDS offer, UNDP has committed to expand its support to multipliers that accelerate progress and build on its comparative advantage in enhancing support to SIDS through a combination of integrated action over the next 10 years. These include climate action, developing blue economies, and promoting digital transformation. This climate action pillar particularly enhances climate change adaptation and resilience support to SIDS governments by incorporating risk reduction and planning for short, medium and long-term risks in combination with the advancement of a whole-of-island and ridge-to-reef approaches to development planning and policy-making.

In relation to the recommendation that UNDP should consider increasing regular resource allocations and revising its policy governing funding of differentiated physical presence (to reduce expectations about SIDS local office contributions), UNDP notes that, in line with the management response to the evaluation of UNDP development cooperation in middle income countries (DP/2020/22), these are decisions for the Executive Board to take; UNDP will factor these elements into its engagement with the Executive Board on the integrated resources plan and integrated budget, 2022-2025, and its mid-term review.

Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
5.1 Support design and implementation of at least five (5) adaptation projects focusing on SIDS by mobilizing public and private sector finance	Q4 2022	BPPS		

Recommendation 6.

UNDP should establish clear priorities for private sector engagement on climate change adaptation.

Private sector engagement and scaling up private finance has a critical role to play in adaptation, and UNDP can benefit from a prioritized strategy for strengthening its engagement in this area. Deepening engagement with the private sector will require significant investment, strong prioritization, careful choices and clear metrics to assess impact. Limitations in the availability of technical and financial resources implies the need to focus on a limited number of priorities, which can be addressed well and provide the basis for progressive expansion.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation, noting that it has been steadily increasing private sector engagement in adaptation and framing its adaptation efforts to support a range of private sector actors, including MSMEs, value-chain actors/businesses, and crowding-in financial/capital providers, including around insurance and other areas of risk informed financing. UNDP has also been developing a structured approach for engaging the private sector in climate change adaptation, informed by a new framework focused on de-risking private sector investments in the adaptation space.

UNDP has launched a flagship project (jointly with FAO) to develop a climate risk-informed, gender-sensitive value-chain development toolkit to support market and value-chain development in the agriculture and food sector. UNDP has also been advancing support to MSMEs, access to finance, and broader adaptation innovation through its portfolio support on water access and resource management, agriculture and food systems, ecosystem-based adaptation, among others, focusing on livelihoods and enterprise development. UNDP FACS has likewise prioritized greater engagement with the private sector in the agricultural sectors, including on adaptation.

Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

UNDP aims to deliver risk finance solutions, including insurance to vulnerable countries and communities, and align and leverage the work of its insurance and risk facility (being set up as part of the UNDP Finance Sector Hub) with its adaptation-related work.

UNDP will continue to accelerate private sector engagement in its adaptation work and scale up innovative approaches, including through the deployment and use of recently updated policies such as on-granting, performance-based payment, and guarantee policies.

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
6.1 Refine the climate change adaptation strategy for private sector engagement, including deepening engagement in private sector financing for adaptation	Q2 2021	BPPS		
6.2 Scale up support for MSMEs/community-scale organizations to promote enterprise development	Q4 2021	BPPS		
6.3 Develop risk finance and insurance for both standalone and integrated initiatives as part of an expanded adaptation engagement with the private sector	Q4 2021	BPPS		

Recommendation 7.

UNDP should strengthen the gender equality dimensions of its policy and capacity-related support in adaptation-related programming.

Attention to strengthening gender mainstreaming should focus on weaknesses in policy and capacity-related support in the environmental protection portfolio. Practical and well-researched objectives should be established in adaptation programming to improve gender equality results. Adopting context-sensitive gender approaches and strengthening the resilience of women to negative impacts of climate change on ecosystems are crucial to the success of environmental programming.

Management Response:

UNDP accepts the recommendation and notes that it has made strong progress and built solid results in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment through its adaptation-related programming and will continue to strengthen efforts. The current UNDP portfolio of projects financed by the environmental vertical funds applies gender analysis and action plan requirements across the entire portfolio to ensure that gender considerations are included during project design and development stages. UNDP has developed specific guidance and templates for ensuring a consistent approach to developing project-level gender analysis and action plans and ensures full compliance with these requirements, including use of specialized gender expertise to develop context-specific approaches to deliver gender equality results through its work.

UNDP will continue to enhance gender mainstreaming approaches for the current and emerging pipeline of adaptation projects and ensure that project-level gender analysis and action plans are fully compliant with requirements, including use of specialized gender expertise to develop context-specific approaches to deliver gender equality results through its work. UNDP will continue to: (a) build on the gender and adaptation work it has conducted; (b) increase the use of methodologies and tools developed; (c) increase gender capacities across adaptation interventions; and (d) document and report how adaptation projects promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
7.1 Continue to refine gender-responsive approaches to the UNDP adaptation policy and programming in the context of developing its next gender equality strategy	Q4 2022	BPPS		

Recommendation 7 (cont'd)

7.2 Increase visibility and promote the use of gender, climate change and adaptation methodologies and tools developed	Q4 2021	BPPS		

Recommendation 8.

To better coordinate across an increasingly complex portfolio of environment projects, including for climate change, UNDP should take steps to upgrade its information management system and avoid running separate/parallel information systems for specific programme portfolios.

The development of a separate information system for the GEF portfolio highlights deficiencies in the UNDP mainstream project management system and suggests that the solution is not to dissolve personnel information management systems but rather raise the capabilities of the corporate information system.

Having two separate project management systems that serve essentially the same purposes is not an efficient use of UNDP resources. It also reinforces continuation of parallel business models, which potentially undermines the objective of better integrating vertical fund finance within UNDP operations.

Other potential efficiencies could be gained by increasing the efficiency of mechanisms for tracking and aggregating results across the UNDP portfolio. This will contribute to addressing a broader challenge with current UNDP systems, which is to ensure requirements are kept simple, in order to ensure there is space for more adaptive and flexible approaches to managing and accounting for results. Currently, reflecting vertical fund and internal requirements, there are a large number of indicators on which UNDP is obliged to collect data. To the extent there is flexibility, UNDP should focus on prioritizing its core information requirements to minimize the reporting burden for staff on the ground, focused on those indicators that best capture the value of its adaptation work.

Recommendation 8 (cont'd)

Management Response:

UNDP partially accepts the recommendation. While Atlas is an ERP system for project implementation and financial and human resource management, PIMS+ is a project cycle management portal for vertical fund-financed projects, covering the project design phase (outside of Atlas) enabling users to aggregate portfolio data, store donor specific documents and data, and interact with external vertical fund portals responding to specific donor reporting requirements. Each system serves distinct purposes. As UNDP is migrating the existing Atlas platform to a new ERP cloud system, UNDP will take the opportunity to further align data points between the two systems and explore opportunities for further integration.

UNDP is in the process of developing its Strategic Plan, 2022-2025 and, in designing the accompanying integrated results and resources framework (IRRF), with performance indicators at outcome and output levels, UNDP will carefully review existing indicators in the current IRRF, 2018-2021, the CCA portfolio, and those in country programme documents and projects, to identify a small set of indicators that best capture the objectives of the UNDP adaptation portfolio to minimize reporting burden for staff on the ground.

Key Actions	Completion Date	Responsible Unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
8.1 Improve integration PIMS+ data with the next generation ERP platform to improve consistency of the corporate data architecture, with dashboards that show key portfolio performance and results along different service lines	Q1 2022	BPPS/BMS		
8.2 Introduce a small number of indicators in the IRRF, 2022-2025, that best capture the objectives of UNDP climate change adaptation work	Q3 2021	BPPS		

* Implementation status is tracked in the Evaluation Resource Centre.

ANNEXES

Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the IEO at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9525.

Annex 1. Evaluation matrix

Annex 2. Documents consulted

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EVALUATION

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