

**UNDP ASIA PACIFIC  
MID-TERM REVIEW**

**Final Report**

Ian Holland and Shirin Gul

23 November 2020

## Contents

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS  | iii |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS  | iv  |
| EXECUTIVE SUMMARY   | v   |
| INTRODUCTION  | 1   |
| DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEW METHODOLOGY                                 | 1   |
| SITUATION ANALYSIS  | 2   |
| RPD PRIORITIES AND STRATEGY   | 3   |
| RPD FINANCING   | 3   |
| MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS   | 3   |
| RELEVANCE   | 5   |
| PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS   | 8   |
| PROGRAMME EFFICIENCY  | 17  |
| INNOVATION AND INTEGRATION  | 20  |
| IMPACT AND SCALE  | 20  |
| SUSTAINABILITY  | 21  |
| HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY                                      | 22  |
| REPORTING AND MONITORING  | 22  |
| COVID-19 RESPONSE   | 23  |
| RPD MANAGEMENT  | 25  |
| ADVANCING UN REFORM   | 27  |
| KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS                                      | 27  |
| ANNEXES   | 32  |
| Annex 1: Deeper Dive of 5 Projects                                    | 32  |
| Annex 2: MTR TORs   | 53  |
| Annex 3: Evaluation Criteria and Questions                            | 58  |
| Annex 4: Findings from Survey Monkey                                  | 59  |
| Annex 5: Sensemaking – Insights from Vietnam and Indonesia            | 62  |
| Annex 6: List of Persons Interviewed                                  | 63  |
| Annex 7: List of Documents Consulted                                  | 65  |
| Annex 8: RPD Theory of Change   | 66  |
| Annex 9: Outcome 1 Mapping of RPD Activities by Scale and Impact      | 67  |
| Annex 10: Outcome 2 & 3 Mapping of RPD Activities by Scale and Impact | 68  |

## ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ACP – African, Caribbean and Pacific States

ACPIs – Anti-Corruption for Peaceful and Inclusive Societies

ADB – Asian Development Bank

AI – Artificial Intelligence

APF-SD – Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development

AP-DEF – Asia Pacific Development Effectiveness Facility

ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations

AWP – Annual workplan

BERA – Bureau for External Relations and Advocacy

BLGBTI – Being LGBTI in Asia UNDP project

BRH – Bangkok Regional Hub

CBO – Community Based Organisation

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

CFN – Climate Finance Network

CIFOR – Centre for International Forestry

CO – Country Office

COP – Community of Practise

CPD – Country Programme Document

COSQA – Country Office Quality Assurance

COST – Infrastructure Transparency Initiative

COVID-19 Corona Virus Disease 2019

CPEI – Climate Public Expenditure Institutional Review

CSO – Civil Society Organisation

CSR – Corporate Social Responsibility

DaO – Delivering as One

DFAT – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

DRM – Disaster Risk Reduction

DRR – Deputy Resident Representative

DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

ESCAP – United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

EU – European Union

FCDO-UK – Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

GCCF – Governance of Climate Change Finance

GCDS – Global Centre for Disaster Statistics

GCF – Green Climate Fund

GCPSE – Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in Singapore

GCTF – International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism

GEF – Global Environment Facility

GPN – Global Policy Network

HLPF – High Level Political Forum

High Middle-Income Country

HIV – Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HR – Human Rights

IBP – International Budget Partnership

IFF – Integrated Financing Framework

IFI – International Financial Institution

IICPSD – Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development

ILO – International Labour Organisation

INFF – Integrated National Financing Framework

JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency

KP – Knowledge Product

KPI – Key Performance Indicators

LDC – Least Developed Country

LGBTI – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex

LNOB – Leave No One Behind

MAS – Management Advisory Services

M&E Monitoring & Evaluation

MIC – Middle Income Country

MoF – Ministry of Finance

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

MPI – Multi-dimensional Poverty Index

MTR – Mid Term Review

NAP – National Action Plan

NCD – Non-Communicable Disease

NCE – Nature, Climate and Environment

NGO – Non-Government Organisation

NHRI – National Human Rights Institutions

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PDNA – Post Disaster Needs Assessment

PDR – People's Democratic Republic

PEI – Poverty-Environment Initiative

PFM – Public Finance Management

PIF – Pacific Island Forum

PSAG – Private Sector Advisory Group

PSOP – Peace and Stabilization Operations Program

PVE – Prevention of Violent Extremism

RBP – Responsible Business Practice

RF – Results Frameworks

ROAR – Results Oriented Annual Report

RPD – Regional Programme Document

RR Resident Representative

RRF – Rapid Response Fund

RRF – Results and Resources Framework

TB – Tuberculous

TBI – Temporary Basic Income

TFILUGP - Temasek Foundation International Leaders in Urban Governance Programme

TOC - Theory of Change

TORs – Terms of Reference

SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

SCF - Standing Committee on Finance

SDG – Sustainable Development Goal

SIDA - Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency

SME – Small & Medium Sized Enterprise

SOGI – Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

SOGIE - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression

SOPs – Standard Operating Procedures

SERF - Socio-Economic Recovery Framework

SP – Strategic Plan

SSTC – South-South and Triangular Cooperation

UBI – Universal Basic Income

UNAIDS - Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS

UNCITRAL – United Nations Commission on International Trade Law

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNDESA - United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs

UNDRR - United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction

UNEP – United Nations Environment Programme

UNCAC - United Nations Convention against Corruption

UNEDAP – United Nations Evaluation Department for Asia Pacific

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFCCC - United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC – United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime

UNOHCHR – United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

UNOTC – United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism

UNRCs – United Nations Resident Coordinators

UPR – Universal Periodic Review

USAID - United States Agency for International Development

USD - United States Dollars

VCCI - Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry

VNR – Voluntary National Review

WHO – World Health Organisation

WPS – Women Peace and Security

WTO – World Trade Organisation

YP – Young People

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To staff at UNDP, including Advisory Board members, whether at HQ, in the regional or country offices, who took the time to participate in this Mid-term Review of the RPD 2018 – 21

Special thanks to all the development partners of UNDP involved in implementing the RPD for taking the time to share their valuable insights with the MTR.

Particular appreciation to Jaco Cilliers, Karin Takeuchi, Bushra Hassan, Sawitree Iimvongsakul and Pauliina Meskus from UNDP's Bangkok Regional Hub, as well as to Marta Vallejo and Elena Tischenko at UNDP HQ for coordination, meticulous review and guidance.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this MTR is to measure and assess results and progress against the Asia-Pacific 2018-2021 Regional Programme Document (RPD). The RPD mirrors the UNDP Strategic Plan and has three primary outcomes: 1: Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions; Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development; Outcome 3: Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis. It identifies eight ‘enablers’<sup>1</sup> in its theory of change (TOC) to achieve the RPD outcomes. These include integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, stronger partnerships and thought leadership. The six regional signature solutions<sup>2</sup> were specified by the TOC as pathways to achieving the RPD outcomes.

### Situation analysis

Apart from the global pandemic, the situation analysis outlined in the original RPD remains valid. A relevant observation in the RPD, is that “the growth model that has propelled the rise in the region’s economic powerhouse is now the cause of the current development challenges”. Governance systems in the region continue to face capacity, transparency and integrity challenges, with implications for human rights. Most noticeably, the region’s lack of progress on environmental sustainability is striking, and if anything, is going backwards<sup>3</sup>, which is a cause for concern in respect to climate change.<sup>4</sup> These structural challenges, which have been made more acute by the COVID-19 pandemic, have affected all peoples and Governments everywhere. An economic cost of around US\$ 60 billion<sup>5</sup> has occurred to the Asia Pacific in 2020 alone, impacting the hard-won poverty gains of recent decades. The region continues to be affected by significant inequalities and urbanization.

### Relevance

Whilst the RPD narrative is relevant to the challenges of the region outlined in the situation analysis, the programme RRF does not appear to be informed by a regional approach. The current regional RRF is more CO-facing, rather than being oriented towards the region. It is worth noting that regional project results are mostly aligned with regional TOC enablers, but because the enablers are not properly integrated into the regional RRF, project contributions are not being captured there. This is not to say that these are orphan activities within ATLAS. However, the chain of results from regional project activity to RPD outputs remains weak and often seems retrofitted to accommodate the language of the RRF.

### Effectiveness

In overall terms the MTR finds that RPD is contributing significant development results in Asia Pacific across all three outcome areas. An overview of RPD progress is shown in Table 1 below. The MTR confirms that there is no need for a radical adjustment at this stage and whilst some refinements of focus may be necessary as referred to in the body of the report, greater attention should be placed on preparations for the next RPD.

### Outcome 1 ‘advance eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions’

The strategic partnership with ESCAP and ADB assured the production of the flagship annual Asia Pacific Regional SDG Reports. In 2019 the report entitled, ‘Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific’, was launched at the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APF-SD) by Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy-Secretary General. These high-level knowledge products support the regional perspective at the annual HLPF and leverage important political capital for the 2030 Agenda. BRH also supported the formulation of VNRs in countries throughout the region. A regional SDG Data Portal has also been developed in partnership with ESCAP.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to the APF-SD, UNDP is also active in promoting and hosting regional and sub-regional level platforms, including the ‘ASEAN – China - UNDP Symposium on Localising the SDGs and Realising Poverty Eradication’, attended by government representatives from 10 ASEAN countries, as well as the regional dialogue titled ‘The Future of Leadership is Gender Equal’ hosting 75 participants from 6 countries and 18 companies. Good progress has been made using the Multidimensional Poverty frameworks. UNDP’s health systems work is yielding important results in affordable medicines, technological innovations and value chains. An important, expanding and promising portfolio of UNDP / private sector partnerships exists across Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and the Philippines. In a further critical breakthrough, Governments from across the region have adopted UNDP facilitated National Integrated Financing Frameworks for the achievement of the SDGs. Innovative work is also being pursued on SDG/Climate Financing, incorporating climate and gender into mainstream budgeting. UNDP is also working across the minerals sector on research and policy in at least three countries, including the recent production of the HDR in Afghanistan. These partnerships, platforms and products each contribute to solid RPD results.

---

<sup>1</sup> 1. Development finance. 2. multi-stakeholder platforms. 3. Innovation. 4. UN reform (DAO). 5. Working with regional bodies (ASEAN, SARC etc.) 6. Thought leadership. 7. Partnerships, especially with the private sector. 8. SSTC.

<sup>2</sup> Regional Signature Solutions: 1. Keep people out of poverty and support an inclusive and sustained urban transition. 2. Governance systems and institutions are responsive, inclusive and accountable for delivering services, ensuring justice, and sustaining peace. 3. Enhance prevention and recovery for resilient societies. 4. Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet. 5. Close the energy gap. 6. Strengthen gender equality.

<sup>3</sup> Especially in regard to climate action and responsible production and consumption – see ESCAP, Asia and the Pacific SDG Report 2020: [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP\\_Asia\\_and\\_the\\_Pacific\\_SDG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP_Asia_and_the_Pacific_SDG_Progress_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Lack of climate action places climate risk at the top of the World Economic Forum’s global risks for the first time – see Global Risk Report 2020: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risk\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.adb.org/news/covid-19-outbreak-have-significant-economic-impact-developing-asia>

<sup>6</sup> <http://data.unescap.org/sdg/>

Whilst these upstream thought leadership and knowledge products on the SDGs are proceeding well, the ultimate aim of outcome one is concerned with eradicating poverty, which in turn requires additional means to strengthen Governments SDG implementation strategies.

## **Outcome 2 ‘accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development’**

Leveraging UNDP’s regionality principle, a cluster of regional projects are spearheading RPD implementation in outcome 2. Significant headway is being achieved in transparency and integrity, business and human rights, youth entrepreneurship and among BLIAP communities, but further inter-linkages between projects is needed. Business practices that reform corporate governance, women’s empowerment to positions of decision-making and leadership, including human rights and gender diversity in the ASEAN sub-region are being welcomed and proving successful. Important legal and policy agreements between countries have been put in place regarding human trafficking and migration, most particularly in the Greater Mekong Subregion.<sup>7</sup>

Steady progress has also been achieved through use of integrated approaches for SDG achievement, including collaboration between UNDP and ADB to integrate the SDGs in a number of countries. Systems thinking and sensemaking approaches have been rolled out in India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and the Philippines, and are welcomed by management in those COs, but will take time to consolidate and yield longer term results. Innovative approaches extend the concept of social innovation platforms in the south of Thailand and to a number of other urban centres. Systems thinking is also being applied to elements of integrated Climate-Land-Energy-Water systems modelling in several countries. A knowledge consortium to explore innovative public policy methods to deal with plastic waste has been created and a number of initiatives support the development of circular economies in multiple country settings. Insufficient reporting in the ROAR on the NCE portfolio prevented a corroboration of results regarding climate, energy, NRM and the environment.

## **Outcome 3 ‘strengthen resilience to shocks and crises’**

Good progress is being made on PVE, WPS and DRR. Several countries have been supported to develop and adopt gender sensitive National Action Plans (NAPs) on the Prevention of Violent Extremism. Women continue to be supported for inclusion in formal and informal peace processes related to crisis prevention and recovery as a result of the WPS strategy and N-Peace initiative - some of whom are serving in difficult to reach locations and on sensitive issues, including sexual violence. The Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP) has invested further in civil society to increase women’s inclusion in decision-making and leadership, which is strengthening gender-responsive policies in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka. Seven of the above NAPs on PVE have specific commitments to gender equality. UNDP continues to maintain its pivotal role within the UN system and strong track record of leadership in DRR based on a strong framework partnership which is at the forefront of leveraging the innovative use of data and technology for DRM and recovery.

## **Programme Efficiency**

The RPD had a projected financing envelop of US\$ 110.14m, of which US\$ 71.3m had been raised shortly after the commencement of this MTR<sup>8</sup>. Hence, financially the regional programme is broadly on course with its original projected financing. In overall terms, the RPD has raised between US\$3 – US\$4 for each individual dollar of UNDP core resources invested. This is broadly in line with the financing targets set out at the time of RPD adoption by the Executive Board. Stakeholders responded positively in answer to the value for money question.

Core investments prioritizing integration (output 1.1); SDG country platform support (output 1.2); and innovation (output 2.1) have yielded good returns, helping to position UNDP at the forefront of advancing the Agenda 2030 in the region. External funds have been effective in accelerating SDG/Climate Change financing (output 1.6); anti-corruption (output 2.2); Business and Human Rights (output 2.3); Youth Co:Lab (output 2.3); PVE (output 3.1); and DRR (output 3.2). These investments translate directly into tangible results, as noted above.

In addition, and as also documented above, BRH has entered into a number of strategic partnerships through which to implement the RPD, which has helped to build strong coalitions and networks which have leveraged efficiencies and capital beyond financial measure. Recommendations are made below as to how and where these partnerships, including within the UN system, could be further leveraged and strengthened for further efficiencies and effect.

## **Results Reporting**

There are some gaps which the MTR identifies in strategic alignment which makes it difficult to attribute results appropriately across the RPD outputs and outcomes. A lot of results achieved are outside the RPD RRF. Currently, these regional activities are part of regional project strategies and are captured in the RRFs of different regional projects. As noted above, the current RPD does not explicitly articulate the significance of the regional interface specifically in the RRF. Following from that, projects are not able to explicitly attribute results to the regional programme RRF. Many results then fall out of the current RRF, in some cases even while aligned with the TOC enablers. While some projects do a comparatively better job in providing an aligned context for such attribution, however articulation of the attribution is lacking. ROAR is not structured to seek

---

<sup>7</sup> (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam)

<sup>8</sup> 1st September 2020.

reporting on the programme TOC and only reports on the results framework. Moreover, work on innovation is not interpreted in terms of impact and scale in the RRF metrics and therefore results may not be traced to sustainability.

For an organisation like UNDP, the emphasis on reporting, monitoring, attribution and results should not be merely from a compliance perspective. Rather, the emphasis of reporting and monitoring should be from a learning perspective. This emphasis has to be kept in mind at every stage of the programme development process, starting from design, identifying ways to collect evidence and track attribution, and finally documenting knowledge creation and learning. This process is strengthened by developing a well-conceptualised TOC that is properly aligned with the RRF, which can help identify what works, what works well, what does not work and what may even do harm. This is what organisational learning aims to achieve with improved TOCs, sharper RRFs, and meaningful results. For an organisation that prioritises and values learning, it is important to (a) delink monitoring and evaluation from compliance, (b) integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, and (c) invest resource (human and capital) in MEL systems.

### **Sustainability**

On the whole, the investments made across the RPD appear capable of being sustained. In outcome one, the policy and financing efforts which have been made to integrate the SDGs into national planning frameworks for poverty reduction are largely considered as permanent measures. Government's across the region have been swift to take the SDGs into their national planning and M&E frameworks, and have begun to integrate them into sub-national frameworks and budgetary processes. Similarly, core governance and service delivery improvements in outcome two present a credible route to being sustained since they are underpinned by changes in national legislation and regulations. National human rights institutions across the region have been institutionally strengthened to continue their endeavours to support the promotion of human rights; BLIAP communities in particular. These capacities, tools and techniques are adaptable to other LNOB groups. The Youth Co:Lab franchise is growing as are partnerships with the private sector. Innovative financing is nationally owned in at least three countries. In outcome three, national PVE actions plans have been adopted and are being promulgated and DRR continues to underpin Government efforts in their resilience strengthening measures. WPS initiatives continue to place women into positions of influence and leadership, often in challenging situations, working in close partnership with and through resourceful CSOs/CBOs.

### **Partnerships**

The MTR has been particularly impressed with rich diversity of partnerships which drive the development effectiveness, and to some extent efficiencies, of the RPD. This diversity of perspective has contributed significantly to the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of results. It has led to the creation of a number of regional networks (youth, BLIAP etc) providing additional stimulus to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. A most significant development is taking place through UNDP's formative partnerships with the private sector, including Citi, Unilever and Intel, among others, which, in the fullness of time should inspire and evolve into a wider network in which the private sector more boldly stakes its claim on delivering its sizeable share of the 2030 Agenda. Strategic alignment needs to better capture these partnerships. The RPD RRF outputs and outcomes are building on the strength of working with national partnerships. The five deeper dive projects reviewed demonstrate that they can leverage the regional presence very well.

### **Innovation**

In the period under review UNDP has fully aligned its strategic intent to innovation. The dividends from this investment will take time to percolate through. New ways of thinking have been injected into the organisation through sense-making and through the recruitment of systems thinkers. The Asia Pacific Regional Innovation Centre has been established and the process of mainstreaming systems thinking across UNDP country offices has commenced. These approaches are enabling the organisation see the big picture and bring new and fresh perspectives and thinking about development challenges. This in turn is fostering a re-conceptualization of integrated design solutions and co-creation opportunities with Governments and partners. However, UNDPs drive for innovation needs to be accompanied by a learning culture. Creating spaces for conscious reflection and learning in the light of the innovative approaches being implemented and embedding learning as a systematic and unifying team and organisation-based pursuit will help UNDP. Amidst these pioneering approaches UNDP still wrestles with a number of more rigid operational incentives, rules and procedures, which will need to be tackled going forward.

### **Human Rights and Gender Equality**

The MTR confirms that human rights and gender equality have been well integrated in the design, implementation and reporting of the RPD. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed that UNDP pays important attention to human rights and gender equality. Some of the clearest results reporting in the ROAR originates from a gender and human rights perspective. There is a particularly strong human rights dimension to the RPD across all outcomes,<sup>9</sup> but especially outcome 2 and 3. Within the five regional projects assessed BLIAP is de facto a human rights project and GCCF has a strong gender and human rights-focused intervention. PVE, with its work on national action plans, is in a position to undertake advocacy with governments

---

<sup>9</sup> Gender issues are clearly integral to: the annual regional joint publication on SDG progress; climate change and gender budgeting, equality of gender participation in the majority of UNDP hosted platforms, workshops and conferences, including the engagement of women's CSOs in the HLPF; very evident at the heart of the BLIAP project; central to the 'future of work' project; a close consideration to the population and migration work; attention paid to gender in data disaggregation; a measure of success in relation to Youth Co:Lab; central to the PVE (NAPs), WPS and N-Peace initiative; important in regard to working with parliaments and with ASEAN etc.

on the inclusion of women and human rights concerns. FairBiz works to include more women in transparency processes and emphasises the inclusion of women in business leadership, advocating for gender equality as key to the future of business leadership. Youth Co:Lab operates on the principle of inclusion, seeking to leave no one behind. It has promoted themes related to SDG 5 and indigenous peoples and empowers women as entrepreneurs.<sup>10</sup>

## Management

Whilst a detailed review of staffing arrangements was outside the parameters of this TORs, a critical point for consideration is how the GPN can be further leveraged, decentralized and effective. The decision hinges on how to strike the right balance between accelerated learning and organic organisational development with that of retaining sufficient critical mass at regional hub that is capable of being able to design and effect meaningfully integrated development solutions. Presently, based on the Indonesia and Economic Network experiences shared with the MTR, the movement of direction would be in favour of selective re-positioning toward increased exposure to CO realities, which may in turn generate some reverse engineering, through leveraging CO expertise for regional solutions. This would, in effective, serve to deepen the GPN to the level of the CO.

Whichever strategy is employed, particular attention should be paid to the value attached to curating and maintaining the quality of the technical networks, as well as to their leadership and coordination. These COPs are valuable assets to UNDP, as well as to partners and donors who recognise their strengths. Likewise, there is good commitment in the regional centre to upholding a strong CO service line orientation. However, relationships and demand flows from the CO to the BRH via the STARS systems needs to be placed on a more strategic footing.

From the semi-structured interviews conducted with CO staff, it was evident across the board that the RRF and TOC were clearly not among the key documents consulted during project design. They were cursorily consulted as a necessity for referencing in project documentation and for setting up the project in ATLAS. These documents are also not considered for monitoring purposes, except while consolidating results for the regional ROAR produced by the BRH.

There is a similar challenge with the RPD governance arrangements. The RPD Advisory Board meets once in a year. Its membership consists of CO RRs. It is an internally oriented instrument, which may be wholly appropriate. At the same time the MTR heard that Advisory Board members would be willing and grateful of the opportunity to engage more regularly at the strategic level on the regional priorities anchored in the RPD. Hence, there are opportunities to revive the RPD, TOC and the RPD governance arrangements between now and the next cycle and in preparation for it. Consideration should be given to make RPD implementation more dynamic and inclusive, perhaps through a strategic portfolio approach involving selected regional partners, as well as a strategic AWP based upon it.

## RPD Response to COVID-19

Finally, in the period of RPD implementation the world was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The MTR concludes that the BRH was able to pivot aspects of the RPD to respond to the crisis and its impact. A 'whole of organisation' response was evident, which brought the corporate, regional and Country Offices together to meet an unprecedented and evolving collective challenge. An integrated task force, coordinated by the Head of the regional GPN Health Team, was established at the regional level. In collaboration with HQ it issued COVID 1.0 and subsequently the more comprehensive and inter-connected offer 2.0. BRH brokered and quality assured proposals from COs to the RRF. The Economists Network, an integral part of the GPN proved its criticality, and with linkages to DRR teams, carried out vital social and economic assessment work at the country offices in support of RRs and the wider UN system. This helped position UNDP well with Governments and partners and complemented macro-economic assessments undertaken by the IFIs. UNDP policy papers on UBI and TBI were well received.

While all projects have adjusted to accommodate the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, most of this adaptation has taken place in terms of implementation strategies and adjusting activities (see Box 5). None of the five projects under review has revised its TOC to account for the pandemic. Regional projects should consider revisiting their respective TOCs to assess whether the desired changes, change pathways and assumptions continue to remain valid in the wake of this major disruption. This issue also highlights the need for a centralised dedicated RBM and M&E function to service all projects to help rearticulate key design and M&E documents to capture such pivots.

## Key Findings and Recommendations

The following key findings and recommendations have been generated by the MTR and are set out under five categories:

### 1. DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT OF A STRATEGICALLY INTEGRATED RPD

**Finding 1.** The MTR observes that the RPD is under-utilized as a tool of strategy and management. Whilst it does provide a strategic link between the Strategic Plan, UNCFs and CPDs, however, once designed it remains largely on the shelf until end of year reporting, or until the MTR or final evaluation comes around. Project teams do refer to the RPD in project documentation and for setting up the project in ATLAS as well as to dock their TOC and results. Otherwise it is not well owned

---

<sup>10</sup> Reporting can be improved by disaggregating results around different categories of inclusion, including gender. For example, with USD 1.3 million raised for start-ups, this amount can be shown in terms of the proportion going to start-ups and enterprises owned by women, religious or ethnic minority groups, and BLIAP people.



or used by the regional programme team. Similarly, the RPD TOC upon which the rationale of the RPD rests was barely referred to by policy or project teams in the MTR consultations. It is standard M&E practice to periodically review the TOC and test causal assumptions in the light of any changes in context. In the case of the RPD, such a review has not been done in the past 2.5 years. Meanwhile, the context in the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP policies and practices, and the BRH structure have all undergone changes during this time. The MTR notes that the various ‘enablers’ referred to in the RPD narrative and TOC have been used well by the BRH and the regional projects. However, the current RRF is incomplete (missing outcome indicators) and there is a tendency to pigeonhole enablers into specific output areas, whereas their application is universal across the regional programme and RRF.

#### **Recommendation 1.**

- a) Complete the RRF in the next cycle of RPD, ensuring strong internal coherence between the TOC and RRF. Employ regional metrics to baseline and set targets against. In addition, for regional RRF indicators, there should be a balance between innovation-specific metrics and standardised metrics as well for scale and impact.
- b) Create an annual work plan for RPD implementation consisting of a smaller number of strategic areas, or portfolio’s, for focused integrated acceleration, results and learning. Translating the RRF into an annual workplan (AWP) of activities for better prioritisation, planning and focus would help improve reporting and attribution. In addition, COs and regional projects could synchronise the annual planning exercise to bring about strategic alignment and coordination of AWP.
- c) Revisit the RPD AWP and TOC at least annually as a collective exercise. It is a manageable expectation for BRH staff to keep themselves apprised of the regional AWP. The AWP exercise can also provide an opportunity to review the TOC and test the validity of its key assumptions. Employ a more experimental approach to spaces for collaboration, dedicating time for key teams and development partners to come together to reflect, think and co-design.
- d) The COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of the rapidity and severity with which the operating environment of a project can change. It is not enough to make superficial adjustments to outputs and activities in the face of such dramatic and long-lasting changes. During implementation of the next RPD, regular review (and revision as required), of the TOC should be a part of the AWP and M&E process, ensuring projects remain relevant and effective.

**Finding 2.** There is a disconnect between the results reported by the regional projects and COs, and the TOC.

#### **Recommendation 2.**

- a) Regional projects must identify clearly the regional public good being sought. The TOC of each regional project must clearly identify the regional ‘public bad’ which it sets out to resolve.
- b) The regional project appraisal committee (RPAC) may be tasked to ensure this is part of approved regional projects.
- c) If in the next RPD planning cycle, UNDP decides to proceed with a standardised TOC and RRF approach to designing projects, which seems to be the default for all five projects reviewed, then it might be useful to develop standardised guidance on the TOC which underscores minimum criteria on elements for inclusion, with guidance as well on identifying desired change, levels of change, change pathways and causal pathways or causal assumptions. This would allow projects to more clearly think through their activities at the strategic level. Most importantly, guidance is required on linking the project TOC with the project RRF in an effective and coherent manner. Online tutorials and sessions on TOC development and integration with the RRF could be introduced for project staff. Guidance on TOCs for regional projects could include a set of guiding questions, leading to the thinking through of the desired change and how to achieve it, innovation based. This will help to better translate the vision of regional projects around experimental space for development solutions (working with the unusual suspects as ecosystem actors, disrupting business as usual, reframing the problem as a solution, etc.). Ideally, project TOCs should be derived from and build upon knowledge of the local or regional context and subject matter, and this should be made explicit in the project TOCs, which would also increase the strategic relevance and effectiveness of interventions.

**Finding 3.** The RPD Advisory Board is an internally oriented structure that meets annually. The members of the Board have expressed a willingness to be engaged more frequently at a strategic level.

**Recommendation 3.** Within the frame of designing the next RPD, give further consideration to the TORs of the RPD Advisory Board with a view to making this oversight body more dynamic, engaged and accountable for RPD implementation. Allied to this, give further consideration to establishing portfolio priorities through which to invite partners (donors, Government’s, private sector, civil society, academics) in areas demanding a strategic collaboration and coalition building for region-wide results at the highest level.

## 2. PROGRESS & CHALLENGES WITH RDP 2018 – 2021 IMPLEMENTATION

**Finding 4.** Whilst good upstream and technical work advancing the 2030 Agenda and SDG integration has been accomplished via knowledge products, partnerships, multi-dimensional poverty tools, multi-stakeholder platforms and innovative financing, there is no clear results pathway to demonstrate that these interventions have contributed to poverty eradication at the level of impact. A similar view was expressed by development partners participating in the MTR interviews, that despite good use of design tools associated with the integration of climate and gender considerations into national budgetary processes, information as to how these interventions have impacted decision making at the level of policy or outcome has yet to be substantiated.

**Recommendation 4.** In line with LNOB centrality to the 2030 Agenda, and in particular the RPD poverty eradication outcome, the current and next regional programme should seek to capture the impact of the upstream policy work on the lives of people and communities. Moreover, in the final year of the current RPD, BRH should extend stronger support to Government's SDG implementation strategies, to ensure the 'farthest' are actually 'reached first'. This is a necessary accompaniment for the purposes of demonstrating impact in outcome one of the current RPD to the extensive up-stream policy support provided for SDG planning, financing, budget integration and VNR reporting.

**Finding 5.** UNDP has evolved its strategic alliances and partnerships in the region to build strong coalitions and leverage efficiencies and capital beyond their financial measure. This has opened the doors of the UN to young people and their creative energies and vision, to LGBTI communities and human rights institutions, as well as hitherto, the largely untapped resources of the private sector. The MTR heard from established institutional partners regarding how these relationships with UNDP could also be further invested in and strengthened.

**Recommendation 5.** That UNDP carry out a review of its strategic regional partnerships with a view to strengthening their long-term durability and joint positions on key issues in ways that further extend their impact and enable greater leverage of each other's GPNs at the regional and country level. For example with:

- a) ESCAP and ADB regarding the production of the annual regional SDG progress report, APF-SD, SDG diagnostics, databases, platforms and VNRs, as well as strengthened collaboration with ESCAP on DRR and the post-COVID-19 resilience agenda;
- b) The EU and OECD with respect to anti-bribery, anti-corruption, integrity, transparency and accountability, including Business and Human Rights;
- c) The EU, UK, SIDA, UNEP and UN Women on matters relating to Climate/SDG finance, should consider expanding to regional networks working on climate finance, the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action and other development partners. Synergies with the World Bank, IMF and other partners which work on core public finance issues will help the sustainability of reforms around climate and SDG finance;
- d) UNOCT, UNODC, the EU and UK on PVE.

**Finding 6.** UNDP partners and stakeholders for the five projects selected for review appreciate and value its outreach and engagement at the grassroots. In BLIAP, for example, legal and policy changes were made possible because the project created a downstream voice mechanism and platforms to amplify and collectivise the voice of the BLIAP communities. In GCCF, upstream changes in budget allocations and expenditure tracking work alongside the voice element of the citizen's climate budget. FairBiz engagement with the private sector has been instrumental. With PVE, the TOC itself is based on voice and accountability, and regional-level engagement is now being carried out through UNOCT, alongside capturing voices through the 'Extreme Lives' initiative and YouTube content creators to bring grassroots voices into the mainstream. With a project like Youth Co:Lab, meanwhile, its ability to fill a major gap in the innovation ecosystem has been limited by the fact that it has not targeted more innovators from low-income groups and rural areas, and may need to focus on low-tech, low-cost innovations. In other words, by not expanding its outreach to the grassroots, it has not yet capitalized on the opportunity to occupy a niche not usually targeted by largely urban-based incubators and accelerators.

**Recommendation 6.** As UNDP transforms into an organisation ready to provide innovative and sustainable solutions for the 21st century, it is important to maintain a balanced portfolio across its constituencies of working with: i) institutions (Governments, private sector etc); ii) communities (often civil society, academic and CBOs etc), and; iii) people (often from LNOB groups). This is important in and of itself, but also allows initiatives to be more effective and responsive to identified needs.

**Finding 7.** In outcome area one, the expanding nature of UNDPs work in the health sector goes beyond the RPD results, which, in the current operating context, including from a systems perspective, is promising. However, UNDPs employment and urban implementation capacities by comparison appears weak and its offer in this regard is unclear and fragmented. The case can also be made for the need for a clear Asia – Pacific gender strategy to bring coherence to all of UNDPs gender related interventions, including partnerships and resourcing.

**Recommendation 7.** In the final year of the existing RPD UNDP should reflect on how it wishes to engage in the livelihoods, employment, skills and enterprise sector, given the rapid structural transformation affecting the region. In doing so, with whom best to partner. Similarly, with urbanization being one of the mega-trends affecting the region, UNDP should give further thought as to its positioning and offer in the urban arena. Both area's offer opportunities for UNDP, but require

clarity, focus and clear linkages with other parts of the portfolio. UNDP may also wish to revisit its gender strategy for Asia Pacific, including with other key UN coalition actors.

**Finding 8.** It is unfortunate that reporting on NCE is not captured in the ROAR, and as a result insufficient evidence was available to the MTR to gauge whether structural transformation is taking place within the region in this respect, since the threat posed by climate action failure according to the World Economic Forum now features as the top global risk.

**Recommendation 8.** NCE results of regional significance should be incorporated into the RPD AWP and ROAR.

**Finding 9.** Among the three overarching frameworks: i) Agenda 2030/SDGs; ii) Paris/Climate change; iii) Sendai/DRR - better co-ordination is needed. Each has its separate UN monitoring processes at the global and national levels. Each Government is having to monitor against a silo UN approach with different ministries potentially taking different approaches. Reporting frameworks are currently at risk of promoting fragmentation, rather than integration. There is a tendency to separate DRR from climate change whereas there is more need to see them together – for example, the relationship between disaster and human health is integrally linked to climate, water systems, pollution, agricultural systems, health and gender, LNOB groups.

**Recommendation 9.** To address and reduce areas of duplicative and/or over-lapping reporting, UNDP needs to support better coherence, alignment and results reporting across these various universal development frameworks: i) Agenda 2030/SDGs; ii) Paris/Climate change; iii) Sendai/DRR. This will help demonstrate the value of UN coordination.

### 3. COVID RESPONSE AND IMPLICATIONS

**Finding 10.** In overall terms, stakeholders commended UNDPs quick and comprehensive response to the COVID-19. A whole of organisation response occurred and the integrated Task Force at the regional level worked well. The RPD was able to pivot, especially the health (initially in terms of PPE procurement), as well as programmatically via employment (UBI/TBI), economist network (social and economic impact assessments), DRR (PDNA type support) and PVE (in response to a rise in hate speech etc.). However, there were bottlenecks in the process. SOPs had to be designed. CO ERF applications threatened to overtake strategic considerations. Staff burnout occurred. In addition, there remains an unresolved tension as to when to move from the emergency-oriented footing of the COVID-19 response back to longer term 'business as Usual' operations.

**Recommendation 10.** At an appropriate moment in the near future UNDP should give consideration to conducting an internal after-action review into its COVID-19 response to understand how and where it might have performed better in what has clearly been a testing period for the organisation and its staff at all levels and in all capacities. In doing so BRH may wish to revisit and revise its Business Continuity Plan, including contingencies, SOPs and 'special measures' which could be invoked in times of crisis. Such a review could include consultations with COs following on from the social/economic assessments that were carried out to identify key issues and themes arising from those studies which might require priority implementation and follow up.

**Finding 11.** The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted development pathways and created new opportunities for rethinking development solutions. COVID-19 has begun to shift thinking on how development is envisioned, conceived, appreciated and experienced. Hence the very conception of development may be changing, hopefully for the better. The indicators of development that brought us to 2015 will not be those that take us to the next level.

**Recommendation 11.** Many countries are now engaged in fiscal stimulus as a route out of the devastating COVID-19 impact on health, jobs and economies. In the region, there may be US\$ 260 billion in investments underway in projects across all sectors. For UNDP and its strategic regional partners this presents an opportunity to support Governments achieve higher levels of risk, resilience, inclusion and sustainability in the design, build and management of these investments. UNDP offer 2.0 identified alternate pathways to achieving desired change by pushing for agendas building on health security, social protection, inclusion and poverty alleviation. There is also an important role for regional projects in this regard, in line with solutions and pathways set out in UNDP Offer 2.0, which may have been less welcome in a business as usual scenario.

### 4. MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL ASSETS

**Finding 12.** The approach that brings together regional projects and BRH advisory services helps achieve better results with respect to uptake of policy advice, and allows innovation to flourish in regional projects with results being taken to scale. For example, the SDG finance and climate finance advisory and project teams have integrated teams effectively. This has resulted in effective cross-fertilisation in SDG financing (AP-DEF, INFF) and climate finance (GCCF), and these efforts seem poised to have greater impact with the involvement of more ecosystem actors. The positive effect of this collaborative approach is clear from discussions with CO teams. In addition, the placing of a BRH staff member within a country office to work on innovative financing dramatically increased the pace of learning and innovation.

**Recommendation 12.** Continue to pursue the current close and networked juxtaposition of policy advisory services and regional project teams, since they create synergies and support the strong curation of regional networks. There appears to be good value added from teams being able to work in integrated ways. Where possible, look to create more favourable contractual conditions for regional project staff. Furthermore, based on positive recent experiences of deployed GPN colleagues to country offices, continue to experiment with extension of the GPN in this way where it makes good sense to do so.

**Finding 13.** The BRH service orientation to the COs is praiseworthy and a strong attribute. Clear signals emanate from COs to BRH as to the particular needs and exigencies of Governments. This keeps the regional centre client focussed. However, there is some dissatisfaction with the STARS system. Better management of the system is needed to ensure support provided is strategic and not piecemeal. Piecemeal approaches, together with some tendencies towards task management, are beginning to take their toll on motivation, morale and possibly performance.

**Recommendation 13.** In the near term, UNDP needs to make better use of a business plan for COs which would facilitate better management of both the demand and supply of BRH resources to COs. This would enable a more strategic, sequenced and timely response to COs. In addition, it could be derived and/or linked to the AWP process set out in recommendation 1(b) above.

## 5. MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)

**Finding 14.** A key milestone in this regard was the establishment of the Asia Pacific Regional Innovation Centre in order to help develop NextGenUNDP. BRH has pioneered the sensemaking and acceleration protocol and has begun the process of mainstreaming systems thinking across UNDP country offices in the region. A number of country's have been through the first phase, including India, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. Thailand, have also applied some the main concepts through social innovation platforms at the sub-national level. Rolling out integrated approaches, innovation and systems thinking at the CO promote transformation and learning within the organisation.

**Finding 15.** Regional projects provide the space to experiment with solutions to key development challenges in the region, which can be introduced as proofs of concept (e.g. CPEIR), transition to the development stage (e.g., GCCF phase 1) and then be implemented at scale (GCCF phase 2 and CFN). The process from innovation to scale up is one that involves multiple stages from developing and testing an idea to eventually being widely adopted (see Figure 2 in main text). In terms of scalability, as observed by the RPD Advisory Board, the regional programme has a responsibility to identify and invest in initiatives that are capable of being taken to scale by Country Offices, once proof of concept has been established.

**Finding 16.** For an organisation like UNDP, the emphasis on reporting, monitoring, attribution and results should not be merely from a compliance perspective, as has been conveyed to the MTR. Rather, the emphasis of reporting and monitoring should be from a learning perspective. Development practitioners and M&E professionals know that this emphasis has to be kept in mind at every stage of the programme development process, starting from design (hence the detailed discussion on the regional TOC and RRF above), identifying ways to collect evidence and track attribution, and finally documenting knowledge creation and learning. This process is strengthened by developing a well-conceptualised TOC that is properly aligned with the RRF (see discussion above) which can help identify what works, what works well, what does not work and what may even do harm. This is what organisational learning aims to achieve with improved TOCs, sharper RRFs, and meaningful results. For an organisation that prioritises and values learning, it is important to (a) delink monitoring and evaluation from compliance, (b) integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, and (c) invest resource (human and capital) in MEL systems.

**Recommendation 14.** Learning must be closely tied in with M&E and with monitoring and tracking of NextGenUNDP work under innovation and sensemaking. In this regard, within the current and next RPD cycle, UNDP should:

- a) Continue to work on integration, innovation, sensemaking and systems thinking across COs in the region with special attention paid to learning generated along the way to know what works and what does not work. In addition, a review of the back-office systems supporting innovation is recommended from the perspective of what fits and what does not fit. This will help locate gaps and propose solutions to align the system well to portfolio management as opposed to project management that these systems (ATLAS etc) are currently set up for.
- b) Approach acceleration and innovation from a scale and impact lens. Track innovations in projects from proof of concept to impact at scale. Introduce monitoring tools that speak to scale and impact within innovation, at programme and project level. (e.g early outcome harvesting designed for regional projects and for portfolio sensemaking).
- c) Adopt a stronger orientation towards results and impact, rather than results reporting being regarded as a compliance issue. Creating spaces for conscious learning and regarding learning as a systematic team-based pursuit will help the organisation. Investment will be required in M&E systems geared towards learning. Without such an investment, whatever learning in terms of what works, and what does not, remains implicit learning. Some upfront investment is required to make this learning explicit, regular and accessible across the organisation through learning sessions and learning products by the MEL team.
- d) Develop systems to capture and share learning from on-going and concluded projects. These lessons should be used at the programme level to inform new interventions and strengthen on-going ones. For example, thematic evaluations, outcome harvesting, participatory workshops for stories of change with contribution analysis, process and TOC case studies and case studies capturing UNDP access and influence should be made part of the M&E cache for the new RPD.

Table 1: RPD Overview of Progress.<sup>11</sup>

| Outcome 1 Eradication of Poverty                      |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
|---|--|--|------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| Outcome indicator 1.1 SDA Coherence                   |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.1 SDG Integration                            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.1.1 SDG Integration                      | Output Ind 1.1.2 Innovative Data         |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.1.3 SDG Diagnostics            |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.2 SDG Frameworks                  |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.2 Platforms                                  |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.2.1 Platforms                            |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.2.2 Good Practices             |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.3 Women’s Economic                |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.3 Poverty / Inequality                       |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.3.1 Tools / Policies                     | Output Ind 1.3.2 Gender Employment       |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.3.3 Domestic Work              |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.4 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.4 Employment                                 |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.4.1 Urban Employment                     |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.4.2 City Exchanges             |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.5 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.5 Health Services                            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.5.1 HIV Services                         |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.5.2 Institutional Capacity     |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.6 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.6 SDG Financing                              |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.6.1 Integrated Financing                 | Output Ind 1.6.2 Private Sector P’ships  | Output Ind 1.6.3 SDG Budget Tracking       |                                    | Output Ind 1.6.4 Parliament Review          | Output Ind 1.6.5 Women’s Livelihoods   |                       |
| Outcome indicator 1.7 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 1.7 Gender NRM Energy                          |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 1.7.1 Gender NRM                           |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 1.7.2 Gender Energy              |  |                       |
| Outcome 2 Structural Transformation                   |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 2.1 Inter-Country Platforms         |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.1 Integrated / Systems Thinking              |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.1.1 Knowledge Products                   | Output Ind 2.1.2 Cities Innovation       |  | Output Ind 2.1.3 Advocacy Products |   |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 2.2 Climate, Resilience, Low Carbon |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.2 ACT Equitable Services                     |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.1.1 ACT                                  |  | Output Ind 2.1.2 Open Service Delivery     |                                    | Output Ind 2.1.3 Improved Service Delivery  |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 2.3 Institutional & Legal Reform    |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.3 A2J & Human Rights                         |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.3.1 Youth Empowerment                    | Output Ind 2.3.2 Business & Human Rights | Output Ind 2.3.3 Trafficking and Migration | Output Ind 2.3.4 NHR Institutions  | Output Ind 2.3.5 Democratic Systems         | Output Ind 2.3.6 Gender Discrimination | Output Ind 2.3.7 SGBV |
| Outcome indicator 2.4 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.4 DDR, Climate, Green / Clean                |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.4.1 DRR / Climate Finance                |  | Output Ind 2.4.2 SNRM                      |                                    | Output Ind 2.4.3 Clean Energy / Zero Carbon |  |                       |
| Outcome 3: Resilience to Shocks                       |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 3.1 Disaster Economic Loss          |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 3.1 Peace / PVE                                |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 3.1.1 PVE                                  |  | Output Ind 3.1.2 Research                  |                                    | Output Ind 3.1.3 WPS                        |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 3.2 DRR Strategies                  |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 3.2 DRM  |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 3.2.1 DRM                                  |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 3.2.2 NRM                        |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 3.3 Women’s Leadership              |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output 3.3 Prevention                                 |  |  |                                    |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 3.3.1 Prevention                           |  |  |                                    | Output Ind 3.3.2 Gender Equality            |  |                       |

<sup>11</sup> (Dark Green – Significant Progress; Light Green – Good Progress; Yellow – Insufficient Progress; Unshaded - Insufficient information)

## INTRODUCTION

The Regional Programme Document (RPD) for Asia and the Pacific was approved by the Executive Board in 2018 and captures the multi-faceted nature of UNDPs priority areas of engagement in Asia and the Pacific region. The 2030 Agenda provides the overarching framework within which UNDP incorporates its strategic analysis and regional framework for addressing a number of longstanding development challenges that persist in Asia and the Pacific region.

The Executive Board requested UNDP to present a mid-term review (MTR) of the RPD. Hence, its purpose is to measure and assess results and progress against the Asia-Pacific 2018-2021 RPD and outcomes and outputs covering the period 2018 until June 2020. The MTR thereby supports accountability and learning within the frame of RBM. It will inform the RPD Advisory Board, Bureau senior management and stakeholders on the current status of the regional programme as well as contribute ideas for the successive strategic planning process. The Regional Programme has been assessed against the clear and measurable indicators of achievement at both the outcome and output levels as set out in the RRF.

More specifically, the MTR, as set out in the TORs (see Annex 2) undertakes to review:

- i. the RPD's cumulative development results achieved from January 2018 to June 2020;
- ii. at least three regional projects as case studies in greater depth;
- iii. the relevance and effectiveness of the policy advisory services, including the theory of change;
- iv. regional level supported through global funds and other sources of funding from RBAP;
- v. whether the RPD outputs are likely to be met including the pathway from the output results to Outcomes;
- vi. changes in the programming context, including impacts of COVID-19 pandemic;
- vii. flexibility and responsiveness of the RPD in response to the COVID19 pandemic;
- viii. the 'integration', 'innovation' and 'financing' of development solutions';
- ix. the extent to which RPD has incorporated rights-based approach and gender-mainstreaming perspective;
- x. the provision of a "way forward" RPD that includes both short and medium-term recommendations.

Regarding the structure of this MTR it first sets out the methodology before turning attention to the evaluation criteria and questions. It outlines the context underpinning RPD design and prioritization as well as its financing and management arrangements. The main body of the MTR includes sections of relevance, programme effectiveness, efficiency (including a brief financial overview), innovation and integration, impact and scale, sustainability, human rights and gender equality, and reporting and monitoring. The MTR goes on to report on the UNDP COVID-19 response, RPD management considerations and opportunities for advancing UN reform in the region. A summary of the 'deep dive' of the five regional projects is woven into the preceding sections of the report (Annex 1 incorporates the full deep dive report). The MTR offers a concluding section on key findings and recommendations going forward.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE REVIEW METHODOLOGY

The OECD DAC principles have provided the basis for this MTR. The collection and analysis of data was carried out through the following stages and exercises:

Phase 1 - Desk review of relevant literature and programme documentation<sup>12</sup> took place from mid-July – mid-August. This included a review of the RPD and its Results and Resource Framework, Regional Board and Project Board Meeting Minutes, Annual Workplans, Results-oriented Annual Reports (ROARs), regional project documents, project evaluations, programme monitoring data, technical and financial monitoring reports, etc.);

Phase II – An extensive series of over 50 Semi-structured interviews took place from late August and throughout September with the RPD Advisory Board, RBAP management in HQ, policy / programme advisory teams, regional project teams, Country Offices, and major partners to RPD implementation. The main evaluation questions can be found at Annex 3 and the list of participants interviewed is attached as Annex 6.

Phase III – Survey Monkey was used as a CO facing online tool with questions about BRH, specifically advisory services and knowledge products. The survey had 24 questions, mostly close ended but also included some open-ended questions. The Survey Monkey findings are found at Annex 4.

Throughout the MTR exercise regular on-line meetings took place between the consultants and the BRH Chief of Regional Policy & Programme, BRH Regional Programme Coordinator, and RBM/ M&E Specialist.

Due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 all consultations and interviews noted above have taken place virtually over the internet. The desk review enabled the MTR consultancy team identify projects selected for the deeper dive review, which was broadened from three to five: i) Climate/SDG Financing; ii) Youth Co:Lab; iii) PVE; iv) Fairbiz, and; v) Being BLIAP in Asia. This was also instrumental for identifying partners and stakeholders to participate in the semi-structured interviews. In a few instances where representatives from donors, partners and Country Offices were unable to participate in the

---

<sup>12</sup> The full list of documents consulted can be found at Annex 7

interviews, written submissions were made to the MTR consultants. COs were involved extensively in the interview process and included the following:

**South & West Asia:**

- Afghanistan (SDG integration, PVE)
- Bangladesh (Climate Finance, SDG financing, Business and Human Rights) DRR, IFF, (Youth Co:Lab)
- Nepal (Climate Finance, DRR, SDG integration, PVE, Health, Youth Co:Lab)
- Myanmar (DRR, PVE, FairBiz, Human Rights)
- India (Private sector, Accelerator lab, Human Rights and Business, Health, Youth Co:Lab)
- Sri Lanka, DRR, PVE, SDG Integration, Health, Private sector, Energy, (Youth Co:Lab)
- Pakistan (SDG Integration, BLIAP, Water, Urban, PVE, Climate Finance, Youth Co:Lab)

**East Asia and the Pacific:**

- Philippines (Health, Private sector, FairBiz, SDG Integration, PVE, DRR, Youth Co:Lab)
- Fiji (SDG Financing, Climate Finance, BLIAP, Livelihoods, Youth Co:Lab)
- Indonesia (SDG Integration, Climate Finance, IFF, FairBiz, Urban, PVE, Human Rights, Youth Co:Lab)
- Timor Leste (Urban, SDG Integration, Youth Co:Lab)
- Vietnam (BLIAP, FairBiz, IFF, Waste Management, Business and Human Rights, Climate Finance, Youth Co:Lab)
- China (SDG Integration, Human Rights, Youth Co:Lab)
- Samoa (Youth Co:Lab, IFF, Health, Business and Human Rights)
- Thailand (DRR, PVE, Human Rights, BLIAP, Health, FairBiz, Youth Co:Lab)

## **SITUATION ANALYSIS**

The RPD (2018 – 2021) outlined a situational analysis which described a number of mega-trends affecting the region which still hold true today. Principal among these is that while the region continues to outpace the rest of the world in terms of economic growth, which has lifted more than a billion people out of poverty since 1990, yet it ‘risks being locked into unsustainable pathways’. The RPD captures this development dichotomy well in the following statement: “the growth model that has propelled the rise in the region’s economic powerhouse is now the cause of the current development challenges”<sup>13</sup>.

The region has so far been unable to directly confront this overarching challenge and still faces a set of development issues which include structural inequalities, environmental degradation and rapid urbanization. Prevalent models of economic development which have flourished across the region, whilst lifting millions of people out of poverty have, nevertheless, left hundreds of millions of people remaining impoverished, marginalized and excluded from development.

A significant root cause of difficulties identified in 2018, which still holds true in 2020, is that a large number of countries in the region continue to experience the lack of open and participatory governance. This tends to be accompanied by the shrinking of space for civil society and the neglect of human rights. Not least, the region and its population is at considerable risk to the effects of climate change and continues to be highly prone to natural disasters, impacting the poorest most.<sup>14</sup>

In terms of making progress on the 2030 Agenda, and at the start of the decade of action for Sustainable Development, the Asia Pacific region is not on track to achieve any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The region’s lack of progress on environmental sustainability is most striking and may need to take centre stage in the next RPD. In this regard the region needs to significantly accelerate its progress and reverse current trends on most of the measurable environmental targets. Among the top priority targets are ones related to climate action, including energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy in total energy consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, climate-related hazards and natural disasters, air quality and waste management. In the areas of responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13) the region is actually going backwards.<sup>15</sup>

These structural challenges have been made more acute by the COVID-19 pandemic, wherein 1.3 billion people or two-thirds of the workforce in Asia and the Pacific, are expected to be the hardest hit by the economic shock<sup>16</sup>. The magnitude of the economic losses is still as yet unknown and will depend on how the outbreak continues to evolve, which remains highly uncertain. The range of scenarios explored in various analysis suggests that the economic impact of COVID-19 on Asia – Pacific<sup>17</sup> will be around US\$ 60 billion, or 0.2% to 0.8% of regional gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>18</sup>

Against this backdrop, Governments in the region have become more sophisticated and donors are more intervention conscious than ever. This has resulted in a dramatic change in the nature of requests being made upon UNDP by Governments. Two extracts from MTR interviews with BRH staff shed light on these changing circumstances:

---

<sup>13</sup> Para 10. RPD 2018 – 2021

<sup>14</sup> World Economic Forum – Global Risk Report 2020 [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risk\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> ESCAP, Asia and the Pacific SDG Report 2020 [https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP\\_Asia\\_and\\_the\\_Pacific\\_SDG\\_Progress\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](https://www.unescap.org/sites/default/files/publications/ESCAP_Asia_and_the_Pacific_SDG_Progress_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> UNDP-RBAP-Position-Note-Social-Economic-Impact-of-COVID-19-in-Asia-Pacific-2020.pdf:

<sup>17</sup> including China

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.adb.org/news/covid-19-outbreak-have-significant-economic-impact-developing-asia>

“Across the region we are playing in different league with different countries – a mix of LDCs, MICs and HMICc. The stakes are higher, as are expectations – MIC/HMICs Gov’ts are saying “tell me something I don’t know”<sup>19</sup>

In relation to the RPD and the flexibility UNDP must demonstrate within this rapidly progressing operating environment:

“A massive transition is underway. UNDP has to stay ahead of the curve and pursue new ways of working. We have broken away from the traditional poverty – governance - environment RPD. The RPD is more flexible document that captures the sum of the parts. The TOC enables people to get out of their ‘box thinking’. But it is not a document that we use in front of us. The regional programme provides an ‘experimentation space’ a ‘buffer between top down and bottom up’. We’ve tried to integrate the COs more into the regional space. We have tried to pursue inside out approaches to the programme – not just top down, or bottom up. There has been a strong emphasis on integration, innovation, financing and engaging the private sector. Some of the key emergent areas are around plastics, pollution, the circular economy and the future of work”.<sup>20</sup>

## RPD PRIORITIES AND STRATEGY

Within this changing environment, the three primary RPD outcomes resolved to address the root causes of i) multi-dimensional poverty; ii) structural challenges associated with the production, consumption, management and governance of resources; iii) the high prevalence to shocks and crises.

UNDP crafted its strategic response based on integrated and multi-sectoral approaches, stronger partnerships and thought leadership on prominent regional priorities. Eight ‘enablers’<sup>21</sup> were outlined in the RPD theory of change (ToC) (see Annex 8). The ToC identified 18 context level issues and intended that the six regional signature solutions<sup>22</sup> would be utilized as pathways to achieving the RPD outcomes. In sum, the RPD consists of 3 outcomes, 9 outcome indicators, 14 outputs and 32 output indicators (a total of 58 interconnected results areas):

- Outcome 1: Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions.
- Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development.
- Outcome 3: Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis.

## RPD FINANCING

The total financial resources for the RPD for the four-year period (2018 – 2021) were estimated at US\$ 110.14m. See table 2 below:

Table 2. RPD (2018 – 2021) indicative resources by outcome.

| Outcome   | Estimated Financing |                   | total              |
|---|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
|   | trac                | external          | trac + external    |
| Outcome 1: Advance poverty reduction in all its forms and dimensions        | 11,650,000          | 45,720,000        | 57,370,000         |
|   |                     |                   | -                  |
| Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development | 8,290,000           | 32,650,000        | 40,940,000         |
|   |                     |                   | -                  |
| Outcome 3: Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises                       | 2,470,000           | 9,630,000         | 12,100,000         |
|   |                     |                   | -                  |
|   | <b>22,410,000</b>   | <b>88,000,000</b> | <b>110,410,000</b> |

At the two-and-a-half-year point of the 2018 – 2021 RPD UNDP had allocated US\$ 16m of core resources and had raised a total US\$ 55.4m of cost sharing financing, bringing the combined total of resource invested in the implementation of the regional programme to US\$ 71.4m. Hence, the programme is broadly on course financially to meet its objectives.

## MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Below the level of the RBAP Regional Director, Deputy Regional Director and BRH Chief of Regional Policy & Programme, BRH has organised its GPN around the main themes of the 2030 agenda in a conscious effort to break thematic silos and promote greater integration across teams. Similarly, Crisis Bureau and BPPS staff work alongside each other within their respective units. Furthermore, Regional Projects Teams are co-located alongside Policy Advisory Teams within the BRH and integral to delivery of the RPD. Management Advisory Services (MAS), Programme Advisory Services and Country Support (COSQA) provide quality assurance and operational oversight. BRH also benefits from an External Relations, Partnerships

<sup>19</sup> MTR Interview

<sup>20</sup> MTR Interview

<sup>21</sup> 1. Development finance. 2. multi-stakeholder platforms. 3. Innovation. 4. UN reform (DAO). 5. Working with regional bodies (ASEAN, SARC etc.) 6. Thought leadership. 7. Partnerships, especially with the private sector. 8. SSTC.

<sup>22</sup> Regional Signature Solutions: 1. Keep people out of poverty and support an inclusive and sustained urban transition. 2. Governance systems and institutions are responsive, inclusive and accountable for delivering services, ensuring justice, and sustaining peace. 3. Enhance prevention and recovery for resilient societies. 4. Promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet. 5. Close the energy gap. 6. Strengthen gender equality.



and Communications team. In addition, whilst there are also separate ‘units’ for: i) human rights; ii) gender, and; iii) Results Based Management (RBM) these consist of only one person each per unit. The GPN Asia-Pacific structure and focal points are illustrated in diagram 1 below:

Diagram 1. GPN Asia-Pacific structure and focal points.



The responses from the survey monkey showed that COs approach advisory services (82%) as well as regional projects (55%) for policy advice<sup>23</sup>. The top 3 thematic areas (signature solutions) identified for advice during the period, Jan 2018-June 2020 were governance, gender and resilience. Among the cross-cutting areas, the top 3 areas for advice were RBM/M&E, Innovation and partnerships. The policy advice was used across different areas of work at the CO and in a majority of cases, it was project design, project implementation, policy dialogue with the government and capacity building for government counterparts (see table 3 below).

Table 3. Use of BRH Policy Advice

| What was the policy advice used for?                 |        |
|--|--------|
| <b>Project design</b>                                | 87.88% |
| <b>Project implementation</b>                        | 69.70% |
| <b>Policy Dialogue with the government</b>           | 57.58% |
| <b>Capacity building for government counterparts</b> | 48.48% |
| <b>Piloting initiatives</b>                          | 45.45% |
| <b>SSC</b>   | 6.06%  |
| <b>Other<sup>24</sup></b>                            | 6.06%  |

<sup>23</sup> Response received from COs in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, Philippines, Nepal, Vietnam, India, Malaysia, India, Cambodia, Laos PDR, China, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, Bangladesh and Pacific Office in Fiji

<sup>24</sup> Included Report Review (e.g ROAR) and Health

## RELEVANCE

This section assesses the regional programme design, including the strategic alignment of the TOC and RRF.

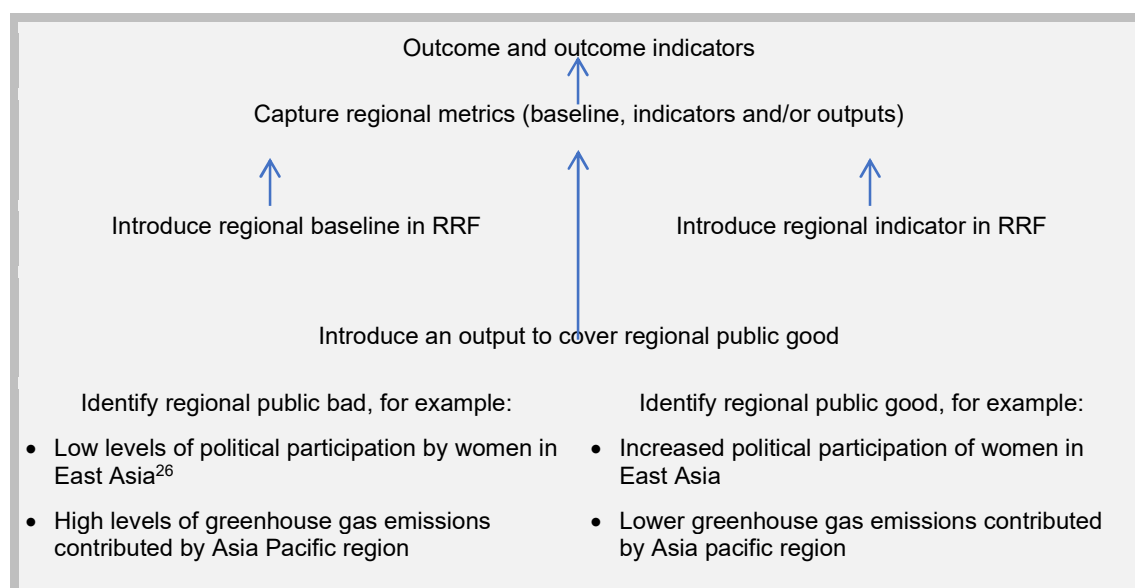
The programme RRF does not appear to be informed by a regional approach. This would entail introducing metrics that fully capture the work of regional projects, including regional partnerships formed and other achievements at the regional level, such as multi-country dialogues, regional platforms for learning and knowledge sharing, etc. Currently, these regional activities are part of regional project strategies and are captured in the RFs of different regional projects. In the RPD RRF, however, indicators for measuring regional exchanges are reflected only in Output 1.2, and for regional knowledge products in Output 1.1. Not only are regional knowledge exchanges and knowledge products an integral part of all regional projects, they are some of the most important elements that help to build and consolidate a regional approach.

The current regional RRF is more CO-facing, rather than being oriented towards the region. Even so, the contribution from regional projects is clear, as ATLAS has the ability to trace, bifurcate and link activities undertaken at the CO-level to the respective regional project.

It is worth noting that regional project results are mostly aligned with regional TOC enablers, but because the enablers are not properly integrated into the regional RRF, project contributions are not being captured there. This is not to say that these are orphan activities within ATLAS. However, the chain of results from regional project activity to RPD outputs remains weak and often seems retrofitted to accommodate the language of the RRF.

To demonstrate its necessity and impact at scale, a regional approach should also incorporate the idea of a regional ‘public good’. Examples of regional public goods achieved will vary, depending on the project: taking the five deeper dive projects as examples we can clearly see these as, the creation of democratic space and inclusive discourse around BLIAP issues (BLIAP), lowering the regional carbon footprint (GCCF<sup>25</sup>), the identification and dissemination of peace narratives (PVE), supporting a more transparent business environment in the ASEAN region (FairBiz), or increased youth entrepreneurship (Youth Co:Lab). Regional projects must identify clearly the regional public good being sought. The TOC of each regional project must clearly identify the regional ‘public bad’ which it sets out to resolve (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Demonstrating ‘public good’ in the RRF



Reviewing the RPD from a results-based management (RBM) M&E perspective, there are two main drivers of the RPD: the TOC and the RRF. For a coherent programme design and contiguous results chain (each output or result deriving logically from the previous input), it is imperative at the macro level for the TOC and the RRF to be aligned.

The desired change is represented in the TOC by three outcomes. For each of these outcomes, the change pathways are different. The TOC would be more strategically coherent and easier to understand if levels of change were clearly defined and change pathways spelled out for each outcome. The TOC in its current format does not make explicit the change pathways from the desired change (the ‘what’ part) to strategies (the ‘how’ part) other than listing the enablers.

<sup>25</sup> Currently, GCCF does not measure impact. In its 2.0 iteration, as the Climate Finance Network, it will need to measure the impact of climate financing tools, mechanisms and processes contributing to the regional public good.

<sup>26</sup> According to the WEF Global Gender Gap report 2020, political participation in East Asia and the Pacific is low, at 0.159 against a global average of 0.249.

In the hierarchy of the RRF, different regional projects and COs are not contributing to the outcomes but to the outputs of the RPD RRF. The outputs come together to contribute to the outcome. In its current form, the RRF does not systematically reflect the enablers from the TOC in the outputs or output indicators. There is also a disconnect between the results reported by the regional projects and COs, and the TOC. To bridge this disconnect, it is necessary to: i) revise the regional TOC to make explicit the proposed change pathways, causal linkages and causal assumptions; ii) revise the RRF in view of the revised TOC and ensure that the outputs reflect the change pathways and causal links of the TOC; iii) Based on the above two, better align regional projects and CO results to the outputs in regional programme RRF.

This revision is very important. It is standard M&E practice to periodically review the TOC and test causal assumptions in the light of any changes in context. In the case of the RPD, such a review has not been done in the past 2.5 years. Meanwhile, the context in the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP policies and practices, and the BRH structure have all undergone changes during this time. The TOC for the RPD must be revised to reflect the significant contextual changes in the region and in the organisational environment in which the programme operates.

The MTR also learned from the semi-structured interviews conducted with CO staff that the RRF and TOC were clearly not among the key documents consulted during project design. They were cursorily consulted as a necessity for referencing in project documentation and for setting up the project in ATLAS. These documents are also not considered for monitoring purposes, except while consolidating results for the regional ROAR produced by the BRH.

To address this deficiency, it would be useful to translate the RRF into an annual workplan (AWP) of activities for better prioritisation, planning and focus. This would improve reporting and attribution, as the COs and regional projects could synchronise the AWP with their own annual planning exercise. It is a manageable expectation for BRH staff to keep themselves apprised of the AWP, rather than what was referred to in one meeting as a “three-year-old document which may or may not even be valid for the current context and work.” The AWP exercise can also provide an opportunity of a review of the TOC and test the validity of its key assumptions.

The MTR found that in early 2020, when the operating context was massively disrupted through COVID-19, UNDP retained its relevance by pivoting the RPD, in consultation with partners, in particular in support of the health sector demands, rapid socio-economic assessments, DRR and new instrumentalities of UBI/TBI. These adjustments were well acknowledged by stakeholders.

### Box 1: The Regionality Principle

UNDPs implementation of regional projects have played a key role in delivering high quality development results which make a substantive contribution to the overall RPD.

The MTR has found that RPD development results that have come about as a result of regionality principle in the pursuit of regional public goods are strong and compelling. Some of the most tangible results recorded in the programme effectiveness section below have been derived from both regional projects and policy advisory services. There is a critical mass of reasons why the regional programme, based on regionality principles is so strong. Whilst the drivers or success may vary per policy issue and per project, the core features invariably include elements of the following:

- i. Conscious and deliberate thought leadership positions taken by UNDP, for example in BLIAP, climate financing, Youth Co:Lab, PVE, engaging the private sector in issues of anti-corruption and human rights, the economist network and DRR;
- ii. From a review of the five projects selected for the MTR, it is clear that regional projects are better able to navigate political sensitivities. Often, by identifying a common issue or phenomenon, it is destigmatised. In the case of projects like BLIAP and PVE, for example, a regional approach has allowed issues to be tackled that might not been more difficult to include in national or country-specific initiatives.
- iii. As described in the MTR consultation with the RPD Advisory Board; a proven ability to evolve and scale up at the regional level a 'proof of concept' innovation that meet the needs of the moment – e.g. INFFs and CPEIR for integration of climate finance into national budgetary processes, and evolving the concept further into gender and DRR;
- iv. A core of regional capabilities and expertise that enable strategic partnerships at the regional level with ASEAN, ADB and ESCAP, for example, in the delivery of regional public goods, such as formulation of annual regional SDG knowledge products that influence Government policy prioritization and resourcing;
- v. The five projects selected for review all deal with transnational issues and activities that are not restricted to national borders: human rights (BLIAP), climate change (GCCF), business (FairBiz and youth entrepreneurship), and violent extremism (PVE). The subjects of climate change, business integrity & anti-corruption, and violent extremism in particular are not just within the domain of national governments. Climate change is a transnational issue, solutions for which lie beyond the scope of national governments. Plastic waste, pollution, trafficking, population migration and COVID-19 are also transboundary phenomena.
- vi. Good use of UNDPs convening power for multi-stakeholder regional level conferences, workshops and platforms to facilitate learning exchange and SSTC, which in turn builds coalitions for policy, legal and behavioral change at scale;
- vii. Regionally initiated research which provides a sound intellectual base (often expressing thought leadership) and foundation for legitimizing, guiding and prioritizing interventions – such was the case in BLIAP and PVE;
- viii. A growing diversity of partnerships through which to corral implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level, for example with the private sector (e.g. Citi, Unilever etc), with young people, industry bodies - such as COST - The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative, the regional Entrepreneurs group, the Centre for International Forestry (CIFOR), Intersex Asia and the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institution's;
- ix. Donors see and have expressed to the MTR the benefits of working at the regional level, whether or not they have their own satellite offices in countries across the region. They observe the economies of scale and value for money gains, they are widely aware of UNDPs extensive CO reach, as well as the prospect of scale up across the network and/or through engagement with regional bodies, such as ASEAN. A variety of stakeholders confirmed the important role of regional projects in creating networks, which in the case of UNDP is strengthened further through the interface with and support of the BRH.
- x. Strong co-ordination with UN bodies at the forefront of regional issues, ESCAP, UNEP, UNOCT, UNDRR, UNWOMEN, including for the purposes of delivering regionally on issued-based coalitions;
- xi. Leverage and curation of UNDPs GPN and regional projects at the regional level, ensuring coordination for example, under the COVID 1.0 and 2.0 responses, collaboration among the health team, the Economists network, DRR and employment teams etc. for integrating strategic responses,
- xii. The regional programme, consisting of regional projects and regional policy teams are often involved in interpreting global guidance and ensuring it is contextualized to the individual operating circumstances of COs, and at the same time, make the linkages between breakthroughs on the ground in order to contribute to international and global policy positions – multiple stakeholders made reference in MTR interviews to UNDPs ability to influence policy at the global level through the capture of country level experience and learning (PVE, GCCP, BLIAP, Youth Co:Lab
- xiii. At the regional level, BRH also provides financial and operational and procurement support, quality assurance and oversight for RBAP for 25 COs, strongly linked to the BMS. Operationalization of the regional programme comes through RBAP, enabling the policy advisory units of CB and BPPS collaborate with regional projects and meet the needs and demands of COs.

## PROGRAMME EFFECTIVENESS

Effectiveness in this MTR measures the extent to which the RPD is on track to achieve the expected development results, supported by the regionality principles. It outlines elements of the value added that UNDP has managed to bring through RPD implementation as well as underlying causes of underperformance and key drivers of success. Hence, this section draws on evidence gathered by the MTR via a systematic review of progress of each outcome area. This includes: the 7 outputs and 19 associated output indicators falling under outcome 1; the 4 outputs and 16 output indicators of outcome 2; and, the 3 outputs and 7 output indicators of outcome 3.

The MTR also encountered a design flaw in the RPD RRF with regard to outcome indicators. For example, within outcome area 1, 4 out of the 7 outputs have no outcome indicator, neither is there an outcome indicator for output 2.4 in outcome area 2.

The MTR found the RPD to be broadly on track with regard to the delivery of its outputs and output indicators, and hence no major readjustment is required at this stage. In fact, a number of areas are slightly ahead of schedule, including SDG integration, platforms, integrated financing, private sector partnerships, as well as work around youth empowerment, trafficking and working with NHDIs in support of the BLIAP project. DRR and PVE have also progressed well. The BRH has played a strong regionality role (see box 1 above) in advancing sensitive issues at the heart of the 2030 agenda. These include working with populations facing discrimination and marginalization

Of particular note, UNDP partners and stakeholders for the five projects selected for review appreciate and value its outreach and engagement at the grassroots. As UNDP transforms into an organisation ready to provide innovative and sustainable solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is important for UNDP to maintain a balanced portfolio across its constituencies of working with Governments, private sector, civil society, communities and people. This is important in and of itself, but also allows initiatives to be more effective and responsive to identified needs. In BLIAP, for example, legal and policy changes were made possible because the project created a downstream voice mechanism and platforms to amplify and collectivise the voice of the BLIAP communities. In GCCF, upstream changes in budget allocations and expenditure tracking work alongside the voice element of the citizen's climate budget. With PVE, the TOC itself is based on voice and accountability, and regional-level engagement is now being carried out through UNOCT, alongside capturing voices through the 'Extreme Lives' initiative and YouTube content creators to bring grassroots voices into the mainstream. With a project like Youth Co:Lab, meanwhile, its ability to fill a major gap in the innovation ecosystem has been limited by the fact that it has not targeted more innovators from low-income groups and rural areas, and may need to focus on low-tech, low-cost innovations. In other words, by not expanding its outreach to the grassroots, it has not yet capitalized on the opportunity to occupy a niche not usually targeted by largely urban-based incubators and accelerators.

Success factors and value added have been generated from several sources. Stakeholders referred consistently to UNDPs people being its strongest asset. The MTR was advised how UNDP has increasingly recruited from more diverse scientific and systems disciplines. The synergies created by the GPN working in collaboration with the regional project teams also adds value. UNDPs commitment to establishing a strong evidence base has served the organisation particularly well in PVE and BLIAP.

The sustained commitment to invest in innovation and systems approaches, together with the management mantra of integration have combined to give the organisation edge. Close partners observed this adjustment in the poise of the organisation. Where UNDP stands to the power of its convictions on innovation it makes breakthroughs. For example, CO staff expressed deep satisfaction with the sensemaking exercises. Equally, where UNDPs offers are weaker or unclear, for example, on urban and employment, and/or lacks resourcing, results in the RPD are trailing. In addition, whilst gender reporting takes place across the RPD, there is insufficient reporting on RPD outputs associated with women's employment and the gender dimension on energy.

### **Outcome 1: Advance eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions.**

Whilst it was clear to the MTR that good upstream and technical work advancing the 2030 Agenda and SDG integration has been accomplished via knowledge products, partnerships, multi-dimensional poverty tools, multi-stakeholder platforms and innovative financing, yet there is no clear results pathway to demonstrate that these interventions have contributed to poverty eradication<sup>27</sup> at the level of impact. A similar view was expressed by development partners participating in the MTR interviews, that despite good use of design tools associated with the integration of climate and gender considerations into national budgetary processes, information as to how these interventions have impacted decision making at the level of policy or outcome has yet to be substantiated.

UNDPs partnerships are strong and evolving. The strategic alliance with ESCAP and ADB is robust and provides the basis for important multi-stakeholder platforms and regional knowledge products, which have significant political and substantive impact at the regional level. A good platform has been built through which to expand partnerships with the private sector.

From a programmatic perspective, the expanding nature of UNDPs work in the health sector is beneficial and goes beyond the RPD results, however UNDP employment and urban capacities appears weak and its offer in this regard is unclear and

---

<sup>27</sup> Asia – Pacific region accounts for 40 per cent of world poverty

fragmented. The RPD has fallen behind in delivering employment outputs, especially for women. The case can also be made for the need for a clear Asia – Pacific gender strategy to bring coherence to all of UNDPs gender related interventions, including their resourcing.

Figure 4: Overview of Outcome 1 – Progress of the RPD<sup>28</sup>

| Outcome 1: Eradication of Poverty        |  |  |                                    |                                     |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Outcome Indicator 1.1 SDG Challenge      |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.1 Skills Integration            |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.1.1 SDG Integration         | Output Ind 1.1.2 Information Base      | Output Ind 1.1.3 SDG Integration       |                                    |                                     |
| Outcome Indicator 1.2 SDG Frameworks     |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.2 Policy Framework              |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.2.1 Policy Framework        |  | Output Ind 1.2.2 Sectoral Frameworks   |                                    |                                     |
| Outcome Indicator 1.3 Women's Inequality |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.3 Policy Framework              |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.3.1 Youth/ Women            | Output Ind 1.3.2 Gender Implementation | Output Ind 1.3.3 Domestic Work         |                                    |                                     |
| Outcome Indicator 1.4 No Chronic Hunger  |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.4 Employment                    |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.4.1 Urban Employment        |  | Output Ind 1.4.2 Rural Employment      |                                    |                                     |
| Outcome Indicator 1.5 No Disasters       |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.5 Resilience                    |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.5.1 Risk Reduction          |  | Output Ind 1.5.2 Disaster Preparedness |                                    |                                     |
| Outcome Indicator 1.6 No Climate Action  |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.6 Climate Change                |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.6.1 Regional Strategy       | Output Ind 1.6.2 Policy Framework      | Output Ind 1.6.3 Policy Framework      | Output Ind 1.6.4 Policy Framework  | Output Ind 1.6.5 Women's Inequality |
| Outcome Indicator 1.7 No Chronic Hunger  |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.7.1 Gender Inequality       | Output Ind 1.7.2 Gender Inequality     | Output Ind 1.7.3 Gender Inequality     | Output Ind 1.7.4 Gender Inequality | Output Ind 1.7.5 Women's Inequality |
| Outcome Indicator 1.8 No Chronic Hunger  |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output 1.8 Gender Inequality             |  |  |                                    |                                     |
| Output Ind 1.8.1 Gender Inequality       | Output Ind 1.8.2 Gender Inequality     | Output Ind 1.8.3 Gender Inequality     | Output Ind 1.8.4 Gender Inequality | Output Ind 1.8.5 Women's Inequality |

**Output 1.1 Tools developed and capacities strengthened across whole of government to integrate 2030 Agenda and related international and regional agreements in development plans and budgets, and to analyse progress towards the SDGs, using innovative and data-driven solutions.**

Good progress is evident through a number of important initiatives. A strategic partnership between UNDP, ESCAP and ADB underpins the annual flagship Asia Pacific Regional SDG knowledge product, which “Ministers refer back to”,<sup>29/30</sup> and which clearly advances the regional 2030 agenda. Governments have been supported through the HLPF and in the formulation of six VNRs.<sup>31</sup> The regional SDG Data Portal<sup>32</sup> was developed in partnership with ESCAP, meanwhile the SDG country implementation snapshot<sup>33</sup> provided a tool to enable three countries<sup>34</sup> identify good practices, gaps and opportunities.

These partnerships, knowledge products<sup>35</sup>, data portals and diagnostics provide high profile advocacy, focus and technical assistance to enable Governments coherently integrate the 2030 Agenda<sup>36</sup> into their national and sub-national development plans, budgetary systems and M&E frameworks.<sup>37</sup> In addition, the collaboration pursued by UNDP, ADB and ESCAP, including through the platforms (see immediately below) contributes “important political coalition and capital building for the 2030 Agenda.”<sup>38</sup> Notwithstanding good progress at the level of output, the MTR was not presented with compelling evidence that a demonstrable contribution to poverty eradication in the region had been brought about as a result of these endeavours.

Partners commented to the MTR that the policy briefs that accompany the main annual regional SDG report are not disseminated and marketed in a timely manner, for example, via web links at the CO level, which also limits utilization by the target audience.

**Output 1.2 Innovative solutions and good practices emerging from 2030 Agenda country platforms are exchanged through strengthened multi-stakeholder platforms**

<sup>28</sup> (Dark Green – Significant Progress; Light Green – Good Progress; Yellow – Insufficient Progress; Unshaded - Insufficient information)

<sup>29</sup> 2018 Asia Pacific Regional SDG Report ‘Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia-Pacific’; 2019 Asia Pacific Regional SDG Report ‘Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific’ launched at the 2019 APF-SD by Amina Mohammed, UN Deputy-Secretary General.

<sup>30</sup> Source: MTR interviews “Ministers and Ministries refer back to the report. The reports produced have a longevity – not only are they especially relevant in the year of production, some produced 20 years ago are still referred back to”.

<sup>31</sup> VNRs supported in Mongolia, Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Indonesia, Fiji and Philippines

<sup>32</sup> Evidence of progress - the SDG Data Portal developed in partnership with ESCAP: <http://data.unescap.org/sdg/>

<sup>33</sup> Generated from the partnership between UNDP, the Sustainable Development Solutions Network and Columbia University.

<sup>34</sup> Cambodia, Nepal, Indonesia

<sup>35</sup> The MTR heard from development partners that “There is an active demand for the KP from Government’s – and Governments are known to reflect on their progress and highlight success in the reporting. In this sense they are also useful advocacy tools. The KPs are also part of the HLPF documentation and contributes a regional dimension to the HLPF.”

<sup>36</sup> Gender issues are consistently mainstreamed in the activities under this output with specific chapter on gender equality and women’s empowerment in the 2019 AP regional SDG report.

<sup>37</sup> BRH supported Indonesia develop the SDG local diagnostic tool in three provinces and districts to localize the SDGs, including partnerships with the private sector and civil society. Support has also been provided to Pakistan and Nepal.

<sup>38</sup> MTR interviews

Multi-stakeholder platforms are listed as one of a number of ‘key enablers’ in paragraph 18 of the RPD as well as in the RPD TOC. The MTR has found that UNDP has made good use of such platforms, including for the launching and consulting on UNDP knowledge products.<sup>39</sup> For example: the AP Forum on SDG<sup>40</sup>; the ASEAN – China - UNDP Symposium on Localising the SDGs and Realising Poverty Eradication;<sup>41</sup> the regional dialogue, ‘The Future of Leadership is Gender Equal’;<sup>42</sup> and the Intergovernmental Forum (IGF) on Mining, Minerals, Metals and Sustainable Development.<sup>43</sup>

The Joint UNDP-UNEP Poverty-Environment Initiative (PEI) ‘Compendium of Poverty-Environment Mainstreaming Tools’ provided 60 good practice techniques for integrating the SDGs into development planning, budgeting and investment management systems. Finally, the SDG Advocates Programme reached 50 million people via social media, raising awareness on behavioural change for the SDGs. Hence, there is good evidence of progress at the level of output<sup>44</sup> but less in terms of how innovative solutions, good practices and multi-stakeholder platforms have had tangible benefit to the lives of those most affected by poverty across the region.

The MTR found good evidence that multi-stakeholder platforms supported by dedicated networks have helped to generate coalitions where good progress is being achieved. These include INFFs, climate/SDG financing, Youth Co:Lab, Business and Human Rights, Fairbiz, DRR, PVE and BLIAP (for more details see the deeper dive report on 5 selected projects).

### **Output 1.3 Tools are developed, deployed and piloted to identify drivers of rural and urban poverty, vulnerability and inequality with particular focus on those left furthest behind and multi-dimensional poverty approaches**

The MTR found good evidence of tools that had been developed, in particular related to multi-dimensional poverty, but questions remain as to the extent to which these tools have been utilized to affect policy change and impact on LNOB populations. For example: the ‘Review of Multidimensional Poverty in the Asia and the Pacific’ was published to share country experiences; the ‘Urban MPI’ was developed in partnership with Oxford Poverty and Human Development institute; and, prototypes were developed to support ‘Municipal Social Innovation Platforms’ for peacebuilding and socio-economic transformation (southern Thailand).

In addition, Being BLIAP in Asia and the Pacific (BLIA) project carried out extensive analytical, policy, legal and rights-based work at the intersectionality of issues relating to gender, economic empowerment and sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression (SOGIE).<sup>45</sup> However, the number of tools, policy briefs, policies and programmes implemented to support redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work appears to be behind schedule, with only one potentially transformative intervention in India recorded.<sup>46</sup> Grassroots outreach remains limited even for a project like Youth Co:Lab which identified inclusion as a key objective.

### **Output 1.4 Approaches and methodologies developed, piloted and disseminated to support productive employment opportunities, particularly for marginalized groups in fast-growing secondary and tertiary cities.**

Despite a few breakthrough initiatives in the urban sector, there are too few examples of approaches and methodologies developed to support productive employment and their linkages to the goal of poverty eradication. Evidence does exist regarding the UNDP, UNCDF and GRAB taxi collaboration on smart cities and financial inclusion. Similarly, Islamabad has benefited from a SSTC city exchange with Singapore,<sup>47</sup> and BRH led the production of four background papers on ‘Approaches to Migration and Displacement’.<sup>48</sup> Other city to city exchanges were reported to have taken place.<sup>49</sup>

Despite some good work having been initiated on populations affected by migration and displacement, these appear somewhat fragmented and do not reveal a more focussed thrust of work in either the urban or employment sectors. According to MTR interviews with BRH staff, UNDPs role in the urban sector needs greater focus and its capacity in the employment sector is lacking.

### **Output 1.5 National institutions, laws and policies strengthened for equitable and effective delivery of HIV and health services**

There is good evidence that UNDP has helped create and strengthen enabling legal and policy environments for people affected by HIV through multi-country research initiatives<sup>50</sup>, including support to the Thailand CO to strengthen SOGI-responsiveness in the Thai justice system on issues of access to HIV and sexual health related services, protection from sexual

<sup>39</sup> For example the 2018 Asia Pacific Regional SDG Report ‘Transformation towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies in Asia-Pacific’ and the 2019 Asia Pacific Regional SDG Report ‘Accelerating Progress: An Empowered, Inclusive and Equal Asia and the Pacific’ launched at the 2019 APF-SD.

<sup>40</sup> The platform for multi-partner knowledge exchange includes civil society.

<sup>41</sup> attended by government representatives from 10 ASEAN countries

<sup>42</sup> hosting 75 participants from 6 countries and 18 companies in 2018.

<sup>43</sup> attended by nearly 70 governments, which witnessed the presentation of the UNDP policy product sourcebook ‘Managing Mining for Sustainable Development’

<sup>44</sup> In addition, UNDP BRH ‘A compendium of good practices in SDG advocacy and outreach’ was developed in based on the joint work of UNDP, UNSDG Action Campaign and UNV for local awareness and capacities for the SDGs and ASEAN Vision 2023 in partnership with civil society

<sup>45</sup> Multiple countries across Asia, with intensive country-level engagement in **China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam**

<sup>46</sup> Support for UNDP **India** for ‘Transforming the Future of Work for Gender Equality’ researched women’s work participation and employability by reducing the burden of unpaid care giving. The pilot is reported to be on track in creating transformative changes in urban pockets of poverty in Delhi, as 15 women have been selected from 10 communities to undergo mompreneur training. This has created micro-entrepreneurship opportunities for these women, while 100+ women in the communities (with children under the age of 6) will now have access to adequate childcare, are freed up to take part of paid work, and will be connected with employment opportunities through the pilot.

<sup>47</sup> as part of the Temasek Foundation International Leaders in Urban Governance Programme (TFILUGP) (2018)

<sup>48</sup> Produced in the **Pacific, Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines** reviewing livelihood options for vulnerable migrants and promoting social cohesion with host communities in cities with significant inward migration.

<sup>49</sup> The following countries have been involved: the Maldives, ROK, Singapore, Thailand Bhutan, Indonesia.

<sup>50</sup> In **Thailand, Vietnam, Pakistan**, and the **Cook Islands** and initiatives on BLIAP inclusion in 19 counties.

violence, stigma and discrimination. Similar social protection work with key populations,<sup>51</sup> included in the Poor ID initiative which in Cambodia was evidenced. The 'Time Has Come' training package, developed by UNDP BRH and WHO has helped reduce stigma and discrimination at health care settings.<sup>52</sup> Health systems strengthening and implementation of HIV, TB and malaria programmes have been rolled out in 11 Pacific countries.

Other important gains in the health sector were registered with the MTR but were not reflected in the RPD RRF and include: an evolving partnership with WHO involving multi-sectoral approaches for prevention of NCDs and tobacco;<sup>53</sup> support to Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for roll out of eVIN in India and extension into Indonesia; innovative initiatives to improve access to affordable medicines; and, emergency procurement of COVID related PPE equipment to multiple countries. These initiatives reveal an expanding role for UNDP in health systems and the health sector.

The MTR was more compelled by evidence that health related interventions working to affect change at the front line of service delivery on HIV and BLIAP, as well as the e-Vin project rollout, were more directly demonstrable to poverty eradication than other measures undertaken in outcome 1.

#### **Output 1.6 Enabling environment strengthened to expand public and private sector financing for the achievement of the SDGs**

Considerable progress has been recorded regarding integrated financing frameworks for the SDGs. The INFF momentum has led to increased support from DFAT, ADB and EU over the 2018-19 period. Integrated National Financing Frameworks and region-wide knowledge sharing has taken place in multiple destinations.<sup>54</sup> The BRH study on fiscal transfers in Asia<sup>55</sup> was presented at a regional forum of Finance Ministers from 13 countries in Asia Pacific and leading experts in the field.<sup>56</sup> At the March 2019 Regional Dialogue, UNDP BRH held a session on integrating climate change and gender<sup>57</sup> into domestic budgeting processes as part of the NDC process.<sup>58</sup> Bangladesh was supported as one of the first countries in the world to have estimated the costs of achieving the SDGs. The Regional Governance and Climate Change Finance Project influenced the 2019/2020 budget submission in Indonesia and Cambodia.<sup>59</sup> Climate change and SDG financing has also been integrated into parliamentary dialogue over budgetary processes at the national and sub-national level in Nepal and Pakistan.<sup>60</sup>

Significant progress has also been accomplished through the expansion of partnerships with the private sector in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Armenia and Philippines, among others.<sup>61</sup> There are other results reported under this section of the output, suffice to say that integrated financing for the SDGs, with a focus on gender and climate change has proven to be a highly effective arena of engagement for the RPD. By contrast, progress of policies and programmes designed to remove barriers to women's independent access to finance and livelihoods opportunities has been more modest.<sup>62</sup> However, in the final evaluation of the RPD further evidence is needed to demonstrate the direct linkages of INFFs and private sector partnerships to the outcome of poverty eradication, as well as to how integrating gender and climate dimensions into the national budget has had affect at the level of impact.

#### **Output 1.7 Gender-responsive policy and regulatory frameworks for sustainable natural resource management, equitable benefit sharing and universal energy access are improved.**

The focus of UNDPs RPD attention to NRM appears to be concerned with minerals extraction. Some progress in this regard has been accomplished as evidenced by the following. Phase II of the global project 'capacity building of institutions and of small-scale private sector operators in low-value minerals in ACP countries' has been rolled out.<sup>63</sup> The National Human Development report (Afghanistan) on extractive industries was finalized and generated recommendations on gender-responsive policies and regulatory frameworks to improve working conditions in this sector, as well as better environmental management, ensuring better benefit-sharing between extractive companies and the government. Similarly, a comprehensive extractive sector report was produced for Mongolia, which included gender dimensions. However, there are

<sup>51</sup> For example, people who use drugs, entertainment workers, PLHIV, and persons with disabilities.

<sup>52</sup> Adopted into national HIV training programmes in Bhutan, Indonesia, India, Nepal, the Philippines, and Timor-Leste.

<sup>53</sup> In **Sri Lanka, Samoa, Philippines, Cambodia, Thailand**, including the Task Force on NCDs with UN agencies, government, and civil society.

<sup>54</sup> For example: **Indonesia, Vietnam, Solomon Islands, Bangladesh and Timor-Leste**.

<sup>55</sup> SDG financing at the local level

<sup>56</sup> organized in partnership between the OECD, ADB and the Korea Institute of Public Finance (The 2nd KIPF-OECD-ADB Roundtable of the Network of Fiscal Relations in Asia@ Local Capacity Building and Performance Improvement for Inclusive Growth).

<sup>57</sup> Participation of regional institutions representing people with disabilities and indigenous Asia-Pacific people in the delivery of a Gender and Climate Change session at the Beijing+25 Regional Review (Bangkok, Nov 25-29, 2019).

<sup>58</sup> Similar sessions were held at the Asia-Pacific Climate Week, as well as during the Climate Summit Side Events in New York.

<sup>59</sup> By its support, the project also provided a knowledge platform which helped UNDP Fiji. In addition, the Climate Response project became gender sensitive in **Bangladesh, Fiji and Tonga**. The climate change and gender integrated sectoral policy at the Ministry of Rural Development in **Fiji** was approved.

<sup>60</sup> The Regional Government of **Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP)** approved the Climate Change Financing Framework (CCFF). This roadmap for budget reforms facilitates the integration of climate change within provincial public finance management. Likewise, the **Nepal** Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development (MoALD) supported for improved climate budget tagging.

<sup>61</sup> **Bangladesh** (Build Bangladesh Fund, Social Enterprise Fund, Accelerator, Affordable Housing with Impress Capital Limited); **India** (Affordable Housing Impact Fund with Brick Eagle, IIFF with Social Finance India). **Indonesia** Impact accelerator with 500 Start-ups and venture capital fund. Targeting the SDGs includes 9 companies iGrow Resources Indonesia, Kitabisa.com, Tech Prom Lab, Sehati, InfraDigital Nusantara, Sampangan, QlueSmart City, Mycotech and Indexalaw. This group of ventures have been introduced to over 100 investors from over 50 investment funds and angel networks at a dedicated demoday hosted at the Google facility in Singapore. The above impact ventures address challenges related to disaster risks, women health and empowerment, financial access inclusivity, education. **Sri Lanka** - UNDP / UNSIF team worked with several impact investment funds e.g. with Lanka Impact Investing Network (LIIN) SEF (5mln) and SLIF (20mln). The funds are capitalized and operational, though not deployed to specific investments. **The Maldives** in negotiating partnership with Morteza Capital to establish the country's first regulated hotel investment fund (Maldives Hospitality Income Fund (MHIF). Blockchain Charity Foundation. Focus of working with impact Private Equity funds. ASEAN Business Advisory Council of Indonesia (MOU) to help set-up an SDG dedicated impact investment funds.

<sup>62</sup> Through the regional initiative 'Transforming the Future of Work for Gender Equality' structural barriers are being addressed in **Thailand** for the employment of women living with disabilities by providing digital skills training, and in **Fiji** - addressing the digital divide affecting rural women with mobile phone-based solutions to deliver financial and agricultural services to the same degree as men.

<sup>63</sup> The project focus is on 8 countries but includes training for over 40 ACP countries.



two limitations. The first is the lack of evidence recording an impact on poverty eradication arising as a result of these endeavours. The second is lack of NCE reporting to the ROAR<sup>64</sup> which prevents more meaningful analysis of progress in output 1.7 in the MTR.

## Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformation for sustainable development

The MTR finds that good overall progress has been achieved across outcome 2. Accelerated progress correlates to those areas reinforced through the implementation of regional projects and in areas where UNDP has increased investment and management priority. Regarding the latter, sustained investment<sup>65</sup> and prioritization of innovation and system thinking has strongly influenced the direction of the organization. This was particularly evident from interviews with BRH staff and development partners, all of which accept and admire changes being wrought in these areas. More particularly, FairBiz (2.1.1), Youth Co:Lab (2.3.1), Business and Human Rights (2.3.2) and BBLIAP in Asia (2.3.4) have significantly advanced progress in those results (output indicator) areas based on the regionality principle (see box 1 above). This has served to enhance UNDPs work with new constituencies (private sector on transparency, corruption, human rights and diversity), and youth in regard to enterprise, social entrepreneurship and the SDGs. In addition, new partnerships, in particular with the private sector, industry associations and human rights bodies at the national and international level have been effective and have flourished.

Despite the good work achieved above it is unfortunate that reporting on NCE is not captured in the ROAR. As a result insufficient evidence was available to the MTR to gauge whether structural transformation is taking place within the region in this respect, since the threat posed by climate action failure according to the World Economic Forum now features as the top global risk.<sup>66</sup>

Figure 5: Overview of Outcome 2 – Progress of the RPD<sup>67</sup>

| Outcome 2 Structural Transformation                   |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
|---|--|--|-----------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------|
| Outcome indicator 2.1 Inter-Country Platforms         |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.1 Integrated / Systems Thinking              |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.1.1 Knowledge Products                   |  | Output Ind 2.1.2 Cities Innovation         |                                   | Output Ind 2.1.3 Advocacy Products          |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 2.2 Climate, Resilience, Low Carbon |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.2 ACT Equitable Services                     |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.1.1 ACT                                  |  | Output Ind 2.1.2 Open Service Delivery     |                                   | Output Ind 2.1.3 Improved Service Delivery  |  |                       |
| Outcome indicator 2.3 Institutional & Legal Reform    |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.3 A2J & Human Rights                         |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.3.1 Youth Empowerment                    | Output Ind 2.3.2 Business & Human Rights | Output Ind 2.3.3 Trafficking and Migration | Output Ind 2.3.4 NHR Institutions | Output Ind 2.3.5 Democratic Systems         | Output Ind 2.3.6 Gender Discrimination | Output Ind 2.3.7 SGBV |
| Outcome indicator 2.4 No Outcome Indicator            |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output 2.4 DDR, Climate, Green / Clean                |  |  |                                   |   |  |                       |
| Output Ind 2.4.1 DRR / Climate Finance                |  | Output Ind 2.4.2 SNRM                      |                                   | Output Ind 2.4.3 Clean Energy / Zero Carbon |  |                       |

### Output 2.1 Tools and approaches developed and piloted to support integrated approaches and systems thinking for SDGs achievement.

Somewhat similar to output 1.1, yet the focus here is on integration and systems thinking. The evidence of progress is favourable and reinforces UNDPs position of experimentation and mainstreaming innovation across the RPD and, systematically, within each Country Office. The systems approach has helped integrate Climate-Land-Energy-Water systems modelling<sup>68</sup>, which has been used in Pakistan<sup>69</sup>, for SDG integration in Afghanistan,<sup>70</sup> as well as in preparation of the knowledge product 'Shifting to Planned Urbanization in Asia'.<sup>71/72</sup> Innovative approaches also helped inform the establishment of a 'Matching Platform' for cities and the private sector,<sup>73</sup> including urban resilience in Banda-Aceh.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>64</sup> NCE is reported at the global level instead.

<sup>65</sup> See Table 3: RPD Financing per year by source, outcome and output, in particular investments made under 2.1 'innovation'.

<sup>66</sup> World Economic Forum, Global Risk Report 2020. [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_Global\\_Risk\\_Report\\_2020.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Global_Risk_Report_2020.pdf)

<sup>67</sup> (Dark Green – Significant Progress; Light Green – Good Progress; Yellow – Insufficient Progress; Unshaded – Insufficient information)

<sup>68</sup> For example, UNDP BRH working with UNDESA and GEF in Indonesia supported building cross ministerial training (energy and mineral resources; planning; environment and forestry; public works and public housing; government agencies and three academic/research institutions – involving modelling skills support integrated models and integrated policy making.

<sup>69</sup> Stanford University Design School, linking to the Metropolitan Cooperation of Islamabad used system thinking to map and understand complex issues related to water scarcity and quality

<sup>70</sup> Capacity support to national/sub-national government and NGOs on systems thinking on Agenda 2030 and the SDGs in Afghanistan.

<sup>71</sup> Co-authored and as a result of the partnership between UNDP, the Asia Foundation and Korean Development Institute.

<sup>72</sup> UNDP BRH also produced 'The Future of Asian and Pacific Cities Report 2019' in collaboration with other UN agencies and development partners. The report provides trends in urbanization and future-oriented approaches to complex urban issues.

<sup>73</sup> This was launched and rolled out in Islamabad, Pakistan and Banda Aceh, Indonesia in 2018. A structured process for cities and businesses to come together to address pressing urban challenges. Tencent Holdings Ltd. and Government of Japan have provided resources toward sourcing design-thinking, smart solutions and systems thinking.

<sup>74</sup> Funded by MOFA Japan.

Significantly, UNDP BRH, together with Alberta Energy<sup>75</sup> crafted a knowledge consortium to explore innovative public policy methods to deal with plastic waste and support development of circular economies in four countries.<sup>76</sup> This includes the development of a portfolio of experiments with the private sector that can accelerate impact at the system level. Of equal significance, sensemaking and systems thinking are proving attractive and beneficial to COs and being mainstreamed across Country Offices in the region (see Annex 5).<sup>77</sup> Hence, sense-making, integrated approaches and systems thinking are beginning to influence UNDPs approach to understanding and presenting innovative development solutions, which can be leveraged for the final year of the RPD and help inform the design phase of the next RPD.

## **Output 2.2 National, local and urban governance institutions are transparent and accountable for equitable access to services (tools, best practice).**

A solid raft of evidence exists to demonstrate significant progress in this output area. Anti-corruption and integrity strategies have been supported in three countries<sup>78</sup> whilst the 'Judicial Integrity Network in ASEAN' has been strengthened via knowledge sharing and tools to enhance court excellence. Judicial integrity has been piloted in Malaysia<sup>79</sup>, and further anti-corruption measures have been implemented in Myanmar.<sup>80</sup>

More broadly, the FairBiz project commissioned the knowledge product 'Good corporate governance and gender diversity in ASEAN'<sup>81</sup> which informed discussion at the first Regional Dialogue network of companies in ASEAN committed to uphold the values of diversity and inclusion. Its Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), with its 10 business representatives, is an excellent example of business engagement, although today somewhat underused.<sup>82</sup> A Fair Business Environment Lab was conducted to develop innovative solutions for business integrity, with mentorship and support by the PSAG.<sup>83</sup> Under the project, five regional platforms<sup>84</sup> have been established and more than 200 companies in Vietnam<sup>85</sup> received training modules on codes of conduct and internal control systems.

The same project was able to establish open and innovative public procurement systems in multiple countries,<sup>86</sup> including the promotion of citizen monitoring of public projects.<sup>87</sup> A successful partnership with the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST) established a multi-stakeholder group of experts for monitoring 400 infrastructure projects, including for their gender equality impacts. Multiple other projects and initiatives were in evidence in this outcome area<sup>88</sup> including the SDG dashboard tool created for local governments in four countries.<sup>89</sup>

Whilst progress across results area 2.2 has been commendable, focussing on improving the transparency and accountability of public services, the element of equity is largely absent within the reporting. For example, how have population cohorts that make up the LNOB groups benefited?

## **Output 2.3 Institutions, networks and non-state actors strengthened to promote inclusion, access to justice, and protect human rights**

Youth empowerment has been one of the success stories of the RPD. There is strong evidence that the regional project Youth Co:Lab has advanced policies and initiatives across the region. Over a period of just four years and in partnership with Citi Foundation the project has gone from pilot stage to having 190 alliance members to date.<sup>90</sup> The project has launched or accelerated more than 650 youth-led social enterprises across 26 countries in Asia and the Pacific. The project demonstrates the effectiveness of a 'blended financing' and 'impact financing' approach, with US\$ 29.1 million raised for Youth Co:Lab from the government and private sector, and USD 1.3 million raised for Youth Co:Lab startups in the Springboard programme.

<sup>75</sup> Government of Alberta, Canada.

<sup>76</sup> Maldives, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and the Philippines

<sup>77</sup> Vietnam, Indonesia among others.

<sup>78</sup> Vietnam, Malaysia and Myanmar

<sup>79</sup> Also supported in Malaysia was the production of a National strategy on tackling corruption and the National Anti-Corruption Plan (NACP) (2019-2023), including support the Governance, Integrity and Anti-Corruption Centre (GIACC) to operationalize the ministry-level action plans.

<sup>80</sup> Myanmar benefited from a strengthened anti-corruption effort and partnership between the public sector, private sector, and civil society, including establishment of 32 Corruption Prevention Units in 18 ministries.

<sup>81</sup> The paper also baselined the status of women representation in boards and top management positions.

<sup>82</sup> Strategy Report: Promoting a fair business environment in ASEAN Jan 2020.

<sup>83</sup> The project spearheaded and supported changes in procurement laws in Thailand, with new regulations for the public procurement law issued in 2019

<sup>84</sup> Five platforms include: judicial integrity platform, public procurement platform, business integrity and governance community of practice, diversity and inclusion platform, youth entrepreneurship platform).

<sup>85</sup> In Vietnam, the project has worked on developing a set of standards to promote and enable business integrity practices. Impact investors will be able to use their Responsible Business Practice (RBP) checklist to assess the business integrity standards and practices of potential new business ventures. In partnership with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the project developed the Business Integrity Pledge for Business Associations to promote business integrity and compliance with the law. In Malaysia, a government guidebook has been developed for ministries and government agencies to produce their own anti-corruption plans.

<sup>86</sup> Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand

<sup>87</sup> In the Philippines – which also included Collaboration via the ACPIS funded initiative in supporting the development of DevLIVE jointly with the Department of Interior and Local Governance

<sup>88</sup> The IACD in Nepal, a National Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Role of Youth in Tackling Corruption. In Bhutan, support to the Anti-Corruption Commission. Support to Papua New Guinea via the Phones Against Corruption initiative. The promoting a fair business environment in ASEAN. The City-ILEAPS initiative assists urban authorities co-design services in 4 cities covering 3 countries (Indonesia; Maldives and Sri Lanka)

<sup>89</sup> Indonesia, Maldives, Philippines and Sri Lanka.

<sup>90</sup> Discussions with Youth Co:Lab project staff.

A major success of the project is the diverse partnerships it has created across UN agencies and in the private sector, and the integration of their work across all GPN areas in BRH, many incorporating the empowerment of women.<sup>91</sup> Youth Co:Lab also gained access to private sector assets, skills and resources and opened many doors within private sector networks for advancing the 2030 Agenda. The project ethos of leading from behind was reported during various interviews,<sup>92</sup> and partners appreciate the project's willingness to share space with collaborators. Innovative financing has led to interaction with the ecosystem of actors and entities in the impact financing space, ranging from venture capitalists and angel investors to foundations, corporations and governments, charting a new course toward creating a collaborative financing model for youth-led social enterprises.

Private-sector partners report that the project shares some of the same challenges that face entrepreneurship generally, involving outreach to the grassroots levels to hunt for talent and mentoring youth to become entrepreneurs. As one private-sector partner noted, "Youth Co:Lab has to move out of the cities into real villages. The dynamics of entrepreneurship and financing are very different there. We are a big tech company, we can work with those who can reach the national incubators, we can also create national incubators for the governments. We need UNDP to add value to the space that none of the ecosystem actors of innovation and impact financing will reach and to which UNDP already has outreach."<sup>93</sup>

In terms of translating the UN principles into practice, support for Thailand's National Action Plan (NAP) on Business and Human Rights (BHR)<sup>94</sup> has provided the standout example of progress, alongside the publication "Gender Dimensions on the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights".<sup>95</sup> Important measures have been undertaken regarding human trafficking and migration in COMMIT countries.<sup>96</sup>

Significant progress has also been recorded by two regional projects<sup>97</sup>, which frequently combine to deliver impressive results in support of human rights institutions and the human rights of individuals and groups at high risk of stigma, discrimination and of being 'left behind'. The regional Business and Human Rights project supported strengthening the capacity<sup>98</sup> of 5 National Human Rights Institutions<sup>99</sup> including a wide range of stakeholders, civil society and businesses. A further standout success from the period under review is the regional project 'Being BLIAP in Asia'<sup>100</sup> (BLIAP) which addresses the root causes of gender inequality. The programme completed 6 multi-country research projects across 19 countries laying a strong foundational evidence base from which to proceed in its operations. These projects are working through multi-partner partner environments<sup>101</sup> to inform legal and policy reform affecting in China, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

BLIAP has played an important role in influencing policy and laws through direct capacity building support to government departments and policymakers, and by bringing its strategic advantage and approach into partnerships with civil society and other types of organisations that have similar, or overlapping, objectives. Often through requests from national governments, the project has contributed to the development of 24 laws and policies across eight countries, supporting or improving gender-responsiveness of legal systems, legal gender recognition, anti-discrimination and civil partnerships. The success of these efforts was made possible through a partnership approach involving building long-term relationships with key government and civil society stakeholders, other UN organisations, and medical and legal experts.

At its origins BLIAP completed six multi-country research initiatives on BLIAP inclusion covering 19 countries, as well as national-level studies. In order to ensure national ownership of the data, and to encourage active use of the findings, research efforts are carried out in partnership with BLIAP civil society groups, relevant government entities, academia and other partners, weaving the development of partnership platforms and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogue into planning and implementation of the research, review of draft reports and dissemination of the findings. Pairing national

<sup>91</sup> Out of 2,535 youth entrepreneur beneficiaries in 2019 1,182 were female, or 47%. The Youth Co:Lab regional team is composed of 74% female, and 24 out of 36 focal points from COs are female (67%). Phinix in the Philippines is a social enterprise that recycles textile waste into high-value clothing accessories while employing economically vulnerable women [E25]. FoodMario in Nepal is a platform that creates a market for healthy food while creating home-based income opportunities for women. 'Mum's The Word' in Sri Lanka reduces teenage pregnancy and promotes education by making migrant mothers role models for teenage girls in the plantation sector. El8HT is a body-positive sportswear brand in Samoa which encourages women to be physically and psychologically healthy.

<sup>92</sup> Interviews with UN Asia Pacific working group on youth, other UN partners.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with Co:Lab private sector partner.

<sup>94</sup> Support for Thailand's Ministry of Justice, Rights and Liberties Protection Department for the development of the Thai NAP has specific provisions on gender and women's rights, outlining specific policy goals, activities and indicators.

<sup>95</sup> Published in coordination with the UN Working Group on Business and Human Rights (which operates under the OHCHR Special Procedures branch).

<sup>96</sup> The MTR found significant Progress based on the following evidence: i) review and development of national laws and policies on human trafficking at the Regional COMMIT Taskforce meeting in Vietnam in June 2018 promoting greater cooperation on law enforcement; ii) the signing of an employment agreement with 29 countries on decent work for migrant workers; iii) UN-ACT collaboration with COMMIT Regional Taskforce for governments in the Greater Mekong Subregion (Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam) updating policy tools related to labour exploitation and human trafficking with focus on transnational and national referral mechanisms; iv) bilateral agreements to prevent and suppress trafficking in persons between the governments of China and Thailand and the governments of Myanmar and Thailand; v) new policies and tools for Cambodia (Referral Mechanisms for Victims of Human Trafficking); Lao PDR (Victim Protection and National Referral Mechanisms); Vietnam, a new law governing migrant workers overseas; vi) the UNDP & ILO published "What's the incentive? Comparing regular and irregular migrant work experiences from Lao PDR to Thailand"; vii) Mechanism (TNRM) initiative, UN-ACT focused on gender-sensitivity in identification processes and service provision to trafficked persons; viii) Guidelines developed through the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children (ACWC).

<sup>97</sup> Business and Human Rights and Being BLIAP in Asia

<sup>98</sup> Capacity support was provided in general, and included a gender lens on priority areas: labour rights; land rights, community rights, natural resources, and the environment; human rights defenders, and cross-border investments and multinational corporations.

<sup>99</sup> Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Myanmar, India. Additional countries supported included: Bangladesh, Samoa, Fiji, Philippines and Timor-Leste recognising right to health, addressing bullying of children in schools.

<sup>100</sup> The project works to review and revise punitive and discriminatory laws, practices and attitudes towards BLIAP people, and supporting building of more gender-equal societies by increasing opportunities for political, economic, and social inclusion and participation. The project has broadened the discourse on gender to address unequal roles and power relations in the context of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression in addition to a special focus on women and highlighted the importance of intersectional approaches.

<sup>101</sup> The project has also supported development and implementation of action plans with NHRIs and civil society on BLIAP inclusion in 5 countries in partnership with the Asia Pacific Forum of NHRIs and facilitated inclusion of sexual orientation, gender identity, expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) in UPRs of 4 countries (Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China and Viet Nam) in partnership with the ASEAN SOGIE Caucus and in partnership with the Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights Institutions.

consultants with regional and international experts to conduct research helps build capacity at the national level. Wide dissemination and use of the evidence is facilitated through publication of the research in both English and national languages wherever possible. These contributions were also highlighted by the UN Independent Expert on SOGI in their June 2019 report to the Human Rights Council.

The MTR notes that there appears to be multiple lessons generated from implementation of the BLIAP project over a number of years. The project commenced with a strong evidence base (similar for PVE). UNDP led from the front on the issue, gained a strong first mover advantage and made good use of the regionality principle. It contributed important impetus to a growing coalition and brought in other UN agencies, for example, UNESCO, which was instrumental for accessing Ministries of Education across the region, leading to valuable spin-off effects.

Good progress is also evident through a number of electoral processes, institutions and parliamentary institutions supported to promote inclusion, transparency and accountability. These include UNDP BRH and ESCAP engaged parliamentarians from ASEAN countries in national and inter-parliamentary dialogues on the implementation of the SDGs as well as bilateral support to the parliaments of Bangladesh, Bhutan<sup>102</sup> and the Solomon Islands.<sup>103</sup> Although gender clearly features as a cross-cutting theme within this outputs area as well as across the RPD, to address practices perpetuating discriminatory gender stereotypes a regional dialogue titled 'The Future of Leadership is Gender Equal' was hosted.<sup>104</sup> Not least, the longstanding partnership with civil society continues to deliver results<sup>105</sup> in some of the most hard to reach geographical areas in the region, and touching on some of the most sensitive issues including sexual violence faced by women in the Rakhine in Myanmar.

#### **Output 2.4 Solutions developed, financed and applied at scale to reduce disaster risks and promote climate change adaptation, promote the sustainable use of natural resources and green commodity chains, and transform to clean energy and zero-carbon development.**

As mentioned above, the MTR faced a challenge in regard to ascertaining full progress in this results area since the NCE team report at the global rather than the regional level. In addition, through the semi-structured interviews the NCE team explained that they were largely acted as brokers between the vertical funds and the COs. Hence, there was no meaningful reporting in the ROAR on critical areas linked to the sustainable use of natural resources, green commodity chains, clean energy, or zero-carbon development. This makes it difficult for the MTR to record a verdict as to whether structural transformation is underway in relation to climate change and the environment, which is central to the 2030 agenda. There is also a degree of overlap between output 2.4 in regard to disaster risks and 3.1 and 3.2 reported under outcome 3 below.

Notwithstanding the abovementioned limitations, the regional GCCF project has supported the Ministry of Finance in Indonesia to develop the framework eligible green projects for the issuance of a USD 1.25 billion Green Sukuk. UNDP, under the SDF, has also assisted the Directorate of Budget Financing and Risk Management (DJPPR) of the Ministry of Finance in developing a campaign toolkit for the green sukuk. Many countries in the region face a financing gap in investment in climate change and have expressed interest in learning from Indonesia's experience. Not least, the project has also provided climate finance data to the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), which will publish the 2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows, which presents estimates of global climate finance flows (public and private).

In addition, the Governments of Tonga<sup>106</sup>, Bangladesh<sup>107</sup>, Cambodia<sup>108</sup> have been assisted. UNDP and ADB collaborated to review public investment planning processes for resilience<sup>109</sup> in Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar. The regional school tsunami preparedness project<sup>110</sup> raised awareness and preparedness in tsunami prone schools in 23 Asia-Pacific countries. World Tsunami Awareness Day 2019 was marked by UNDP and UNDRR partnering to produce a video on how preparedness and resilient infrastructure can save lives, in line with the Sendai Framework.<sup>111</sup>

#### **Outcome 3: Strengthen resilience to shocks and crises**

UNDPs extensive partnerships in the areas of DRR and PVE are proving effective. In both cases the organisation has a clear mandate and comparative advantage. Development partners appreciate UNDPs capabilities in these regards as well as the strong network of technical expertise across the region that UNDP has managed to successfully curate. Both networks were leveraged in the response to COVID-19 pandemic (see below). DRR has championed data analysis and innovation. Meanwhile PVE has been particularly successful in regard to its formative research as well as the content of its communications via social

<sup>102</sup> Support to Parliaments in Bangladesh, Bhutan and the Solomon Islands has been designed to increase members and staff's awareness and mainstreaming of Agenda 2030 and the SDGs and on enhancing effectiveness, inclusion, transparency and accountability. The Bhutan Women Parliamentary Caucus supported on how to better incorporate gender perspectives into the work of parliament. Support to Pakistan's Parliament related to SDG / climate considerations inclusion within budgetary processes.

<sup>103</sup> - Support for the Solomon Islands focussed on the 2019 Elections Commission for better accountability, inclusiveness and transparency of electoral processes

<sup>104</sup> The event consisting of one day of sessions and discussions, followed by a day of Design Thinking Lab. The event hosted 75 participants from 6 countries and 18 companies. Included a workshop on becoming aware of, and tackling social norms and gender stereotypes that may prevent gender equal leadership.

<sup>105</sup> A total of 22 women peace and security initiatives were ongoing at the time of the MTR in seven N-Peace countries (see further outcome 3 below). Nearly 4,000 individuals were recorded as currently directly benefiting from the process, implementing the WPS agenda.

<sup>106</sup> Tonga – the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Corporate Plan projects were risk informed

<sup>107</sup> Bangladesh - Union Parishad (Deluti Union) in partnership with the Local Government Division piloted a gender responsive climate change adaptation integrated livelihood program

<sup>108</sup> Participatory Action Research with the Cambodia Development Resources Institute (CDRI) (2019).

<sup>109</sup> For the purposes of understanding how respective agencies in Lao PDR, Cambodia, and Myanmar consider climate and disaster risk information in developing new roads. The process and results were also shared with 14 countries.

<sup>110</sup> Over 70,000 students, teachers and school administration directly benefitted. Collaboration between COs, JICA, NDMOs, MOE, Red Cross, Save the Children etc. A regional guide was completed and disseminated.

<sup>111</sup> i) UNDP BRH partnership with Japan on the occasion of the Rugby World Cup 2019 demonstrating the importance of preparedness. Campaign#PrepareToWin was launched and high visibility events were promoted on social media. The video was screened at the high-level event in New York and disseminated on social media.

media, which was one of the contributory factors yielding expanded phase II support from development partners. In overall terms the efforts being made toward the outcome of strengthening resilience to shocks and crises is valid.

Table 5: Overview of Outcome 3 – Progress of the RPD<sup>112</sup>

| Outcome 3: Resilience to Shocks              |                           |                                  |
|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Outcome indicator 3.1 Disaster Economic Loss |                           |                                  |
| Output 3.1 Peace / PVE                       |                           |                                  |
| Output Ind 3.1.1 PVE                         | Output Ind 3.1.2 Research | Output Ind 3.1.3 WPS             |
| Outcome indicator 3.2 DRR Strategies         |                           |                                  |
| Output 3.2 DRM                               |                           |                                  |
| Output Ind 3.2.1 DRM                         |                           | Output Ind 3.2.2 NRM             |
| Outcome indicator 3.3 Women's Leadership     |                           |                                  |
| Output 3.3 Prevention                        |                           |                                  |
| Output Ind 3.3.1 Prevention                  |                           | Output Ind 3.3.2 Gender Equality |

### **Output 3.1 Solutions developed, financed and applied at scale to reduce disaster risks and promote climate change adaptation, promote the sustainable use of natural resources and green commodity chains, and transform to clean energy and zero-carbon development.**

Despite an obvious mismatch between the output and indicator the MTR found strong evidence in regard to efforts to prevent violent extremism through the development and adoption of National Action Plans (NAPs)<sup>113</sup> in the Philippines and Indonesia. Similar to the BBLIAP project above The PVE project produced nationally contextualised research on the dynamics of violent extremism in four South-East Asian countries. In discussions with the EU as well as the COs that are part of the PVE project, it was acknowledged that this research was considered to be insightful and a valuable contribution to the understanding of conflict dynamics in the region by stakeholders and partners, including government counterparts.

The digital narratives of alternate discourse on violent extremism were highly effective in terms of youth outreach. The 'Extreme Lives' initiative has emerged as something of a signature product for the project and was presented as one of 100 innovate ideas for peace at the Paris Peace Forum, achieving high-level visibility for the project. The project partnered with YouTube to develop alternative narratives on extremism by artists and creative people. 'YouTube Creators for Change' is a global initiative that spotlights inspirational creators who use YouTube to foster productive conversations around tough issues and make a positive impact. These content creators receive mentorship and promotional support, and make films that tackle a wide range of topics from self-acceptance and showing kindness to others, to celebrating cultures and advocating for global empathy. UNDP and the European Union are YouTube partners supporting this initiative in the Asia region.<sup>114</sup>

The MTR heard various stakeholders report that due to the nature of the issue, countries do not always accept that they have a violent extremism issue. The regionality principle is therefore important. Regionality has also contributed to the strategic relationship with ASEAN. Solid regional research on the drivers of violent extremism have also helped to position UNDP within the PVE space and engage at the technical level with Government's. UNDP CO presence, network and strong technical expertise have played a vital role in the project. The project has exposed a broader demand for inclusion, diversity and social cohesion across the region.

As reported above, under output 2.3, there is also good evidence<sup>115</sup> of women's participation in formal and informal peace processes/leadership positions related to crisis prevention and recovery.

### **Output 3.2 Countries have improved access to data, finance and technology for rapid response and recovery from natural disasters and crises.**

The MTR records significant progress in regard to harvesting data and technology for DRM and recovery. The evidence for this includes pioneering of the use of the DRM-PEIR methodology,<sup>116</sup> the perpetuation of an ongoing partnership between ESCAP, UNDRR, Tohoku University Fujitsu and the Global Centre for Disaster Statistics (GCDS), through which significant technical inputs and support was provided to 7 countries<sup>117</sup> in regard to national disaster loss databases for national disaster management agencies<sup>118</sup> to inform risk-informed development planning and monitoring to Sendai Framework, population

<sup>112</sup> (Dark Green – Significant Progress; Light Green – Good Progress; Yellow – Insufficient Progress; Unshaded - Insufficient information)

<sup>113</sup> The NAPs provide systematic preventive steps to address the underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalize and join violent extremist groups through a whole-of-society approach.

<sup>114</sup> Source: <https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/programmes-and-initiatives/creators-for-change.html>.

<sup>115</sup> Evidence includes: i) **Afghanistan and Pakistan** where N-Peace Individual Awardees have actively participated in the creation of policies and programmes on WPS which are aimed at creating sustainable peace; ii) 22 women peace and security initiatives in the seven N-Peace countries (nearly 4,000 individuals) implementing the WPS agenda in some of the most hard to reach geographical areas in the region, and touching on some of the most sensitive issues including sexual violence faced by women in the Rakhine in Myanmar (as reported in output 2.3 above). This was supported by the work of the additional 22 CSOs working towards this goal through the Small Grants Component; iii) The Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP), through the N-Peace project increased investment for civil society grants. Increase women's inclusion in decision-making, and the strengthening of gender-responsive policies in **Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka**, 86% working directly on strengthening gender-responsiveness in regulatory frameworks from local to national levels; iv) the UNDP BRH supported N-Peace publish a case-studies report and launched it at the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action Review for Asia-Pacific. The N-Peace initiative is implemented across 7 NAPs on PVE have specific commitments to gender equality countries: **Afghanistan, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Sri Lanka**.

<sup>116</sup> The DRM-PEIR methodology refer to Disaster Risk Management - Public Expenditure and Institutional Review, adapted from CPEIR (Climate Public Expenditure and Institutional Review). The methodology was applied in **Lao PDR and Thailand**.

<sup>117</sup> Indonesia, Cambodia, Philippines, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Maldives.

<sup>118</sup> This work further expanded: **Nepal** developed a portal BIPAD (Building Information Platform Against Disasters) to assist the government in planning and decision-making for disaster risk reduction and recovery. The **Philippines** National Loss and Damage Registry (NLDR) including a robust data ecosystem for climate resilient development and low carbon growth.

displacement<sup>119</sup> and relevant SDGs. However, owing to the non-reporting of NCE results in the ROAR the MTR was unable to determine how many countries have improved access to data, finance and technology for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Several partners were at pains to point to out to the MTR that among the three overarching frameworks: i) Agenda 2030/SDGs; ii) Paris/Climate change; iii) Sendai/DRR - better co-ordination is needed. Each has its separate monitoring processes, Globally and nationally. Governments are thereby duplicating their monitoring along similar lines to a siloed UN approach. Different ministries are reportedly taking different approaches with inevitable fragmentation. As a result, there has been a tendency to disassociate DRR from climate change whereas there is more need to see them linked. For example, the relationship between disaster and human health is integrally linked to climate, water systems, agricultural systems, health and gender, as well as to specific LNOB groups.

### **Output 3.3 Gender-responsive policy and regulatory frameworks for resilience planning, prevention and preparedness are improved.**

Noting some overlap with output 2.3, results reporting under output 3.3 focus on peace and prevention. In this regard there is evidence to support good progress in this area. Ongoing efforts are being made by the UNDP supported N-Peace team, in consultation with Country Offices, to ensure the impacts of various ongoing initiatives are sustained. This includes the Peace and Stabilization Operations Program (PSOP) in six countries<sup>120</sup> 86 percent of which work directly on strengthening gender-responsiveness in regulatory frameworks from local to national levels.<sup>121</sup>

## **PROGRAMME EFFICIENCY**

Efficiency is judged by the extent to which resources have been leveraged and mobilized by the regional programme and by regional projects. It includes an assessment of value for money. It also entails how partnerships have enabled traction and development results that go beyond what individual agency or project budgets would have been able to accomplish with their own resources. Not least, a factor for consideration is whether the resources have been used in an efficient way to integrate human rights and gender perspectives in the design, implementation and monitoring of the RPD.

Table 6 below outlines the financing of the entire RPD two and a half years into its implementation. The combined total of all financial resources invested in the implementation of the regional programme was **US\$ 71.4m** (US\$ 16m from core resources and US\$ 55.4m from cost sharing), at the two-and-a-half-year point against the four-year estimated budget for the RPD of US\$ 110.4m. In overall terms, the RPD has raised between US\$3 – US\$4 for each individual dollar of UNDP core resources invested. This is broadly in line with the financing targets set out at the time of RPD adoption by the Executive Board.

In terms of MTR observations, it is clear that UNDP has ramped up investment of core resources into areas prioritized within the RPD and necessary to advance the process of organizational transformation. For example, key beneficiary areas of reform include: integration (output 1.1); SDG country platform support (output 1.2); and innovation (output 2.1). Meanwhile external funds have been particularly attracted to: SDG/Climate Change financing (output 1.6); anti-corruption (output 2.2); Business and Human Rights (output 2.3); Youth Co:Lab (output 2.3); PVE (output 3.1); and DRR (output 3.2). These investments translate directly into tangible results, as noted above.

In terms of the five deep dive projects under review, none have an explicitly defined value proposition. For all projects, however, the implicit value proposition is their ability to use more or less the same amount of funds as a country office project and show results across multiple countries. This was also noted by donors as offering good value for money (VFM). Other than the GCCF project, there was no easily accessible identification of the main cost drivers or expenditure tracking. GCCF project documents provide a clear articulation of cost drivers, including savings at the activity and output level. Overall, it is fair to say that given the satisfactory effectiveness on the multifaceted goals of the projects, efficiency was also satisfactory.

In interviews with various stakeholders during the information gathering phase of the MTR, donors were asked a direct question about VFM. Within their calculus donors recognised that for UNDPs access, influence, reach, network, expertise and convening power they may be paying a higher premium than if they were to be channelling funding via a civil society network. But when these factors weigh into the equation, the majority indicated satisfaction. For example, in answer to the value for money question in the MTR interview the EU indicated that it had actually increased its investment in phase II of the PVE work based on appreciating the results delivered during phase I. Meanwhile, despite recognising important global

---

<sup>119</sup> The partnership with the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre IDMC prepared displacement risk models for **Indonesia** and the **Philippines**. Useful applied research was also undertaken by the GCDS to better understand macro-economic impacts of disasters and use of ICT for large scale tsunami simulation. These findings were shared at the Second Regional Meeting of the GCDS in Sendai in Nov 2019 and attended by the 7 pilot countries: **Cambodia, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka**. Countries also reviewed progress and discussed the structure and plans for the global disaster database.

<sup>120</sup> Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Indonesia, Philippines, Sri Lanka.

<sup>121</sup> This includes, but not limited to: i) **Banda Aceh, Indonesia**, passing of the Mayor's Regulation 01/2019 (and work with the MUSRENA to increase disabled women's participation in governance and decision-making forums); ii) **Nepal**, supported UNDP Nepal's new Deputy Mayor's Club platform to strengthen capacity of women leaders to mainstream gender and WPS priorities including improving capacity for gender-responsive budgeting; iii) **Afghanistan**, ongoing support of the Afghan Women's Network and Women & Peace Studies Organization which is making headway in inclusion of women in the peace process Monitoring and evaluation is ongoing, nevertheless, over 8,000 direct beneficiaries have been recorded; iv) It also includes research conducted by WPSO on challenges faced by women in the peace process will feed into the broader review of the High Peace Council, that will inform the new Strategy of the High Peace Council which is being implemented with support from UNDP. Similarly, recommendations from the dialogue conducted in Mindanao, will feed into to inform the provincial government in the implementation of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (2018).

lessons learned from its investment in BLIAP, USAID has divested itself from the programme due to the changed priorities of the US (Trump) administration.

In addition, and as also documented above, BRH has entered into a number of strategic partnerships through which to implement the RPD, which has helped to build strong coalitions and leveraged efficiencies and capital beyond financial measure. Recommendations are made below as to how and where these partnerships, including within the UN system, could be further leveraged and strengthened for further efficiencies and effect.

Table 6: RPD Financing per year by source, outcome and output<sup>122</sup>.

| Outcome | RDP Output                       | Atlas PM                     | 2018      |            | 2019      |            | 2020      |            | total           |
|---------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------|------------|-----------------|
|         |                                  |                              | trac      | external   | trac      | external   | trac      | external   | trac + external |
| 1       | 1.1 SDG Integration              | Christine Wellington         |           |            | 865,532   |            | 1,780,000 |            | 2,645,532       |
|         | 1.1 SDG Integration              | Francisco Santo-Jara         |           |            |           |            | 400,000   |            | 400,000         |
|         | 1.1 2030 Agenda Implementation   | Tiwari/Francisco Santo-Jara  | 240,000   | 1,009,477  | 352,768   | 247,203    |           | 84,446     | 1,933,894       |
|         | 1.1 Employment & Livelihoods     | Tiwari                       | 35,199    | 128,738    |           |            |           |            | 163,937         |
|         | 1.2 SDG Country Platform Support | Patrick Haverman             | 1,363,904 |            | 1,384,112 | 1,000      | 144,300   |            | 2,893,316       |
|         | 1.3 Poverty & Inequality         |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         | 1.4 Urban employment             |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         | 1.5 HHD Health Service Delivery  | Hakan Bjorkman               |           |            | 150,000   | 126,000    | 100,000   | 101,472    | 477,472         |
|         | 1.5 Health & HIV laws            | Hakan Bjorkman               | 100,000   | 16,800     |           | 1,020      |           |            | 117,820         |
|         | 1.5 Being LGBTI Asia             | Hakan Bjorkman/Katri Kivojja |           | 2,053,907  |           | 991,764    |           | 965,229    | 4,010,900       |
|         | 1.6 SDG/Climate Change Finance   | Radhika Lai/Asad Maken       | 250,000   | 4,108,979  | 510,000   | 3,698,422  | 120,000   | 3,280,328  | 11,967,729      |
|         | 1.6 UNDP-UNSIF                   | Nan Collins                  | 40,000    | 1,436,967  | 230       | 1,093,650  |           | 1,806,572  | 4,377,419       |
|         | 1.7 NRM, energy public/private   |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         |                                  |                              | 2,029,103 | 8,754,868  | 3,262,642 | 6,159,059  | 2,544,300 | 6,238,047  | 28,988,019      |
|         |                                  |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
| 2       | 2.1 Innovation                   | Alexandru Oprunenco          | 640,000   |            | 1,665,000 |            | 1,062,601 |            | 3,367,601       |
|         | 2.1 Sustainable Urbanization     | Patrick Doung                | 114,801   |            | 155,120   | 358,001    |           | 299,034    | 926,956         |
|         | 2.2 Anti-Corruption & Els        | Diana Torres                 | 24,100    | 79,504     |           | 1,238      |           |            | 104,842         |
|         | 2.2 Anti-Corruption              | Diana Torres                 | 38,000    | 1,018,097  |           | 3,209,138  |           | 2,336,777  | 6,602,012       |
|         | 2.2 Local Gov/SDG local          | Patrick Doung                | 249,900   | 107,200    | 180,000   | 57,800     | 280,000   |            | 874,900         |
|         | 2.3 Access to Justive & HRs      | Nicolas Booth                | 59,915    | 350,199    | 15,670    | 85,714     | 400,000   | 87,341     | 998,839         |
|         | 2.3 COMMIT - Mekong trafficking  | Paul Buckley/George May      |           | 1,745,892  |           | 607,875    |           | 765,193    | 3,118,960       |
|         | 2.3 Business & HRs               | Livio Sarandrea              | 70,100    | 306,041    | 295,536   | 1,572,400  |           | 3,156,239  | 5,400,316       |
|         | 2.3 Youth Co Lab                 | Beniam Gebrezghi             | 481,854   | 1,064,474  | 50,000    | 1,761,090  |           | 1,443,000  | 4,800,418       |
|         | 2.3 Gender                       | Koh Miyaoi                   |           |            |           |            | 100,000   |            | 100,000         |
|         | 2.4 Climate Change               | Yusuke Taishe                |           |            |           | 267,951    | 1,148,000 | 384,928    | 1,800,879       |
|         | 2.4 Environment & Bio-diversity  | Tashi Dorji                  |           | 145,787    | 495,101   | 72,271     |           | 36,155     | 749,314         |
|         |                                  |                              | 1,678,670 | 4,817,194  | 2,856,427 | 7,993,478  | 2,990,601 | 8,508,667  | 28,845,037      |
|         |                                  |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
| 3       | 3.1 PVE                          | Mitra Modaressi              |           | 939,457    | 139,001   | 2,787,543  |           | 4,693,783  | 8,559,784       |
|         | 3.1 Pol Transition and PB        | Mitra Modaressi              | 75,000    | 82,663     |           |            |           |            | 157,663         |
|         | 3.1 WPS                          | Belinda Hiatshwayo           |           | 235,286    | 5,000     | 497,777    |           | 225,000    | 963,063         |
|         | 3.2 Disaster & CF Policy Makers  | Sanny Ramos Jegillos         | 7,000     | 1,098,614  |           |            |           | 480,190    | 1,585,804       |
|         | 3.2 Disaster Risk Reduction      | Sanny Ramos Jegillos         | 100,000   | 70,000     |           | 955,429    | 250,000   | 792,080    | 2,167,509       |
|         | 3.3 Gender resilience            |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         |                                  |                              | 182,000   | 2,426,020  | 144,001   | 4,240,749  | 250,000   | 6,191,053  | 13,433,823      |
|         |                                  |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         | RBM                              |                              |           |            |           |            | 40,000    | 40,000     | 80,000          |
|         |                                  |                              |           |            |           |            |           |            | -               |
|         |                                  |                              | 3,889,773 | 15,998,082 | 6,263,070 | 18,393,286 | 5,824,901 | 20,977,767 | 71,346,879      |

<sup>122</sup> UNDP Financial Data - 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020



## INNOVATION AND INTEGRATION

Stakeholders interviewed in the course of the MTR commended UNDP for its bold approach to innovation and financing. One partner referred specifically to the “courageous approach to Innovation taken by UNDP” which has “permeated UNDP”.<sup>123</sup> Innovation and integration features on BRH office walls and is perpetually reiterated from management. UNDP have invested in SDG centres at the country level, and the SDG financing hub in Jakarta.”<sup>124</sup> Some UN agencies believe this could be more inclusive of them.

When asked to provide examples of integration and innovation stakeholders spoke of the CPEIR methodology and the ‘South – South’ conclave at the recent conference which brought all relevant partners together; the creative engagement of young people in PVE content material for social media that went viral; the use of data and digital technologies, including drones in DRR, to name but a few. Furthermore, innovation around the evolution of Integrated National Financing frameworks (INFF) as an outcome of the Adis conference and which achieved ASEAN recognition has clearly been very important.

A key milestone in this regard was the establishment of the Asia Pacific Regional Innovation Centre in order to help develop NextGenUNDP. BRH has pioneered the sensemaking and acceleration protocol and has begun the process of mainstreaming systems thinking across UNDP country offices in the region. A number of country’s have been through the first phase, including India, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. Thailand, have also applied some the main concepts through social innovation platforms at the sub-national level. Rolling out integrated approaches, innovation and systems thinking at the CO promotes transformation and learning within the organisation. Annex 5 provides further evidence of how the sense-making exercises are influencing integration and innovation in the Indonesia and Vietnam Country Offices.

The dividends from this investment take time to percolate through. There is a degree of complexity, and trust, involved. Innovation needs to continue to be demystified as a conceptual ideal into a practical set of tools fit for purpose on the shop floor of the COs across the region. As was explained to the MTR:

“The innovation buzz word has been around now for 6 or 7 years. We have expanded innovation, in terms of money, people, teams, initiatives. But the fruits of innovation are not necessarily born quickly. Sense-making and portfolio design are proceeding. We need to have teams of people in COs who can carry it forward.”<sup>125</sup>

The thereby MTR acknowledges the extensive efforts that have been advancing innovation, integration and financing. The forward momentum of these progressive reforms has not gone unnoticed among UNDPs partners. The direction the organisation is moving in is highly beneficial. As noted by one commentator, even with fewer material resources, “UNDP has become more enterprising”.<sup>126</sup>

One means for UNDP to sustain this transformation is through its recruitment policy. Thought leadership and innovation entails thinking and doing things differently. It is disruptive, in a positive sense. UNDP needs to continue placing people with a constructively disruptive mindset across the organization in order to bring about organizational transformation. It has begun this process, but it needs to bring others along to lead it, spot talent and capabilities within UNDP to help drive the process and bring people to the table. It is about embracing diversity of thought, perspective and from different scientific and policy backgrounds, not just diversity of ethnicity.

In considering the organisational transformation taking in place within UNDP and the significant attempts being made to embrace new innovative ways of working the MTR heard a lot frustration from teams regarding the constraints placed on them by more rigid operational and back-office rules and procedures. There were concerns that risk aversion had become more important to the organisation, and that a dashboard orientated was taking over. In addition, that HR and procurement processes are incredibly inflexible, demanding and time-consuming. Hence, at the same time as trying to create a ‘transformational engine’, organisational processes are often out of line. Staff lamented at having to spend “a lot of time on rules and procedures”.

The MTR heard that experimentation and innovation come up against a compliance requirement on the basis of: results frameworks, donor agreements, CO specific demands, delivery targets, short-term time horizons, TRAC allocations, a rigid ATLAS framework etc. One participant stated: “Our back-office systems are ‘rigidly projectized.’” While some of these may be outside of UNDPs direct control, and a large number of them are within it, and perhaps this is where some concentrated energy now needs to be focussed to achieve more organisational coherence.

## IMPACT AND SCALE

The process from innovation to scale up is a process that involves multiple stages from developing and testing an idea to eventually being widely adopted (see Figure 2 below). In terms of scalability, as observed by the RPD Advisory Board, the regional programme has a responsibility to identify and invest in initiatives that are capable of being taken to scale by Country Offices, once proof of concept has been established. Regional projects provide the space to experiment with solutions to key

---

<sup>123</sup> MTR Interview

<sup>124</sup> MTR Interview

<sup>125</sup> MTR Interview

<sup>126</sup> MTR Interview

development challenges in the region, which can be introduced as proofs of concept (e.g. CPEIR), transition to the development stage (e.g., GCCF phase 1) and then be implemented at scale (GCCF phase 2 and CFN).

It is worth noting that streamlining management of climate finance work enabled synergies with the AP-DEF, which allowed work in this area to move towards sustainable scale with multiple actors becoming involved. However, since both the INFF and CFN are yet to mature, it may be premature to make a call on the direction. Within the hub, SDG and climate financing have stood out as an example of the complementarities and synergies that can exist between BRH advisory and regional project functions. This coherence appears to be a major contributor to their ability to achieve scale at the level of ecosystem actors in the area of public finance.

Similarly, for PVE, with its innovation related to messaging, proof of concept (social cohesion through building digital narratives) transitioned to the development stage, attracting two big tech partners, Facebook and YouTube. The project has yet to achieve scale, but a model has been developed that can be scaled up and replicated elsewhere.

BLIAP entered an arena with limited democratic space for discussion of BLIAP rights and issues. The project demonstrated proof of concept by brokering a regional association on BLIAP rights, transitioned into development with private-sector partnerships and expanded civil society space for BLIAP groups, and started to achieve significant scale with more than 1,300 organisational partnerships. It is important to consider scale both in terms of results (numbers) and knowledge creation. Knowledge creation and application allows for replication in a multi-county or regional context.

Two good examples of such new ways of looking at the development agenda are the focus on youth as a development constituency and the anti-corruption work in the regional portfolio. Engaging with youth as a development constituency rather than viewing unemployed youth as a problem has led to capitalising on their proclivity for disruption to create opportunities for innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship. The impact of these disruptive social enterprises on SDG acceleration, a goal the project sets itself, is yet to be ascertained. With US \$ 1.3 million dispersed to Youth Co:Lab enterprises so far, the project has demonstrated proof of concept.

Anti-corruption is a longstanding development agenda within governance programming. FairBiz pivoted the problem to tackle it at the interface of public-private interaction (public procurements) and directly with business (business integrity), alongside work on anti-corruption laws and policies. While the project has overshot its targets in most quarters, it has yet to achieve the crucial proof of concept, and had to adjust some of its work in view of the ASEAN CSR Network not being able to come on board as a partner, as was originally envisaged.

A mapping of the main policy and project initiatives across the RPD by scale and impact can be found at Annex 9 and 10.

Figure 2: Stages of scaling<sup>127</sup>



## SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability of the regional programme depends on the extent to which investments that are made in the outcomes are capable of enduring and perpetuating beyond the timeframe of the RPD. Much depends on the nature of partnerships in existence, especially with national partners.

On the whole, the investments made across the RPD are capable of being sustained. By way of a snapshot, in outcome one, the policy and financing efforts which have been made to integrate the SDGs into national planning frameworks for poverty reduction are largely considered as permanent measures. Government's across the region have been swift to take the SDGs into their national planning and M&E frameworks, and have begun to integrate them into sub-national frameworks and budgetary processes. Governments have engaged enthusiastically in the HLPF for which national VNRs have been prepared. Integrated financing frameworks have been explored and adopted by Governments, including some at the sub-national level.

Core governance and service delivery improvements in outcome two present a credible route to being sustained since they are underpinned by changes in national legislation and regulations. National human rights institutions across the region have been institutionally strengthened to continue their endeavours to support human rights across the region, and BLIAP communities in particular. These capacities, tools and techniques are adaptable to other LNOB groups. The Youth Co:Lab franchise is growing as are partnerships with the private sector. Innovative financing is nationally owned in at least three countries. In outcome three, national PVE actions plans have been adopted and are being promulgated and DRR continues to underpin Government efforts in their resilience strengthening measures. WPS initiatives continue to place women into

<sup>127</sup> Similar scales are also used by Bill Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID (Development Innovation Ventures), UNICEF (office of innovation), Grand Challenges Canada and others. Adapted from Insights into measuring the impact of innovation, the International Innovation in Development Alliance (IIDA) 2017

positions of influence and leadership, often in challenging situations, working in close partnership with and through CSOs/CBOs.

However, the MTR recognises that there are also risks to sustainability. For example, Across the globe, COVID-19 has exacerbated existing social, economic and political fissures, further eroding already weakened state structures and social safety nets in many regions, and making it all the more difficult to reach those who are most in need. There is growing recognition that in the post-COVID era, sustainability has to take resilience and social protection into greater account.<sup>128</sup> UNDP in its Offer 2.0 strategy also acknowledges the need for recovery through resilient social protection, resilient institutions and resilient green jobs.<sup>129</sup> For UNDPs regional projects, too, there are implications. It is important to recalibrate the approach to the sustainability of initiatives and investments. In the DRR partnership interviews with the MTR ESCAP identified an important opportunity for working on strengthened investments in resilience at this time.

For example, BLIAP has achieved significant success in developing partnerships and platforms for BLIAP rights in many countries in the region. It remains to be seen whether the investment by UNDP was enough to withstand the COVID shock, which has led to the increased alienation of excluded and marginalised groups across the globe, including in the Asia-Pacific region. GCCF, together with SDG financing, is pivoting vital processes for resource allocation to be gender, human rights and climate friendly. The project is already planning for sustainability by working to establish a regional Climate Finance Network (CFN) and a regional SDG financing network.

PVE has moved into Phase 2, following a project evaluation earlier this year that took into account issues of sustainability. It is too soon at this stage to make an assessment of sustainability of Phase 2, which launched in May 2020. Meanwhile FairBiz has not been in operation long enough for most of its gains to be sustainable after the life of the project. The business integrity output was clearly designed to achieve a regional public good. However, due to the relevant partnerships not materialising, the output had to be redirected.

Youth Co:Lab can only be as sustainable as the social enterprises it helps get off the ground. In other words, if the startups it has identified and supported go on to become thriving businesses, the project will have been sustainable in a broader sense. In the startups ecosystem, too, there is growing acknowledgement of the need to balance innovation and resilience.<sup>130</sup> Going forward, Youth Co:Lab will need to recalibrate its focus to create a better balance between innovation (the 'unicorn') and resilience (the 'camel') in its portfolio. Another way in which this initiative can have a sustainable impact is to deepen engagement with policy frameworks at the country level, as well as regionally.

National and local development solutions are increasingly co-created using systems thinking. This entails deep listening first, then seeking to understand, before moving towards the co-creation of integrated development solutions. In the majority of these circumstances UNDP COs are working collaboratively with partners in local contexts, before project design, which helps establish the principle of sustainability from the outset.

## HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

The MTR confirms that human rights and gender equality have been well integrated in the design, implementation and reporting of the RPD. Stakeholders interviewed confirmed that UNDP pays important attention to human rights and gender equality. Some of the clearest results reporting in the ROAR originates from a gender and human rights perspective. There is a particularly strong human rights dimension to the RPD across all outcomes,<sup>131</sup> but especially outcome 2.

All five projects address aspects of gender and human rights. BLIAP is de facto a human rights project. GCCF is a gender and human rights-focused intervention, creating mechanisms for public financing to respond to climate change, poverty, gender and human rights. PVE, with its work on national action plans, is in a position to undertake advocacy with governments on the inclusion of women and human rights concerns. FairBiz works to include more women in transparency processes that CoST undertakes, and emphasises the inclusion of women in business leadership, advocating for gender equality as key to the future of business leadership. It has also set a good precedent of sex disaggregating all reporting on beneficiaries and stakeholders, including participation in regional events and platforms. This a practice that other projects should emulate. Youth Co:Lab is based on the principle of inclusion, seeking to leave no one behind. It has promoted themes related to SDG 5 and indigenous peoples and empowers women as entrepreneurs.<sup>132</sup>

## REPORTING AND MONITORING

---

<sup>128</sup> World Economic Forum 2020 Investor Leadership: Retooling for a resilient future.

<sup>129</sup> UNDP 2020 Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030.

<sup>130</sup> <https://hbr.org/2020/10/startups-its-time-to-think-like-camels-not-unicorns>

<sup>131</sup> Gender issues are clearly integral to: the annual regional joint publication on SDG progress; climate change and gender budgeting, equality of gender participation in the majority of UNDP hosted platforms, workshops and conferences, including the engagement of women's CSOs in the HLPF; very evident at the heart of the BLIAP project; central to the 'future of work' project; a close consideration to the population and migration work; attention paid to gender in data disaggregation; a measure of success in relation to Youth Co:Lab; central to the PVE (NAPs), WPS and N-Peace initiative; important in regard to working with parliaments and with ASEAN etc.

<sup>132</sup> Reporting can be improved by disaggregating results around different categories of inclusion, including gender. For example, with USD 1.3 million raised for startups, this amount can be shown in terms of the proportion going to start-ups and enterprises owned by women, religious or ethnic minority groups, and BLIAP people.

For an organisation like UNDP, the emphasis on reporting, monitoring, attribution and results should not be merely from a compliance perspective, as has been conveyed to the MTR. Rather, the emphasis of reporting and monitoring should be from a learning perspective. Development practitioners and M&E professionals know that this emphasis has to be kept in mind at every stage of the programme development process, starting from design (hence the detailed discussion on the regional TOC and RRF above), identifying ways to collect evidence and track attribution, and finally documenting knowledge creation and learning. This process is strengthened by developing a well-conceptualised TOC that is properly aligned with the RRF (see discussion above) which can help identify what works, what works well, what does not work and what may even do harm. This is what organisational learning aims to achieve with improved TOCs, sharper RRFs, and meaningful results. For an organisation that prioritises and values learning, it is important to (a) delink monitoring and evaluation from compliance, (b) integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, and (c) invest resource (human and capital) in MEL systems.

Currently, ROAR reporting is at the level of output, rather than output indicator, making the exercise of independent results verification and evaluation more tedious than it need be. The lessons learned sections of the ROAR are more often blank or incomplete. Conversely, gender reporting to the ROAR is strong. Regional projects appear to report well to the requirements of individual donors, but there are no standardised templates, including for reporting from COs for regional project activities. These templates should be aligned to the regional project TOC and RF as well as the regional programme TOC and RRF, making both more relevant. In practical terms, this does not need to create a new or additional reporting burden on COs, but is more a matter of streamlining reporting from COs to regional projects in a manner that clearly demonstrates the strategic alignment between CO results, regional projects results and regional programme results.

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

The TORs for this MTR have included space for an initial review of the how the Regional Programme was able to adjust for the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. This includes an assessment of the flexibility and responsiveness of the advisory services and project interventions in response. In the first instance the MTR heard that “COVID swept everything off the table” and that “Asia was on the front line – the COVID hit us first”.<sup>133</sup> In the beginning Offer 1.0 was crafted very swiftly during the early part of the crisis/crisis response. “HQ took it, and without changing a word, it became the global offer. It provided evidence that BRH was really on the ball in responding to the crisis.”<sup>134</sup> The survey monkey also asked about COVID 19 response and COs found it helpful (52%) and very helpful (42%) When asked about which areas of support during COVID 19 were most relevant, support in rapid response, financial resources, concept notes, procurement, business and COVID 19 came up as top responses.

But there were also some challenges encountered by the organisation in marshalling a quick response. For example: “For the COVID response, we were lucky that everyone was fumbling. We quickly started organizing. The first issue was procurement. On our social and economic response – that took some time. It revealed that we are a development organization, not a crisis organization. It was referred to as an unprecedented crisis. But we weren’t prepared in our response. We need to be fast, efficient and transparent – but our rules are still an issue, needing COA from COs, approvals etc. We need to be more flexible, nimble, less bureaucratic. It’s a competitive environment. UNOPS are faster.”<sup>135</sup>

What is apparent to the MTR is that UNDPs swift response to COVID helped to galvanize the whole organisation into action. Many internal and external perspectives have commended UNDPs ability to come up with an integrated response in a short period of time. There was clearly strong coordination between global, regional and country offices<sup>136</sup> in rallying together to provide a strategic, integrated and befitting response to what was an unfolding and unprecedented global crisis. Once there was a clear policy position, for example, on UBI and TBI the organisation was coherent: “When UNDP corporately, regionally and COs align we can really make things happen. The organisation walked together - ‘we owned that space’. All of us were speaking to all. The question we should be asking now is, having built that momentum, and position, have we pushed hard enough at the final mile at the CO level to have impact? We start something, but can we finish?”<sup>137</sup>

The MTR learned that in order to organise an integrated response from across BRH a Task Force was established comprising the Heads of various Policy Units, which was “an excellent unit from across BRH”.<sup>138</sup> Since it was initially Health Crisis, the Head of the Health Policy Team was appointed to lead the Task Force. By all accounts leadership of the Task Force was strong: “It was completely integrated team – it produced some innovative thinking on the future of work and social protection (UBI, TBI, etc.).”<sup>139</sup>

The MTR also heard that the Task Force may have been dependent on too few people and too few resources given the scale and scope of the challenges and may have been closed down too soon: “Collaboration on COVID-19 was perhaps first organization wide attempt to operationalize the principle of integration, but ended up being a core group of colleagues from

---

<sup>133</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>134</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>135</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>136</sup> For example, “We have appreciated regularly meetings on COVID chaired by the RBAP Regional Director, who has brought the COs together for a series of exchanges.” [MTR interviews]. Offer 1.0 and subsequently 2.0. Across UNDP the ‘comms teams’ came together for COVID 19.

<sup>137</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>138</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>139</sup> MTR Interviews

across the house.” Furthermore, “We lost the opportunity across the house to keep pursuing an inter-linked response. The Task Force was dissolved prematurely”.<sup>140</sup>

One of the greatest time-consuming challenges that fell on the Task Force was its intermediary role in corralling and quality assuring proposals from COs to the UN Joint Rapid Response Fund. The MTR learned that HQ had agreed a 24-hour response turnaround. This placed additional pressures on the team. Teams were reviewing numerous proposals per day until an SOP was in place. The absorption capacity in the BRH was not sufficient. A core group of people pulled together and ended up responding to an overwhelming number of requests from COs. Whilst the additional funding may have been a welcome boon to the COs, it added a significant burden to the BRH which it appears to have been unprepared for and ill-equipped to deal with.

Within the high-pressured environment described above there was clearly a balance to be struck between the need to respond to individual CO requests while maintaining a strategic regional programmatic perspective. There were for areas of support within 2.0, with rapid social and economic assessments preceding the 2.0 offer. It was reported to the MTR that since the initial assessments have been undertaken, BRH has done less to support COs, for example, in terms of following up with priorities revealed in the assessments. Meanwhile BRH has focused on supporting the individual requests of the COs (in accessing the RRF and Japanese funding). There may be more need for BRH to support the actual implementation of these initiatives, and for more strategic coordination of COs around broad issues of resource mobilization, implementation and communications.

To amplify the point, a number of commentators to the MTR remarked “without being too critical – it was a good response under the circumstances, but could have been more strategic. What was missing was an integrated response to COs. Money was coming from a variety of sources, but it led to fragmentation. Instead, the funding flows took over, we focused too much on RRF and Japanese funding. We needed more strategic coordination – a more strategic mechanism.”<sup>141</sup> In addition, “Giving funds to each of the GPN teams to work on COVID may not have been what was needed”<sup>142</sup>

One of the most apparent observations of the MTR is the issue of ‘criticality’. The term is usually used in crisis countries to determine which aspects or assets of the programme should remain in operation. Here we use criticality in the sense that UNDP had assets in the right place at the right time with capabilities to respond. In this regard it was observed by many participants to the MTR interviews that: “The Economic Network played a key role, generating policy options. In terms of the response. There was a three-pronged plan. i) Health systems – emergency procurement PPE, which was time critical, especially given that medical procurement issues were extremely challenging; ii) Social and economic impact assessments and surveys – which the Economists Network, supported by the Chief Economist in China – which were essentially country led; iii) Funding made available to COs via the fast track process. People and teams really pulled together for COVID, especially the Economists and the disaster people”<sup>143</sup>

The criticality of having the Economists Network in place (20 Development Economists) as part of the GPN was very evident to the MTR. They played a vital role in being at the forefront in supporting UNDP COs, the wider UN system and host Governments make sense of the multi-faceted PDNA style socio-economic impact assessments (using the Socio-Economic Recovery Framework (SERF) with UNDP as the technical lead within the UN system. This helped position UNDP take up a leading role in the following policy dialogue on response recovery. The network also worked collaboratively at the regional level, contextualizing support to CO circumstances.

The MTR heard practical examples of how the Economists worked effectively both in collaboration with BRH and COs and were able to balance and synergize. The network also worked with ESCAP on behalf of BRH on a region wide Briefing Note. A number supported UNRCs, linking with other UN agencies. In particular the network helped craft and advocate for the promotion of the Universal Basic Income (UBI). This helped position UNDP globally at the forefront of the COVID policy discussion, requiring fiscal space. Five COs including Cambodia, Iran, Lao PDR and Samoa demanded support on social protection systems.

In its discussions with the Economists Network the MTR heard how the principle of development effectiveness had been well coordinated across the Asia Pacific Region between WB/ADB/IMF. The latter have led on Macro-economic assessments, while UNDP has led the UN system on socio-economic assessments which have included the impact on the ‘real economy’ across a complexion of issues including LNOB groups, gender, livelihoods/jobs, health systems, social cohesion and resilience. The other benefit of the Economic Network, as part of the GPN, yet situated in COs across the region, is that it has enabled highly contextualized responses with expertise in possession of a sound grasp of the political, institutional and development realities in their respective countries. The MTR was presented with good evidence that the Economists Network function as a professional network in a collaborative manner with a consistent flow and exchange of information (e.g. in the crafting of the post-COVID questionnaire between China, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Mongolia). They have also supported each other’s efforts to access the joint SDG fund.

---

<sup>140</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>141</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>142</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>143</sup> MTR Interviews

In overall terms, stakeholders commended UNDPs quick and comprehensive response to the COVID-19. A whole of organisation response occurred. The integrated Task Force at the regional level worked well. The RPD was able to pivot, especially the health (initially in terms of PPE procurement), as well as programmatically via employment (UBI/TBI), economist network (social and economic impact assessments), DRR (PDNA type support) and PVE (in response to a rise in hate speech etc.). However, there were bottlenecks in the process. SOPs had to be designed. CO ERF applications threatened to overtake strategic considerations. In addition, there remains an unresolved tension as to when to move from the emergency-oriented footing of the COVID-19 response back to longer term ‘business as Usual’ operations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly disrupted development pathways and created new opportunities for rethinking development solutions. COVID-19 has begun to shift the goalposts in terms of how development is envisioned, conceived, appreciated and experienced. It has accelerated a shift towards conscious development. Hence the very conception of development is changing – the indicators of development that brought us to 2015 will not be those that take us to the next level.

## RPD MANAGEMENT

One of the most perplexing questions poised to the MTR<sup>144</sup> related to what is the best configuration of the GPN/project assets in the AP Region. The MTR has reported above on the benefits and synergies arising from the co-location of policy and project teams above. But there is clearly a balance to be struck between having a critical mass resident in Bangkok that is capable of collaborating in innovative and integrated approaches, and a more widely dispersed network that has one foot firmly within a CO or COs. The discussion is finely balanced.

The founding principle upon which further exploration of this question should be based for the purposes of identifying a solution for the best way forward was reflected in the following perspectives:

“The GPN is currently quite centralized in BKK – is that the best place? Could we decentralize more into the COs and have CO staff more engaged in the GPN. The balance rests on getting closer to the CO without compromising the GPN regionality function. The subsidiarity principles has good merit. We certainly need to be smarter at tapping and exchanging information and expertise across the region, learning lessons and transferring knowledge and skills faster.”<sup>145</sup>

“In terms of the where the BRH assets should be located, there is some merit in looking to beef up the capacities of the COs, relocating staff from BRH to COs. However, if we are to be able to function as a think-tank, with integrated approaches and solutions, there is also value in retaining the core. If we lose the critical mass of capacities in BKK we may lose the innovation and integration capabilities.”<sup>146</sup>

Different variations of the BRH network and GPN already exist, dependent on the area of work. For example:

- The Nature, Climate and Environment Team have a large number of personnel based in Bangkok, yet they serve more a brokering role to COs, as expressed above.
- The Economic Network has a BRH presence and regional function, yet is distributed across some 20 COs, serving their interests principally, yet coordinated by the Chief Economist, who resides in Beijing.
- The PVE network appears to have a strong lead from Manilla, and likewise, the Business and Human Rights network from Dhaka.
- The DRR has a strong network team, and its Lead is based in Bangkok.

A critical point for consideration is how more decentralized teams are to be lead and coordinated alongside how well the respective networks are curated. The final analysis rests on what arrangement best helps UNDP to accelerate its own organisational development. In this consideration the MTR learned that the placing of a BRH staff member to work on innovative financing dramatically increased the pace of learning and innovation. This is an important consideration that weighs heavily. UNDP will need to carefully analyse where there is a strong alignment between Government demand and CO opportunity in order to be able to exploit its position.

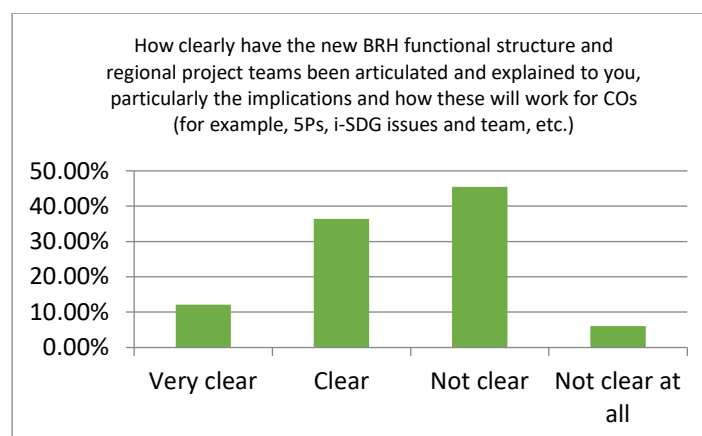
The survey monkey results show that with the recent changes, the COs do not consider that they are very clear on the changing role, profiles and nomenclatures within the teams, work streams, portfolios and thematic areas. (see fig 3)

Figure 3 Understanding of new BRH structure and portfolios

<sup>144</sup> This question was put to the MTR by the senior management team after the data collection and interview processes had been concluded.

<sup>145</sup> MTR Interviews

<sup>146</sup> MTR Interviews



Whilst the parameters of the MTR TORs did not permit a detailed review of management arrangements a number of findings were apparent and these are set out below.

To the MTR it was apparent that the management decision to bring together regional projects and BRH advisory services helps achieve better results with respect to uptake of policy advice, and allows innovation to flourish in regional projects with results being taken to scale. For example, the SDG finance and climate finance advisory and project teams have integrated teams effectively. This has resulted in effective cross-fertilisation in SDG financing (AP-DEF, INFF) and climate finance (GCCF), and these efforts seem poised to have greater impact with the involvement of more ecosystem actors. The positive effect of this collaborative approach is clear from discussions with CO teams. The collegial atmosphere could be seen even in a video conference call. Experience was shared of peer learning across COs. Experience sharing across the two initiatives within countries takes place to a lesser extent, as suggested by discussions at the CO level. This can be a possible area for greater synergising.

The MTR learned that one of the greatest assets of the BRH is its service orientation towards Country Offices, was also one of its greatest sources of pressure. A number of staff reported a 'reactionary and piecemeal approach in response to CO requests', the need to be 'constantly responding to requests from COs', and that 'demands from COs are endless – such that we don't focus very well on what we do'. There was concern expressed across the house that the BRH may be stretched too thinly, with people 'run ragged'. When the GPN was conceptualized it was noted that it would only really work as a network if there was some slack in the workload, but it is currently too overwhelmed for the network to be flexible, leaving insufficient time for intentional learning. There also appears to be considerable inequalities in terms of staffing as well as contractual status, with those staff in projects being considered as 'poor relations'. In line with the current RPD, or its successor, a mapping of skills, capacities and gaps to deliver should be undertaken.

The MTR is pleased to report that the dedicated BRH service orientation to the COs is praiseworthy and a strong attribute. Clear signals emanate from COs to BRH as to the particular needs and exigencies of Governments. This keeps the regional centre client focussed. However, there is some dissatisfaction with the STARS system. Better management of the system is needed to ensure support provided is strategic and not piecemeal. Piecemeal approaches, together with some tendencies towards task management, are beginning to take their toll on motivation, morale and possibly performance.

A survey monkey exercise undertaken as part of this MTR revealed that COs approach advisory services (82%) as well as regional projects (55%) for policy advice. The top 3 thematic areas (signature solutions) identified for advice were governance, gender and resilience. Among the cross-cutting areas, the top 3 areas for advice were RBM/M&E, innovation and partnerships. Most respondents found the advice very helpful (60.61%) or helpful (36.36%) for achieving the purpose it was used for. On response time for policy advice, a majority (82%) received it in 1 week or less. Regarding the BRH COVID-19 response COs found it helpful (52%) and very helpful (42%). However, in terms of BRH successfully communicating the structure of the GPN, there is still considerable confusion within COs. The full results of the Survey Monkey can be found at Annex 4.

In terms of the utility of the RPD and TOC, policy and project teams interviewed in the MTR unanimously regard the RPD as a framework that "falls into the background". It is used in conducting LPACs and RPACs as a point of reference, "but it doesn't come to life". "Operationally we don't use the RPD. It's not managed." There is no annual work-planning under the RPD. The MTR heard further that "the RPD is conceptual, but is something that could be better improved. "how we build alliances and synergies within that framework is up to the teams"<sup>147</sup>. Most people look at the RPD when its 'ROAR time' rather than when 'planning for collaboration', which seems to suggest that the RPD doesn't really guide planning exercises, annual or otherwise." The priorities that tend to drive are: i) how much US\$ have you raised/spent; ii) what KPs have you produced;

<sup>147</sup> Quotations from various MTR Interviews.

iii) how many COs have you helped. Hence, conversations around substance is often lacking". In addition, there are other processes more dynamic to rally around with partners<sup>148</sup>.

The MTR observes that the RPD is under-utilized as a tool of strategy and management. Whilst it does provide a strategic link between the Strategic Plan, UNCFs and CPDs. Once designed it remains on the shelf until the end of the year, or until the MTR or final evaluation comes around. Project teams do use it to dock their TOC and results. Otherwise it is not well owned or used by the regional programme team. Similarly, the RPD TOC upon which the RPD rests was barely referred to by policy or project teams in the MTR consultations.

In terms of RPD governance arrangements, the Advisory Board meets just once in a year. Its membership consists of CO RRs. The MTR heard from the Advisory Board members how they would be grateful of the opportunity to engage more regularly at the strategic level on the RPD. Taking a private sector perspective gleaned through the MTR interviews: "It is always good to have different partners, they give us perspective. We hear different types of feedback. It is always dangerous for a company to think it is on the right path".<sup>149</sup>

Development partners engaged in regional projects have also expressed to the MTR a desire to be more involved in substantive dialogue and not be merely regarded as financial donors. They note good technical collaboration with UNDP Regional Project Teams, but miss the opportunity to consult with other partners on priority areas of mutual interest afforded through project Boards operating at the CO level. In this light UNDP might want to consider injecting some additional partner voices into the Regional Governance arrangements. The RPD Advisory Board was also open to being more engaged in ongoing RPD strategy discussions.

The MTR also observes that the RPD Advisory Board is an internally oriented structure that meets annually. On the other hand, members of the Board expressed their willingness to be engaged more frequently at a strategic level, which could be beneficial going forward.

## ADVANCING UN REFORM

The MTR finds that UNDP is engaged in a number of important, often strategic, partnerships with UN agencies. The regional programme also works to implement the wider UNs normative frameworks and global priorities. Regional level issue-based coalitions are also being taken up. There is both the scope and the need for UNDP to engage in these energetically. Extensive mention has been made in this report of the range of UN partnerships that exist for implementation of the RPD. Some of the most prominent include:

- UNDP and ESCAP working across a front of issues to accelerate implementation of the 2030 agenda and SDGs, including on the DRR resilience agenda, also in partnership with UNDRR to deliver on the Sendai framework.
- UNDP and UNEP working collaboratively on climate change and climate change financing, and on a range of environment, natural resource management and energy related topics.
- UNDP and UN Women collaboration, also on climate, Youth Co:Lab, and PVE. On the latter also with UNOTC and UNODC.
- UNDP working with UNICEF and UNESCO on Youth Co:Lab and BLIAP respectively
- UNDP partnership with UNAIDS, WHO and UNICEF on health system and services.
- UNDP is also well placed to engage more closely with UNEDAP (UN Evaluation Development Group for Asian and the Pacific) and the DCO on regional interventions.

RPD implementation continues to demonstrate that the UN is stronger when it works together as one. Throughout the MTR several UN agencies have requested stronger partnerships with UNDP, among them, UNEP, UN Women, UNEDAP, UNOCT and ESCAP.

## KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key findings and recommendations have been generated by the MTR and are set out under five categories:

### 1. DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION & MANAGEMENT OF A STRATEGICALLY INTEGRATED RPD

**Finding 1.** The MTR observes that the RPD is under-utilized as a tool of strategy and management. Whilst it does provide a strategic link between the Strategic Plan, UNCFs and CPDs, however, once designed it remains largely on the shelf until end of year reporting, or until the MTR or final evaluation comes around. Project teams do refer to the RPD in project documentation and for setting up the project in ATLAS as well as to dock their TOC and results. Otherwise it is not well owned or used by the regional programme team. Similarly, the RPD TOC upon which the rationale of the RPD rests was barely referred to by policy or project teams in the MTR consultations. It is standard M&E practice to periodically review the TOC and test causal assumptions in the light of any changes in context. In the case of the RPD, such a review has not been done in the past 2.5 years. Meanwhile, the context in the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP policies and practices, and the BRH structure have all undergone changes during this time. The MTR notes that the various 'enablers' referred to in the RPD narrative and

---

<sup>148</sup> MTR Interviews.

<sup>149</sup> MTR Interviews.



TOC have been used well by the BRH and the regional projects. However, the current RRF is incomplete (missing outcome indicators) and there is a tendency to pigeonhole enablers into specific output areas, whereas their application is universal across the regional programme and RRF.

**Recommendation 1.**

- e) Complete the RRF in the next cycle of RPD, ensuring strong internal coherence between the TOC and RRF. Employ regional metrics to baseline and set targets against. In addition, for regional RRF indicators, there should be a balance between innovation-specific metrics and standardised metrics as well for scale and impact.
- f) Create an annual work plan for RPD implementation consisting of a smaller number of strategic areas, or portfolio's, for focused integrated acceleration, results and learning. Translating the RRF into an annual workplan (AWP) of activities for better prioritisation, planning and focus would help improve reporting and attribution. In addition, COs and regional projects could synchronise the annual planning exercise to bring about strategic alignment and coordination of AWP.
- g) Revisit the RPD AWP and TOC at least annually as a collective exercise. It is a manageable expectation for BRH staff to keep themselves apprised of the regional AWP. The AWP exercise can also provide an opportunity to review the TOC and test the validity of its key assumptions. Employ a more experimental approach to spaces for collaboration, dedicating time for key teams and development partners to come together to reflect, think and co-design.
- h) The COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of the rapidity and severity with which the operating environment of a project can change. It is not enough to make superficial adjustments to outputs and activities in the face of such dramatic and long-lasting changes. During implementation of the next RPD, regular review (and revision as required), of the TOC should be a part of the AWP and M&E process, ensuring projects remain relevant and effective.

**Finding 2.** There is a disconnect between the results reported by the regional projects and COs, and the TOC.

**Recommendation 2.**

- d) Regional projects must identify clearly the regional public good being sought. The TOC of each regional project must clearly identify the regional 'public bad' which it sets out to resolve.
- e) The regional project appraisal committee (RPAC) may be tasked to ensure this is part of approved regional projects.
- f) If in the next RPD planning cycle, UNDP decides to proceed with a standardised TOC and RRF approach to designing projects, which seems to be the default for all five projects reviewed, then it might be useful to develop standardised guidance on the TOC which underscores minimum criteria on elements for inclusion, with guidance as well on identifying desired change, levels of change, change pathways and causal pathways or causal assumptions. This would allow projects to more clearly think through their activities at the strategic level. Most importantly, guidance is required on linking the project TOC with the project RRF in an effective and coherent manner. Online tutorials and sessions on TOC development and integration with the RRF could be introduced for project staff. Guidance on TOCs for regional projects could include a set of guiding questions, leading to the thinking through of the desired change and how to achieve it, innovation based. This will help to better translate the vision of regional projects around experimental space for development solutions (working with the unusual suspects as ecosystem actors, disrupting business as usual, reframing the problem as a solution, etc.). Ideally, project TOCs should be derived from and build upon knowledge of the local or regional context and subject matter, and this should be made explicit in the project TOCs, which would also increase the strategic relevance and effectiveness of interventions.

**Finding 3.** The RPD Advisory Board is an internally oriented structure that meets annually. The members of the Board have expressed a willingness to be engaged more frequently at a strategic level.

**Recommendation 3.** Within the frame of designing the next RPD, give further consideration to the TORs of the RPD Advisory Board with a view to making this oversight body more dynamic, engaged and accountable for RPD implementation. Allied to this, give further consideration to establishing portfolio priorities through which to invite partners (donors, Government's, private sector, civil society, academics) in areas demanding a strategic collaboration and coalition building for region-wide results at the highest level.

## **2. PROGRESS & CHALLENGES WITH RDP 2018 – 2021 IMPLEMENTATION**

**Finding 4.** Whilst good upstream and technical work advancing the 2030 Agenda and SDG integration has been accomplished via knowledge products, partnerships, multi-dimensional poverty tools, multi-stakeholder platforms and innovative financing, there is no clear results pathway to demonstrate that these interventions have contributed to poverty eradication at the level of impact. A similar view was expressed by development partners participating in the MTR interviews, that despite good use of design tools associated with the integration of climate and gender considerations into national budgetary

processes, information as to how these interventions have impacted decision making at the level of policy or outcome has yet to be substantiated.

**Recommendation 4.** In line with LNOB centrality to the 2030 Agenda, and in particular the RPD poverty eradication outcome, the current and next regional programme should seek to capture the impact of the upstream policy work on the lives of people and communities. Moreover, in the final year of the current RPD, BRH should extend stronger support to Government's SDG implementation strategies, to ensure the 'farthest' are actually 'reached first'. This is a necessary accompaniment for the purposes of demonstrating impact in outcome one of the current RPD to the extensive up-stream policy support provided for SDG planning, financing, budget integration and VNR reporting.

**Finding 5.** UNDP has evolved its strategic alliances and partnerships in the region to build strong coalitions and leverage efficiencies and capital beyond their financial measure. This has opened the doors of the UN to young people and their creative energies and vision, to LGBTI communities and human rights institutions, as well as hitherto, the largely untapped resources of the private sector. The MTR heard from established institutional partners regarding how these relationships with UNDP could also be further invested in and strengthened.

**Recommendation 5.** That UNDP carry out a review of its strategic regional partnerships with a view to strengthening their long-term durability and joint positions on key issues in ways that further extend their impact and enable greater leverage of each other's GPNs at the regional and country level. For example with:

- e) ESCAP and ADB regarding the production of the annual regional SDG progress report, APF-SD, SDG diagnostics, databases, platforms and VNRs, as well as strengthened collaboration with ESCAP on DRR and the post-COVID-19 resilience agenda;
- f) The EU and OECD with respect to anti-bribery, anti-corruption, integrity, transparency and accountability, including Business and Human Rights;
- g) The EU, UK, SIDA, UNEP and UN Women on matters relating to Climate/SDG finance, should consider expanding to regional networks working on climate finance, the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action and other development partners. Synergies with the World Bank, IMF and other partners which work on core public finance issues will help the sustainability of reforms around climate and SDG finance;
- h) UNOCT, UNODC, the EU and UK on PVE.

**Finding 6.** UNDP partners and stakeholders for the five projects selected for review appreciate and value its outreach and engagement at the grassroots. In BLIAP, for example, legal and policy changes were made possible because the project created a downstream voice mechanism and platforms to amplify and collectivise the voice of the BLIAP communities. In GCCF, upstream changes in budget allocations and expenditure tracking work alongside the voice element of the citizen's climate budget. FairBiz engagement with the private sector has been instrumental. With PVE, the TOC itself is based on voice and accountability, and regional-level engagement is now being carried out through UNOCT, alongside capturing voices through the 'Extreme Lives' initiative and YouTube content creators to bring grassroots voices into the mainstream. With a project like Youth Co:Lab, meanwhile, its ability to fill a major gap in the innovation ecosystem has been limited by the fact that it has not targeted more innovators from low-income groups and rural areas, and may need to focus on low-tech, low-cost innovations. In other words, by not expanding its outreach to the grassroots, it has not yet capitalized on the opportunity to occupy a niche not usually targeted by largely urban-based incubators and accelerators.

**Recommendation 6.** As UNDP transforms into an organisation ready to provide innovative and sustainable solutions for the 21st century, it is important to maintain a balanced portfolio across its constituencies of working with: i) institutions (Governments, private sector etc); ii) communities (often civil society, academic and CBOs etc), and; iii) people (often from LNOB groups). This is important in and of itself, but also allows initiatives to be more effective and responsive to identified needs.

**Finding 7.** In outcome area one, the expanding nature of UNDPs work in the health sector goes beyond the RPD results, which, in the current operating context, including from a systems perspective, is promising. However, UNDPs employment and urban implementation capacities by comparison appears weak and its offer in this regard is unclear and fragmented. The case can also be made for the need for a clear Asia – Pacific gender strategy to bring coherence to all of UNDPs gender related interventions, including partnerships and resourcing.

**Recommendation 7.** In the final year of the existing RPD UNDP should reflect on how it wishes to engage in the livelihoods, employment, skills and enterprise sector, given the rapid structural transformation affecting the region. In doing so, with whom best to partner. Similarly, with urbanization being one of the mega-trends affecting the region, UNDP should give further thought as to its positioning and offer in the urban arena. Both area's offer opportunities for UNDP, but require clarity, focus and clear linkages with other parts of the portfolio. UNDP may also wish to revisit its gender strategy for Asia Pacific, including with other key UN coalition actors.

**Finding 8.** It is unfortunate that reporting on NCE is not captured in the ROAR, and as a result insufficient evidence was available to the MTR to gauge whether structural transformation is taking place within the region in this respect, since the threat posed by climate action failure according to the World Economic Forum now features as the top global risk.

**Recommendation 8.** NCE results of regional significance should be incorporated into the RPD AWP and ROAR.

**Finding 9.** Among the three overarching frameworks: i) Agenda 2030/SDGs; ii) Paris/Climate change; iii) Sendai/DRR - better co-ordination is needed. Each has its separate UN monitoring processes at the global and national levels. Each Government is having to monitor against a silo UN approach with different ministries potentially taking different approaches. Reporting frameworks are currently at risk of promoting fragmentation, rather than integration. There is a tendency to separate DRR from climate change whereas there is more need to see them together – for example, the relationship between disaster and human health is integrally linked to climate, water systems, pollution, agricultural systems, health and gender, LNOB groups.

**Recommendation 9.** To address and reduce areas of duplicative and/or over-lapping reporting, UNDP needs to support better coherence, alignment and results reporting across these various universal development frameworks: i) Agenda 2030/SDGs; ii) Paris/Climate change; iii) Sendai/DRR. This will help demonstrate the value of UN coordination.

### 3. COVID RESPONSE AND IMPLICATIONS

**Finding 10.** In overall terms, stakeholders commended UNDPs quick and comprehensive response to the COVID-19. A whole of organisation response occurred and the integrated Task Force at the regional level worked well. The RPD was able to pivot, especially the health (initially in terms of PPE procurement), as well as programmatically via employment (UBI/TBI), economist network (social and economic impact assessments), DRR (PDNA type support) and PVE (in response to a rise in hate speech etc.). However, there were bottlenecks in the process. SOPs had to be designed. CO ERF applications threatened to overtake strategic considerations. Staff burnout occurred. In addition, there remains an unresolved tension as to when to move from the emergency-oriented footing of the COVID-19 response back to longer term 'business as Usual' operations.

**Recommendation 10.** At an appropriate moment in the near future UNDP should give consideration to conducting an internal after-action review into its COVID-19 response to understand how and where it might have performed better in what has clearly been a testing period for the organisation and its staff at all levels and in all capacities. In doing so BRH may wish to revisit and revise its Business Continuity Plan, including contingencies, SOPs and 'special measures' which could be invoked in times of crisis. Such a review could include consultations with COs following on from the social/economic assessments that were carried out to identify key issues and themes arising from those studies which might require priority implementation and follow up.

**Finding 11.** The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted development pathways and created new opportunities for rethinking development solutions. COVID-19 has begun to shift thinking on how development is envisioned, conceived, appreciated and experienced. Hence the very conception of development may be changing, hopefully for the better. The indicators of development that brought us to 2015 will not be those that take us to the next level.

**Recommendation 11.** Many countries are now engaged in fiscal stimulus as a route out of the devastating COVID-19 impact on health, jobs and economies. In the region, there may be US\$ 260 billion in investments underway in projects across all sectors. For UNDP and its strategic regional partners this presents an opportunity to support Governments achieve higher levels of risk, resilience, inclusion and sustainability in the design, build and management of these investments. UNDP offer 2.0 identified alternate pathways to achieving desired change by pushing for agendas building on health security, social protection, inclusion and poverty alleviation. There is also an important role for regional projects in this regard, in line with solutions and pathways set out in UNDP Offer 2.0, which may have been less welcome in a business as usual scenario.

### 4. MANAGEMENT OF REGIONAL ASSETS

**Finding 12.** The approach that brings together regional projects and BRH advisory services helps achieve better results with respect to uptake of policy advice, and allows innovation to flourish in regional projects with results being taken to scale. For example, the SDG finance and climate finance advisory and project teams have integrated teams effectively. This has resulted in effective cross-fertilisation in SDG financing (AP-DEF, INFF) and climate finance (GCCF), and these efforts seem poised to have greater impact with the involvement of more ecosystem actors. The positive effect of this collaborative approach is clear from discussions with CO teams. In addition, the placing of a BRH staff member within a country office to work on innovative financing dramatically increased the pace of learning and innovation.

**Recommendation 12.** Continue to pursue the current close and networked juxtaposition of policy advisory services and regional project teams, since they create synergies and support the strong curation of regional networks. There appears to be good value added from teams being able to work in integrated ways. Where possible, look to create more favourable contractual conditions for regional project staff. Furthermore, based on positive recent experiences of deployed GPN colleagues to country offices, continue to experiment with extension of the GPN in this way where it makes good sense to do so.

**Finding 13.** The BRH service orientation to the COs is praiseworthy and a strong attribute. Clear signals emanate from COs to BRH as to the particular needs and exigencies of Governments. This keeps the regional centre client focussed. However, there is some dissatisfaction with the STARS system. Better management of the system is needed to ensure support provided is strategic and not piecemeal. Piecemeal approaches, together with some tendencies towards task management, are beginning to take their toll on motivation, morale and possibly performance.

**Recommendation 13.** In the near term, UNDP needs to make better use of a business plan for COs which would facilitate better management of both the demand and supply of BRH resources to COs. This would enable a more strategic, sequenced

and timely response to COs. In addition, it could be derived and/or linked to the AWP process set out in recommendation 1(b) above.

## 5. MONITORING, EVALUATION & LEARNING (MEL)

**Finding 14.** A key milestone in this regard was the establishment of the Asia Pacific Regional Innovation Centre in order to help develop NextGenUNDP. BRH has pioneered the sensemaking and acceleration protocol and has begun the process of mainstreaming systems thinking across UNDP country offices in the region. A number of country's have been through the first phase, including India, Philippines, Indonesia and Vietnam. Thailand, have also applied some the main concepts through social innovation platforms at the sub-national level. Rolling out integrated approaches, innovation and systems thinking at the CO promote transformation and learning within the organisation.

**Finding 15.** Regional projects provide the space to experiment with solutions to key development challenges in the region, which can be introduced as proofs of concept (e.g. CPEIR), transition to the development stage (e.g., GCCF phase 1) and then be implemented at scale (GCCF phase 2 and CFN). The process from innovation to scale up is one that involves multiple stages from developing and testing an idea to eventually being widely adopted (see Figure 2 in main text). In terms of scalability, as observed by the RPD Advisory Board, the regional programme has a responsibility to identify and invest in initiatives that are capable of being taken to scale by Country Offices, once proof of concept has been established.

**Finding 16.** For an organisation like UNDP, the emphasis on reporting, monitoring, attribution and results should not be merely from a compliance perspective, as has been conveyed to the MTR. Rather, the emphasis of reporting and monitoring should be from a learning perspective. Development practitioners and M&E professionals know that this emphasis has to be kept in mind at every stage of the programme development process, starting from design (hence the detailed discussion on the regional TOC and RRF above), identifying ways to collect evidence and track attribution, and finally documenting knowledge creation and learning. This process is strengthened by developing a well-conceptualised TOC that is properly aligned with the RRF (see discussion above) which can help identify what works, what works well, what does not work and what may even do harm. This is what organisational learning aims to achieve with improved TOCs, sharper RRFs, and meaningful results. For an organisation that prioritises and values learning, it is important to (a) delink monitoring and evaluation from compliance, (b) integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, and (c) invest resource (human and capital) in MEL systems.

**Recommendation 14.** Learning must be closely tied in with M&E and with monitoring and tracking of NextGenUNDP work under innovation and sensemaking. In this regard, within the current and next RPD cycle, UNDP should:

- e) Continue to work on integration, innovation, sensemaking and systems thinking across COs in the region with special attention paid to learning generated along the way to know what works and what does not work. In addition, a review of the back-office systems supporting innovation is recommended from the perspective of what fits and what does not fit. This will help locate gaps and propose solutions to align the system well to portfolio management as opposed to project management that these systems (ATLAS etc) are currently set up for.
- f) Approach acceleration and innovation from a scale and impact lens. Track innovations in projects from proof of concept to impact at scale. Introduce monitoring tools that speak to scale and impact within innovation, at programme and project level. (e.g early outcome harvesting designed for regional projects and for portfolio sensemaking).
- g) Adopt a stronger orientation towards results and impact, rather than results reporting being regarded as a compliance issue. Creating spaces for conscious learning and regarding learning as a systematic team-based pursuit will help the organisation. Investment will be required in M&E systems geared towards learning. Without such an investment, whatever learning in terms of what works, and what does not, remains implicit learning. Some upfront investment is required to make this learning explicit, regular and accessible across the organisation through learning sessions and learning products by the MEL team.
- h) Develop systems to capture and share learning from on-going and concluded projects. These lessons should be used at the programme level to inform new interventions and strengthen on-going ones. For example, thematic evaluations, outcome harvesting, participatory workshops for stories of change with contribution analysis, process and TOC case studies and case studies capturing UNDP access and influence should be made part of the M&E cache for the new RPD.

## ANNEXES

### Annex 1: Deeper Dive of 5 Projects

#### Project review

This chapter examines the regional programme theory of change (TOC) and regional results framework (RRF) to assess the programme design. It then reviews five selected projects in greater depth to assess their alignment with the regional TOC and RRF, their coherence and effectiveness, and the M&E systems set out in project results frameworks (RFs).

#### Programme design: Strategic alignment within the RPD

This section assesses the regional programme design, including the strategic alignment of the TOC and RRF.

#### Programme design and RRF

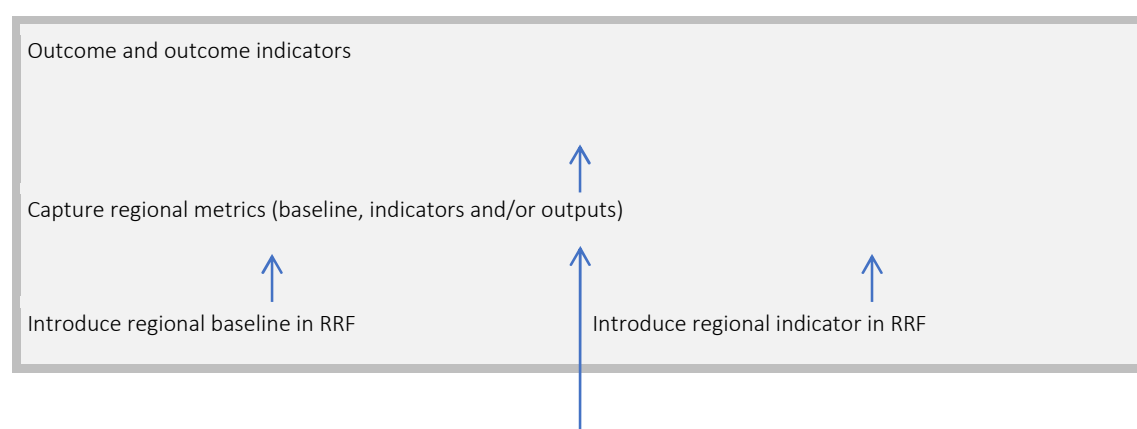
The programme RRF does not appear to be informed by a regional approach. This would entail introducing metrics that fully capture the work of regional projects, including regional partnerships formed and other achievements at the regional level, such as multi-country dialogues, regional platforms for learning and knowledge sharing, etc. Currently, these regional activities are part of regional project strategies and are captured in the RFs of different regional projects. In the RPD RRF, however, indicators for measuring regional exchanges are reflected only in Output 1.2, and for regional knowledge products in Output 1.1. Not only are regional knowledge exchanges and knowledge products an integral part of all regional projects, they are some of the most important elements that help to build and consolidate a regional approach.

The current regional RRF is more CO-facing, rather than being oriented towards the region. Even so, the contribution from regional projects is clear, as ATLAS has the ability to trace, bifurcate and link activities undertaken at the CO-level to the respective regional project.

It is worth noting that regional project results are mostly aligned with regional TOC enablers, but because the enablers are not properly integrated into the regional RRF, project contributions are not being captured there. This is not to say that these are orphan activities within ATLAS. However, the chain of results from regional project activity to RPD outputs remains weak and often seems retrofitted to accommodate the language of the RRF.

To demonstrate its necessity and impact at scale, a regional approach should also incorporate the idea of a regional ‘public good’. Examples of regional public good achieved will vary, depending on the project: for example, the creation of democratic space and inclusive discourse around LGBTI issues (BLIAP), lowering the regional carbon footprint (GCCF<sup>150</sup>), the identification and dissemination of peace narratives (PVE), supporting a more transparent business environment in the ASEAN region (FairBiz), or increased youth entrepreneurship (Youth Co:Lab). Regional projects must identify clearly the regional public good being sought. The TOC of each regional project must clearly identify the regional ‘public bad’ which it sets out to resolve (see Figure 1).

Figure 4: Demonstrating ‘public good’ in the RRF



<sup>150</sup> Currently, GCCF does not measure impact. In its 2.0 iteration, as the Climate Finance Network, it will need to measure the impact of climate financing tools, mechanisms and processes contributing to the regional public good.

Introduce an output to cover regional public good

Identify regional public bad, for example:

- Low levels of political participation by women in East Asia<sup>151</sup>
- High levels of greenhouse gas emissions contributed by Asia Pacific region

Identify regional public good, for example:

- Increased political participation of women in East Asia
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions contributed by Asia Pacific region

BRH has reorganised teams and reprioritised work streams after the RPD was already in place. While an organisational assessment is outside the scope of the MTR exercise, it is important to caution that attribution to RRF outcomes cannot be considered without taking into consideration these organisational and programmatic changes.

### TOC and RRF

Reviewing the RPD from a results-based management (RBM) M&E perspective, there are two main drivers of the RPD: the TOC and the RRF. For a coherent programme design and contiguous results chain (each output or result deriving logically from the previous input), it is imperative at the macro level for the TOC and the RRF to be aligned.

The desired change is represented in the TOC by three outcomes. For each of these outcomes, the change pathways are different. The TOC would be more strategically coherent and easier to understand if levels of change were clearly defined and change pathways spelled out for each outcome. The TOC in its current format does not make explicit the change pathways from the desired change (the 'what' part) to strategies (the 'how' part) other than listing the enablers.

In the hierarchy of the RRF, different regional projects and COs are not contributing to the outcomes but to the outputs of the RPD RRF. The outputs come together to contribute to the outcome. In its current form, the RRF does not systematically reflect the enablers from the TOC in the outputs or output indicators.

There is a disconnect between the results reported by the regional projects and COs, and the TOC. To bridge this disconnect, it is necessary to:

- Revise the regional TOC to make explicit the proposed change pathways, causal linkages and causal assumptions, and
- Revise the RRF in view of the revised TOC and ensure that the outputs reflect the change pathways and causal links of the TOC.
- Based on the above two, better align regional projects and CO results to the outputs in regional programme RRF

This revision is very important. It is standard M&E practice to periodically review the TOC and test causal assumptions in the light of any changes in context. In the case of the RPD, such a review has not been done in the past 2.5 years. Meanwhile, the context in the Asia-Pacific region, UNDP policies and practices, and the BRH structure have all undergone changes during this time. The TOC for the RPD must be revised to reflect the significant contextual changes in the region and in the organisational environment in which the programme operates.

Similarly, a lot of results in the area of innovation, private-sector engagement, innovative financing and engagement through multi-stakeholder platforms are not well captured in the regional Results Oriented Annual Report (ROAR) that is cumulatively produced by the BRH. A review of the RRF shows that innovation, private-sector engagement, multi-stakeholder platforms and financing are all identified as enablers in the TOC, but are not reflected systematically in the RRF. As enablers, these should be captured across a range of outputs and not just a few outputs. Moreover, if all 17 regional projects are developing and using regional multi-stakeholder platforms, then all 17 regional projects should be tagged against Output 1.3.

Related to the above point on tagging all 17 regional projects to Output 1.3 to develop a cumulative look of contribution to regional multi-stakeholder platforms, there is the question of retaining the integrity and internal coherence of the RRF. As mentioned, project outputs contribute to the individual outcomes of the RRF. The RRF outcomes are thematically conceived. All 17 projects may not align thematically with Outcome 1 and would therefore not be well placed or well mapped against Output 1.3.

---

<sup>151</sup> According to the WEF Global Gender Gap report 2020, political participation in East Asia and the Pacific is low, at 0.159 against a global average of 0.249.

At this mid-course correction point, a revision of the RPD TOC and RRF should be undertaken to better reflect the extensive work and new ways of engagement that are being successfully implemented by the BRH team.

From the semi-structured interviews conducted with CO staff, it was evident across the board that the RRF and TOC were clearly not among the key documents consulted during project design. They were cursorily consulted as a necessity for referencing in project documentation and for setting up the project in ATLAS. These documents are also not considered for monitoring purposes, except while consolidating results for the regional ROAR produced by the BRH.

It would be useful to translate the RRF into an annual workplan (AWP) of activities for better prioritisation, planning and focus. This would improve reporting and attribution, as the COs and regional projects could synchronise the AWP with their own annual planning exercise. It is a manageable expectation for BRH staff to keep themselves apprised of the AWP, rather than what was referred to in one meeting as a “three-year-old document which may or may not even be valid for the current context and work.” The AWP exercise can also provide an opportunity of a review of the TOC and test the validity of its key assumptions.

Best practice in project design and M&E recommends that the TOC should be seen as a living document, with periodic reassessment of issues, pathways and assumptions in the light of changes in context or other disruptions (such as COVID-19). For a dynamic programme in a complex and varied region, a mechanism for regularly reviewing and recalibrating the TOC should be part of the programme implementation and M&E structure. Organisationally, the regional programme coordination function and the RBM function at the regional hub should jointly take responsibility for annual work planning against the RRF, and periodic review and revision of the TOC.

### Project review

Five projects were selected for a desk review of documents related to project design, implementation and monitoring. Annual reports and other documents were also reviewed.<sup>152</sup> The findings of the desk review were supplemented with information gathered from semi-structured interviews with policy advisory and regional project teams, CO staff and key partners.<sup>153</sup> A survey was also circulated among key CO staff members for feedback on their requirements from and experience working with the regional office.<sup>154</sup>

### Brief introduction

This section provides a brief overview of the five projects selected for review.

#### Being LGBTI in Asia and the Pacific (BLIAP)

This project aims to promote inclusive development for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) people in Asia and the Pacific. It fosters collaboration between governments, civil society, regional institutions and other stakeholders to advance the social inclusion of LGBTI people. The project addresses the issues of inequality, violence and discrimination, and promotes universal access to health and social services. Its objectives are:

- Through community building and empowerment, to support LGBTI individuals to know their rights, and to have access to justice to report human rights violations and end impunity;
- Through community mobilisation and advocacy (with law makers, local governments, judiciary, and NHRIs), to ensure the development and enforcement of protective laws and policies (including anti-violence/anti-discrimination laws and policies);
- Through community mobilisation and engagement with key stakeholders (such as religious organizations, the private sector, law enforcement authorities, educational institutions), to address stigma and discrimination and end harmful practices that fuel human rights violations against LGBTI individuals in public and private settings, and to ensure LGBTI individuals have equal access to public services

The expected outcome is:

- Increased capacity of LGBTI organisations to effectively mobilise, advocate and contribute in policy dialogues and community empowerment activities.

---

<sup>152</sup> For a full list of documents and other sources consulted, see [Annex X](#).

<sup>153</sup> For a list of interviews conducted, see [Annex X](#).

<sup>154</sup> For details on the survey, see [Annex X](#).

#### BLIAP

Project duration: September 2014–December 2021

Countries of operation: Multiple countries across Asia, with intensive country-level engagement in China, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam

Donors: USAID, Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok, Faith in Love Foundation (Hong Kong), Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Outright International, Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation<sup>155</sup>

Budget: USD 6,200,000

#### Governance of Climate Change Finance for Gender Equality (GCCF)<sup>156</sup>

This project supports governments to implement budget reforms that enable the delivery of gender-responsive climate change related investments. It is currently in its second phase. The project has four outputs:

- Output 1: Budget processes increasingly formulate climate change related investments that are gender responsive and will have positive impacts on poverty and human rights.
- Output 2: Accountability for gender-responsive climate change related investments that have impacts on poverty and human rights is enhanced.
- Output 3: Regional institutions increasingly play a role in the integrated approach to gender-responsive climate change budgeting that have impacts on poverty and human rights.
- Output 4: International policy processes give increasing priority to strengthen domestic budget systems that enable delivery of gender-responsive climate change investments that have positive impacts on poverty and human rights.

#### GCCF

Project duration: March 2017–June 2022

Countries of operation: Bangladesh, Cambodia, Indonesia, Pacific (Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu), Thailand

Donors: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)

Budget: USD 12,252,296

#### Preventing Violent Extremism through Inclusive Development and the Promotion of Tolerance and Respect for Diversity (PVE)

This project aims to reduce vulnerability to violent extremism, reduce the danger of radicalisation and increase the resilience of local communities and societies as a whole to combat terrorist threats. It is linked to a UNDP global programme addressing the underlying factors that drive violent extremism through longer-term, inclusive and rights-based development. The project is implemented mainly by COs, while the role of the regional office is to create networks, commission research, host dialogues

---

<sup>155</sup> Not all donors are currently active: USAID (September 2014–30 March 2020), Embassy of Sweden in Bangkok (December 2014–December 2020), Faith in Love Foundation, Hong Kong (August 2017–December 2020), Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (March 2018–December 2018), Outright International (September 2018–December 2019), Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation (November 2019–December 2021)

<sup>156</sup> For the purposes of project results and effectiveness, results from both projects will be used. For the discussion on alignment and coherence, only the GCCF SIDA project will be referenced since there can be no revisions or adjustments in a closed project. The GCCF projects are also linked to SDG finance work under the AP-DEF/INNF initiatives. Where applicable, these will be referred to. However, the AP-DEF/INNF is not one of the projects selected for in-depth review.



and provide quality control ensuring a transnational analysis. In-country partners work with national institutions and civil society to address the root causes of violent extremism specific to the country context. Project outputs are:

- Output 1: Regional network of practitioners that conducts research, holds forums and develops policy recommendations for preventing violent extremism in Asia established.
- Output 2: National policies and programmes on violent extremism developed and implemented within a human rights and gender equality framework.
- Output 3: Strengthened capacities of communities to promote peace, tolerance and respect for diversity.

#### PVE

Project duration: August 2018–February 2020

Countries of operation: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand

Donor: EU

Budget: USD 3,994,201

#### Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN (FairBiz)

The project aims to increase transparency and reduce corruption in the public and private sectors in six countries (Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam). Its goal is to raise business standards and strengthen business integrity through a range of interventions directed at the public and private sectors separately, and through partnerships between the two sectors. The project structure consists of four ‘pillars’:

- Encourage partnerships between the public and private sectors, as well as civil society and development partners at the regional level, to implement and monitor integrity policies in ASEAN
- Improve transparency in government contracts and increase compliance with international procurement and trade standards
- Promote business integrity and sustainable practices for private companies and state-owned enterprises
- Strengthen anti-corruption strategies, policies and laws, and improve redress mechanisms for companies, investors and the broader public.

#### Fair Biz

Project duration: June 2018–September 2021

Countries of operation: Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Viet Nam and Myanmar will

Donors: FCDO

Budget: USD 7,309,714

#### Youth Co:Lab

Youth Co:Lab aims to empower young people in countries of the Asia-Pacific region and accelerate the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through youth leadership, social innovation and entrepreneurship. By developing skills, and catalysing and sustaining youth-led start-ups and social enterprises, it seeks to position young people front and centre in order to solve the region’s most pressing challenges. The project works with multiple stakeholders including governments, civil society and the private sector. It prioritises the following five outputs:

- Improved ecosystem on youth empowerment in Asia and the Pacific to achieve SDGs.
- Empowered youth (with focus on marginalised groups) avail opportunities for expanding their leadership and entrepreneurship capabilities.

- Enhanced learning and skills development programmes for youth entrepreneurship and leadership are designed and delivered through regional dialogues.
- Advocacy, research and knowledge exchange initiative informs new youth entrepreneurship initiatives.
- Innovative financing solutions are leveraged for youth entrepreneurship.

#### Youth Co:Lab

Project duration: January 2017–December 2021

Countries of operation: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Vanuatu, Viet Nam Donors: Citi Foundation, Baoshang Bank

Budget: USD 9,910,000

### Project design and theory of change

The five projects selected for review are producing meaningful results both at the country level and the regional level. All projects also demonstrate the leverage and network effects of regional positioning. **BLIAP** has managed to create spaces, networks and narratives for LGBTI people that was previously not considered doable, given social and cultural sensitivities and democratic space available for such issues in most countries in the Asia-Pacific region. **PVE** has demonstrated that it is possible, when not bound by national boundaries, to create alternative and authentic narratives on putting an end to violent extremism. There are similar results demonstrated for **GCCF**, which is now evolving into a climate change network, and for the **FairBiz** project where more countries in the region are opening up to membership with transparency organisations after witnessing national-level results in other countries. Youth Co:Lab too has worked on same strategy an Asia Pacific start up platform – Youth Co:Lab’s regional Springboard programme being a prime example.

In all five projects, a closer alignment with the RPD RRF would have helped to establish a more coherent results chain from the regional programme to individual regional projects. Currently, the link to RPD outputs and outcomes is due to the broad nature of the RPD RRF and not necessarily part of a results chain.

#### External coherence and consistency

**BLIAP.** This is a good example of a project that has refined its theory of change over a period of time.<sup>157</sup> Alignment with the regional TOC and RRF have improved after this fine-tuning. The project TOC and RF map onto two outcomes and two outputs in the RPD RRF, namely Outcome 1, Output 1.5, Outcome 2 and Output 2.3. The project outcomes focus on the areas of voice and advocacy, legal change and accountability, specifically through NHRIs, reducing stigma and supporting inclusion, which map on to other outputs in the RPD RRF and so could be included there.

Project activities also map well onto some regional TOC enablers, and have done particularly well on multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships. The project has engaged 1,300 organisations, including 176 in the private sector, through its multi-stakeholder platforms and partnerships.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, the project is responsive to two cross-cutting themes of the RPD, namely, gender and human rights.

**GCCF.** The project has a coherent theory of change and results framework, both of which map well onto the RPD TOC and RRF at the outcome level. There is no specific RRF output that aligns with the GCCF project. The project document refers to an output from the previous RPD (Output 4.2B, on strengthened governance of climate change finance at regional, national and local level).<sup>159</sup> In the current RRF, GCCF contributes to Output 1.6 within Outcome 1.

The project maps well onto some of the enablers in the regional TOC, specifically thought leadership, multi-stakeholder platforms and South-South Technical Cooperation (SSTC). Discussions with the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)<sup>160</sup> team highlighted that the Climate Public Expenditure Institutional Review (CPEIR) methodology was a demonstration of thought leadership in the area of understanding climate public finance and served as proof of concept, which spurred the long-term relationship with UNDP. During interviews with CO staff, peer learning between country offices

<sup>157</sup> Being LGBTI in Asia and the Pacific, Project Update 9 July 2020.

<sup>158</sup> Being LGBTI in Asia and the Pacific, Project Update 9 July 2020.

<sup>159</sup> UNDP 2017 Project Document, Strengthening the Governance of Climate Change Finance to Enhance Gender Equality.

<sup>160</sup> Formerly the UK Department of International Development (DFID).

was repeatedly highlighted, with specific examples of learning from Pakistan and Nepal on budgetary frameworks and expenditure tracking.

**PVE.** The project TOC and RF are linked to RPD Outcome 2, Output 2.3, Outcome 3 and Output 3.1. RPD Output 2.3 and Output 3.1 are measured against an institutional (NHRIs) and a policy (National Action Plan) metric, respectively. The project has done extensive work on creating an a body of knowledge on conflict dynamics at the national level and creating virtual spaces for alternative narratives through the Extreme Lives initiative (in partnership with YouTube and Facebook). As such, the current metrics for PVE within the RPD do not fully capture the knowledge, innovative partnerships and alternate narratives created.

Project activities focus on the development of regional platforms and networks, enhancing the policy space through development of National Action Plans, and improvement in social cohesion by strengthening capacities of civil society. The project theory of change speaks to the RPD theory of change where Issue Area 8 (Increasing political extremism) and Issue Area 16 (Lack of voice of marginalised groups in political decision-making) are addressed, primarily through the RPD pathway of 'Strengthening effective, accountable and inclusive governance', as specified in the RPD TOC. A second RPD TOC pathway, 'Strengthening gender equality', is also incorporated into the project design, however from a results point of view this is still somewhat aspirational.

Key RPD TOC enablers reflected in the work of the project are multi-stakeholder platforms and working with sub-regional bodies such as ASEAN. In interviews conducted for the MTR, the EU acknowledged the successful demonstration of the network effect through the PVE project, where COs were linked with regional networks. Specifically, the 'Extreme Lives' initiative and YouTube partnerships required regional coordination beyond any one country and would not have been possible at the country level alone.

**FairBiz.** The project TOC is well aligned with the RPD TOC and RRF at the outcome level. The presentation of the project TOC is more process oriented.

This is a good example of a project that has done its due diligence in terms of mapping the initiative onto the RPD Outcome 2, which is reflected both in the project TOC and RF. However, there is limited scope within the outputs for alignment with project outcomes and results. RPD Output 2.2 is perhaps most closely mapped onto the project (see Box 1). But a closer look at the indicators for Output 2.2 shows that Indicator 2.1.1, which is about anticorruption policies and laws, is the only indicator that is directly relevant to Output 4 of the project.

**Box 1: RPD output and indicators mapped for FairBiz Project**

Output 2.2. National, local and urban governance institutions are transparent and accountable for equitable access to services (tools, best practice) (Strategic Plan 2.2)

Indicator 2.2.1: Number of countries supported to develop or update preventive anti-corruption policies, plans or strategies

Indicator 2.2.2.: No of countries that establish open and innovative service delivery mechanisms

Indicator 2.2.3 No of sub-national and local governments supported to enhance transparency and accountability for improved service delivery/SDGs

The project also maps well onto some enablers of the regional TOC, specifically multi-stakeholder platforms, partnerships (with the private sector) and some emerging results in South South and Technical Cooperation (SSTC) Interviews with internal and external stakeholders highlighted the utility of the Integrity Hub, established by the project, as a portal for sharing learning and best practices related to business integrity.

**Youth Co:Lab.** The project TOC and RF are mapped on to the RPD RRF Outcome 2 and Output 2.3. There is only one indicator for Output 2.3 which measures work on youth, pertaining youth policy. While linked to the RPD at the output level, the project is only partially aligned since the important work by the project on youth start-ups and financing, SDG solutions from youth led initiatives, outreach to marginalised youth, capacity building on leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship, and networking and partnership is not seamlessly woven into a results chain from Output 2.3 of the RPD, measured by Output Indicator 2.3.1 using policy as a metric.

Youth Co:Lab maps well onto some regional TOC enablers, specifically partnerships (with the private sector), working as one UN, financing, innovation and venturing into SSTC.

Internal coherence and consistency

**BLIAP.** The project document for Phase 2 builds well on the knowledge and lessons learned from Phase 1. It locates LGBTI rights within human rights and to some extent contextualises these issues to the Asia-Pacific region. Project activities have achieved stated goals, having helped to create space, craft narratives and provide platforms to connect the LGBTI community across the region. The BLIAP project RRF is from 2017. A new project would entail a new RRF.

Project outputs are appropriately realistic within the lifetime of the project.

**GCCF.** The project document identifies needs and solutions well, geographically and thematically, including an assessment of gender equality in the Asia-Pacific region. Needs are located within the public finance management (PFM) space nationally, regionally and globally with a clear and detailed interface with regional and international organisations, partners and instruments, foregrounded by the Paris Agenda and nationally determined contributions (NDCs) within the broader framework of Agenda 2030. The interface with UNFCCC, UN Women, actors in ASEAN, partners on budgetary transparency and others is clearly articulated in terms of roles and expected results. Within the output narratives, identified needs are further linked to specific outputs and the causal connections from need to result is articulated.

Of all the TOCs reviewed, the GCCF project's TOC provides the most clear articulation of problems and change pathways, and clearly identifies the desired change within the TOC schematic. The assumptions underlying the TOC are also laid out. As the project is contextualised and located within the PFM space, the assumptions align well as they speak to readiness, capacity and behaviour change. It is reasonable to consider readiness, capacity and behaviour change as causal link assumptions for an intervention focused on systems, processes and policies.

Perhaps the most important strategic alignment action that the project has taken to manage its results in a coherent manner is to introduce country-level TOCs aligned with the overall TOC for the regional project.

The GCCF RF has 4 outputs, 13 output indicators and 29 activity-level indicators. Although activities are not evenly distributed within the RF, the total number of activities for a multi-country, multi-year project appears to be quite manageable. As mentioned above, the desired change identified in the TOC is well captured in the RF. Therefore, in annual progress reviews with the donors, both the RF and TOC are discussed for progress reporting and activity planning.

Project outputs are appropriately realistic within the lifetime of the project.

**PVE.** The project design applies the construct of 'grievance' as a causal factor contributing to violent extremism, which is reflected in the project TOC. However, the TOC appears to suggest that the project design targets and addresses grievances through voice and accountability mechanisms, which is not the case. The RRF is much clearer on what the project is actually doing (promoting social cohesion) compared to what the TOC suggests it is doing (grievance redressal). To address this dissonance, the project design and TOC should be amended to situate the approach more firmly around building social cohesion. Project outputs in Phase 1 were appropriate but not linked to the project TOC too well.

The project design for Phase 2 combines innovation, data platforms and digital narrative development to address challenges such as hate speech and disinformation.<sup>161</sup> The project is well poised to generate evidence and has demonstrated the ability to mobilise based on the evidence, which speaks to a cohesive and relevant TOC.

Progress reports include country-level context and activity detail, suggesting that the research-based activity structure contributes to a greater degree and quality of local context in project operations. The quarterly progress reports do not provide evidence to support the validity of the assumptions presented in the RRF, which should be addressed in subsequent phases of reporting.

The regional office plays an important role here in collectivising the common elements, coordination, and partnership development.

The project RF measures 11 indicators across three outputs. Indicators specific to RRF outputs are situated in Output 1 (Indicators 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3) and Output 3 (Indicator 3.1). There is a missed opportunity in the failure to capture the results of the role played by the regional office, as the indicators do not sufficiently record the impact of partnerships and cross-country dialogue and learning.

The activity structure at the country level (e.g., Indonesia) applies core project objectives within the country context. While there is, understandably, variation across countries, the overall success of country-level adaptation is high. There is also cross-learning between countries and demand for cross-learning that the BRH is well-positioned to facilitate. The project aligns well with government priorities, and there is an opportunity to reflect regional partnerships (a RPD TOC enabler) better in the results framework.

**FairBiz.** The project document covers the Asia-Pacific context within the parameters of anticorruption, transparent public procurement and business integrity. It would have been more useful if the narrative had also taken into consideration the ASEAN-level context. An output narrative has been included for each of the four outputs, which provide a rationale for the various outputs and activities. Needs are not identified specifically in relation to women and youth. The TOC identifies women and youth as two specific groups benefiting from integrity measures.

The project TOC does not set out clearly defined levels of change (starting with problem identification and linking it to outputs and outcomes). The revised TOC appears to be defining a process (nature of intervention) and then linking it to outputs and outcomes. The TOC starts with outputs and outcomes, without explicit articulation of the desired change, levels of change or

---

<sup>161</sup> In conversations with the current technology/social media partners, they were not able to confirm continuing the partnership in Phase 2.

causal link assumptions. The TOC in the project document does identify problems and articulates risks to some extent. It remains unclear why the problem identification and risk articulation was not refined and made part of the revised TOC.

Targets for each of the outputs are not ambitious enough. This is evident from project progress reports which show that all targets have been overshoot.

The project has 4 outputs and 11 output indicators. Targets in the RRF are quite low against each output. For example, in Output 2, for two indicators (women's participation in participatory procurement processes, and countries carrying out procurement risk assessment) the target by the end of the third year is 1. This is also borne out in the quarterly progress report where the project reports overshooting its targets.

This may dilute effectiveness, given the regional level result, which will need a critical mass. Going forward, the project may want to reconsider and use its experience to build on the momentum it has achieved so far.

**Youth Co:Lab.** The project document is detailed and locates the project thematically within a global framework and a regional context. Overall, the project appears to be more conceptually elaborate than contextually grounded. The main assertions within the project strategy are to provide alternative forms of employment and social inclusion, and to 'leave no one behind'. The project theory of change and RRF respond to the needs identified by the project.

Project outputs are coherent, and Output 1 on incubation is linked to Output 5 on a partnership mechanism for resource mobilisation. Similarly, the other three outputs on research, forums and dialogues are tied together thematically. These themes are leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship, which are at the core of the project.

Regional RRF outputs are part of the solution pathways in the TOC of the Youth Co:Lab project. Project outputs are reasonable but the metrics for measuring the outputs are not appropriate.

The project has 4 outputs and 17 key results. The RRF for this project is different from the RRF structure used by other projects. The Youth Co:Lab RRF does not have indicators, although some results are expressed as indicators and targets. As such, the relationship between outputs, results and indicators is not very strong, specifically with the first 3 outputs where there is also some overlap in the metrics used. Overall, the project RF is not built using innovation metrics. Although there are some indicators for entrepreneurship, metrics for leadership are vague.

A review of project results shows that it collects results that are outside the indicators in the project RRF. For example, the result from innovative financing efforts, as reported, is USD 1.3 million raised for youth enterprises.<sup>162</sup> But the indicators for the output on innovative financing are 'Partnerships mechanism developed in order to strengthen youth empowerment initiatives' (Indicator 5.1) and 'A Youth Start-up Incubator scheme established to support youth entrepreneurs, with special focus given to young women and marginalised youth' (Indicator 5.2). Revising Indicator 5.1 to add co-founding partners and adding an additional indicator on expected resource mobilisation would help strengthen the output metrics.

In discussions with the project team it was shared that work on streamlining outputs, outcomes and indicators is ongoing, with an embedded project RF being developed where the detailed problem identification in the TOC is reflected in the RF. In the embedded RF, partner resources (in kind or in cash) will be used as an indicator for partnerships to promote youth entrepreneurship. This effort should continue to tighten the embedded RF further.

## Reporting and monitoring

For an organisation like UNDP, the emphasis on reporting, monitoring, attribution and results should not be merely from a compliance perspective. Rather, the emphasis of reporting and monitoring should be from a learning perspective. Development practitioners and M&E professionals know that this emphasis has to be kept in mind at every stage of the programme development process, starting from design (hence the detailed discussion on the regional TOC and RRF above), identifying ways to collect evidence and track attribution, and finally documenting knowledge creation and learning. This process is strengthened by developing a well-conceptualised TOC that is properly aligned with the RRF, which can help identify what works, what works well, what does not work and what may even do harm. This is what organisational learning aims to achieve with improved TOCs, sharper RRFs, and meaningful results. For an organisation that prioritises and values learning, it is important to (a) delink monitoring and evaluation from compliance, (b) integrate monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems, and (c) invest resource (human and capital) in MEL systems.

Currently, regional projects appear to be performing well and reporting adequately, but there is no standardised reporting template. Reporting from regional projects seems to be aligned to the requirements of individual donors. There is a need to standardise templates for reporting from COs for regional project activities. These templates should be aligned to the regional project TOC and RF as well as the regional programme TOC and RRF. In practical terms, this does not need to create a new or additional reporting burden on COs, but is more a matter of streamlining reporting from COs to regional projects in a manner that clearly demonstrates the strategic alignment between CO results, regional projects results and regional programme results.

---

<sup>162</sup> Youth Co:Lab 2019/2020 Report: A movement to meet a moment.

It would be more useful to develop reporting templates which are aligned to regional projects and the regional programme. Some training and orientation for the relevant CO staff would be needed to better familiarise them with the regional programme document and the regional programme TOC. This can have the additional benefit of ensuring that reporting of CO results will be better aligned to regional strategic documents.

As noted above, investment will be required in M&E systems geared towards learning. Without such an investment, whatever learning in terms of what works, what does not implicit learning. It is required to make some upfront investment to make this learning, explicit, regular and accessible across the organisation through learning sessions and learning products by the MEL team.

While standardisation is important, it is also important to learn from good practices for reporting already being employed by various projects, such as process case studies (Youth Co:Lab), TOC-based case studies (FairBiz, see Box 2), and ROAR-specific reports (GCCF).

Process case studies are currently developed at the country level. A clear articulation of regional public good would enable a project to prepare case studies at the regional level that explain the often long-term or slow-moving processes through which influence and access are employed to bring about change.<sup>163</sup> Legal and policy change in particular are long-drawn-out processes, with results often not achieved over the life of a single project. Especially in such cases, developing timelines that track these processes, covering multiple project cycles (as the case may be) and highlighting stumbling blocks or favourable conditions, can provide invaluable knowledge for understanding and replicating processes of change. Often the push comes from a former contact or friend of UNDP being in a position to influence the process; this hard to measure but important to document. It is worth noting that documenting these processes can also help to refine and fine-tune project TOCs.

TOC-based case studies, meanwhile, are an effective way to ensure that where TOC assumptions fail, the TOC is revised. They can also be used to document pathways that may not directly translate into RRF outputs and indicators but are an important part of the project strategy.

In addition, it is important to review the effectiveness of the ROAR as the standard for capturing BRH results, as discussed elsewhere in this report. If the ROAR is better aligned with the TOC, RRF and other regional strategic and programme documents, such a template will help in overall strategic alignment.

Finally, it is understood that regional projects provide space for innovation and experimentation, which is something that private-sector partners want to see more of from UNDP.<sup>164</sup> Reporting on innovation within projects using metrics specifically designed to measure the success of such efforts (e.g., proof of concept, scale, impact, new partners, support for ecosystem actors, etc.) would help sharpen the focus of project activities, allow for course correction if necessary, and create a body of knowledge for others to build on or replicate.

The RPD TOC is not framed in terms of desired changes or levels of change. All five projects reviewed for the MTR have one or more elements or activities, or part of their implementation strategy or toolkit, that are among the enablers mentioned in the RPD

A theory of change is not reported on consistently by all projects. In at least two projects, however, revisions were made to the TOC in view of changes in context: BLIAP and FairBiz. GCCF annual reporting to the donor builds from the TOC into outputs and progress against outputs. The FairBiz annual evaluation report under the prosperity fund is case study-based, and uses the TOC to build the analytical case for results (see Box 2).

**Box 2: FairBiz TOC-based case study<sup>165</sup>**

Change pathway: public-private partnerships

UNDP has a 'responsible partnership agreement' with CoST, a non-governmental organisation. The CoST intervention in Thailand is aimed at supporting the Government of Thailand in improving transparency in government contracts in line with international procurement and trade standards, and thereby empowering communities to better monitor projects. The intended impact of CoST is the delivery of better and cost-efficient infrastructure that can bring inclusive economic growth and better lives to people.

Causal assumption

<sup>163</sup> See <https://www.itad.com/article/measuring-political-access-influence-fragile-conflict-affected-settings/>

<sup>164</sup> In interviews with Intel and Google teams, it was noted that UNDP is "too careful" with national governments. While this was understood to give UNDP an advantage in certain areas, it was also noted that space needs to be created for innovation, as "everything cannot be strictly process oriented" (source: interviews with partners).

<sup>165</sup> Adapted from ASEAN Economic Reform Programme Evaluation Report: Cycle 2 June 2020. Projects can introduce TOC-based case studies in their progress reports.

Partnerships between governments and the private sector are instrumental in removing barriers to economic and social growth, and create a virtuous cycle of shared prosperity.<sup>166</sup>

#### Key results

In 2019, the Government of Thailand embedded the CoST Infrastructure Transparency Data Standard (CoST IDS) by enacting a procurement regulation into the revised 2016 public procurement law. It is fully invested in the project objectives and has demonstrated this by funding a portion of CoST activities and increasing the number of compliant projects.

Over 400 new infrastructure projects are now disclosing procurement data.<sup>167</sup> To date, 408 stakeholders have been engaged in procurement monitoring of infrastructure projects (80% female and 20% male).<sup>168</sup>

As mentioned above, GCCF has developed country-level theories of change which are aligned for reporting. Country-level reporting is against the components, outputs or activities for which a particular country office is responsible. Progress from COs is reported to the regional project as part of progress reports. COs are accountable to the regional project for the financial contribution from the regional project into their projects. The chart of account links those activities, outputs or components to the regional project and BRH within ATLAS. There is a clear attribution and trail of finances to activities in the CO from its ATLAS report that bifurcates as per source of funds.<sup>169</sup> Progress against regional ROAR is collated and reported by the regional project staff at BRH.

In the wake of the COVID crisis, it is important to introduce measures to make the leap from tracking inputs to tracking outputs. It is important to capture results in a manner where the impact on people is visible, be it the green Sukuk in Indonesia or social protection work in Bangladesh. This is important especially where UNDP has provided advice and input for government stimulus and relief packages. In the case of GCCF, for example, it is difficult to measure its full impact because within the RPD it is placed in the outcome relating to eradication of all forms of poverty, whereas the outputs are only very indirectly linked to the outcome.

RPD outcomes are building on the strength of working with national partnerships. What the 5 projects reviewed for the MTR have demonstrated is that they can leverage the regional presence very well. The RPD was not able to articulate the significance of the regional interface. Following from that, projects are not explicitly attributing results to the regional programme TOC. While some projects do a comparatively better job in providing an aligned context for such attribution, however articulation of the attribution is missing. ROAR is not structured to seek reporting on the programme TOC and only reports on the results framework.

#### **Positioning of regional projects**

From a review of the five projects selected for the MTR, it is clear that regional projects are better able to navigate local political sensitivities. Often, by identifying a common issue or phenomenon, it is destigmatised. In the case of projects like BLIAP and PVE, for example, a regional approach has allowed issues to be tackled that might not been more difficult to include in national or country-specific initiatives. In the Youth Co:Lab project, meanwhile, regional thinking helped frame the intervention as a 'movement' across 25 countries, making the project more attractive to global-focused donors. In other projects, a cascade effect of activities could be observed.

A variety of stakeholders, project partners and donors have noted the important role of regional projects in creating networks, which in the case of UNDP is strengthened further through the interface with and support of the BRH (see Box 3). In discussions with the project teams and senior management at BRH, it was clear that they too recognise this comparative advantage and leverage it strategically to achieve results and mobilise resources. Discussions with donors for the five selected projects also confirm that a multi-county approach is attractive to donors.

#### **Box 3: Comparative advantage and partnerships<sup>170</sup>**

UNDP, as the lead development agency in the UN system, has a long-standing experience with managing large-scale projects that involve a wide range of partners. UNDP has a unique architecture at the global, regional and country levels, which makes it the partner of choice for implementing a large-scale Project for Southeast Asia, with:

<sup>166</sup> UNDP Regional Project on Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN, 2018–21, Work Plan for Thailand, UNDP, 2018.

<sup>167</sup> Evaluation Report Case Study –ER 2-UNDP CoST Thailand.

<sup>168</sup> Evaluation Report Case Study –ER 2-UNDP CoST Thailand.

<sup>169</sup> One such ATLAS report is the enhanced RBM.

<sup>170</sup> Extract from Project Document, Regional Project for Promoting a Fair Business Environment in ASEAN, section on Comparative Advantage and Partnerships.

A regional centre, the Bangkok Regional Hub, to provide the overall coordination and management of the Project, facilitate knowledge management, mobilise relevant international/regional experts, and provide backstopping expertise. UNDP Bangkok Regional Hub has a track record in successfully supporting anti-corruption and procurement reforms in the Asia-Pacific region, including in partnership with the UK FCO, as well as other partners such as DFAT Australia and the United States Department of State. In addition, the Project will benefit from existing initiatives in related areas such as the Business and Human Rights project as well as the UNDP Responsible Business Forum.

Country offices in Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, for daily implementation support of the Project.

Specialised UNDP centres that will be closely involved in the Project: UNDP Istanbul International Center for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD), UNDP's Procurement Centre in Denmark that runs jointly with UK's CIPS the Procurement Certification Project, as well as the UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence in Singapore (GCPSE).

UNDP is uniquely positioned to facilitate meaningful dialogue and engagement among governments, private sector and civil society at the country levels. In addition, UNDP has strong and long-standing partnerships at the regional and global levels with key actors such as the ADB, ASEAN Secretariat, ASEAN CSR Network, OECD, Transparency International, UNCITRAL, UNODC, the UN Global Compact, WTO and the World Bank. This broad network of partners will be critical to continue the successful implementation of the Project in and beyond the Asia-Pacific region.

Regional projects have been able to secure the involvement of industry bodies and sector-specific entities such as the Asia-Pacific Forum of NHRIs (BLIAP), the The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative previously Construction Sector Transparency Initiative or CoST (FairBiz), International Budget Partnerships (GCCF) and the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Youth Co:Lab), which have created synergies to achieve project results. These partnerships can be built upon in the future to develop more strategic and high-impact interventions at the regional level. Regional projects have been able to provide regional platforms for governments and industry partners to cooperate for enhanced public-private engagement.

There are some questions that BRH needs to articulate and address for the work under regional projects. The MTR engaged with the 'why regional projects' question by framing the question from a CO perspective. Discussions with CO teams and other partners, including UN partners, yielded positive responses on the value added by a regional approach for results both at the country level and the regional level. The critical question is whether those results can be achieved without the vehicle of the regional project.

The five projects selected for review all deal with transnational issues and activities that are not restricted to national borders: human rights (BLIAP), climate change (GCCF), business and commerce (FairBiz) and commerce (youth entrepreneurship), and violent extremism (PVE). The subjects of climate change, business integrity & anti-corruption, and violent extremism in particular are not just within the domain of national governments. Climate change is a transnational issue, solutions for which lie beyond the scope of national governments.

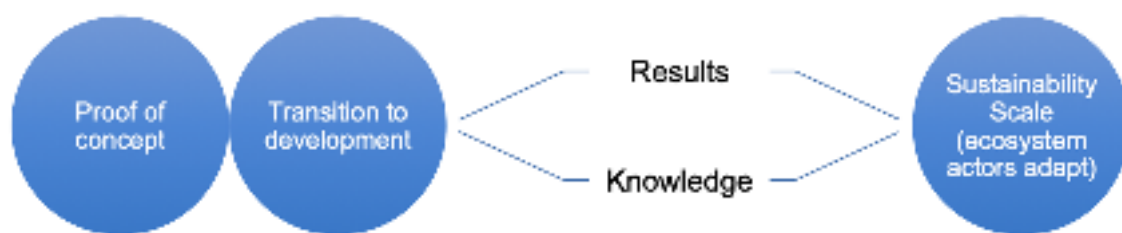
Climate change is a transnational issue, solutions for which lie beyond the scope of national governments. The same can be said for violent extremism. Indeed, the RPD itself recognises climate change and violent extremism as transboundary issues. Meanwhile, in today's globalised economy, businesses (including start-ups and social enterprises once they begin to achieve scale) require bilateral or regional agreements on supply chains and access to markets.

Figure 5: Stages of scaling<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>171</sup> Similar scales are also used by Bill Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID (Development Innovation Ventures), UNICEF (office of innovation), Grand Challenges Canada and others. Adapted from Insights into measuring the impact of innovation, the International Innovation in Development Alliance (IIDA) 2017





Innovation does not happen overnight. It is a process that involves multiple stages from developing and testing an idea to eventually being widely adopted (see Figure 2). Regional projects provide the space to experiment with solutions to key development challenges in the region, which can be introduced as proofs of concept (e.g., CPEIR), transition to the development stage (e.g., GCCF phase 1) and then be implemented at scale (GCCF phase 2 and CFN). While this review does not include that project, it is worth noting that streamlining management of climate finance work enabled synergies with the AP-DEF, which allowed work in this area to move towards sustainable scale with multiple actors becoming involved. However, since both the INFF and CFN are yet to mature, it may be premature to make a call on the direction. Within the hub, SDG and climate financing have stood out as a balance of complimenting BRH advisory and regional project. This coherence appears to be a major contributor to their ability to achieve scale at the level of ecosystem actors in the area of public finance.

Similarly, for PVE, with its innovation related to messaging, proof of concept (social cohesion through building digital narratives) transitioned to the development stage, attracting two big tech partners, Facebook and YouTube. The project has yet to achieve scale, but a model has been developed that can be scaled up and replicated elsewhere.

BLIAP entered an arena with limited democratic space for discussion of LGBTI rights and issues. The project demonstrated proof of concept by brokering a regional association on LGBTI rights, transitioned into development with private-sector partnerships and expanded civil society space for LGBTI groups, and started to achieve significant scale with more than 1,300 organisational partnerships.

It is important to consider scale both in terms of results (numbers) and knowledge creation. Knowledge creation and application allows for replication in a multi-county or regional context.

Spaces and opportunities for innovation by regional projects are also created as the policy advisory and knowledge production side of the BRH is constantly finding new ways of looking at development needs and agendas. Regional projects provide the vehicle to operationalise some of these perspectives and generate practical know-how, results and products that are competitive at a regional and global level.

Two good examples of such new ways of looking at the development agenda are the focus on youth as a development constituency and the anti-corruption work in the regional portfolio. Engaging with youth as a development constituency rather than viewing unemployed youth as a problem has led to capitalising on their proclivity for disruption to create opportunities for innovation, leadership and entrepreneurship. The impact of these disruptive social enterprises on SDG acceleration, a goal the project sets itself, is yet to be ascertained. With USD 1.3 million dispersed to Youth Co:Lab enterprises so far, the project has demonstrated proof of concept.

Anti-corruption is a longstanding development agenda within governance programming. FairBiz, one of the newer projects among the five projects selected for deeper drive review,, pivoted the problem to tackle it at the interface of public-private interaction (public procurements) and directly with business (business integrity), alongside work on anti-corruption laws and policies. While the project has overshot its targets in most quarters, it has yet to achieve the crucial proof of concept, and had to adjust some of its work in view of the ASEAN CSR network not being able to come on board as a partner, as was originally envisaged.

### Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the five projects selected for review has been assessed in terms of the achievement of outputs, along with the views of key stakeholders. The findings below are not intended to assess each and every activity undertaken by the five projects to date. The purpose of this section is to support the review of the overall approach, with selected results highlighted, leading to lessons learned and recommendations for the future.

**BLIAP.** The project has played an important role in influencing policy and laws through direct capacity building support to government departments and policymakers, and by bringing its strategic advantage and approach into partnerships with civil society and other types of organisations that have similar, or overlapping, objectives. Often through requests from national governments, the project has contributed to the development of 24 laws and policies across eight countries, supporting or improving gender-responsiveness of legal systems, legal gender recognition, anti-discrimination and civil partnerships. The

success of these efforts was made possible through a partnership approach involving building long-term relationships with key government and civil society stakeholders, other UN organisations, and medical and legal experts.

BLIAP has completed six multi-country research initiatives on LGBTI inclusion covering 19 countries, as well as national-level studies. In order to ensure national ownership of the data, and to encourage active use of the findings, research efforts are carried out in partnership with LGBTI civil society groups, relevant government entities, academia and other partners, weaving the development of partnership platforms and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder dialogue into planning and implementation of the research, review of draft reports and dissemination of the findings. Pairing national consultants with regional and international experts to conduct research helps build capacity at the national level. Wide dissemination and use of the evidence is facilitated through publication of the research in both English and national languages wherever possible. These contributions were also highlighted by the UN Independent Expert on SOGI in their June 2019 report to the Human Rights Council.

**GCCF.** The project supported the Ministry of Finance in Indonesia to develop a framework for the selection of eligible green projects for the issuance of a Green Sukuk in 2018, which generated USD 1.25 billion. UNDP under the SDF has also assisted the Directorate of Budget Financing and Risk Management (DJPPR) of the Ministry of Finance in developing a campaign toolkit for the green sukuk. Many countries in the region face a financing gap in investment in climate change and have expressed interest in learning from Indonesia's experience.

The project has also provided climate finance data to the UNFCCC Standing Committee on Finance (SCF), which will publish the 2018 Biennial Assessment and Overview of Climate Finance Flows, which presents estimates of global climate finance flows (public and private).

**PVE.** The project has produced nationally contextualised research on the dynamics of violent extremism in four South-East Asian countries. In discussions with the EU as well as the COs that are part of the PVE project, it was acknowledged that this research was considered to be insightful and a valuable contribution to the understanding of conflict dynamics in the region by stakeholders and partners, including government counterparts.

The digital narratives of alternate discourse on violent extremism were highly effective in terms of youth outreach. The 'Extreme Lives' initiative has emerged as something of a signature product for the project and was presented as one of 100 innovate ideas for peace at the Paris Peace Forum, achieving high-level visibility for the project.

The project partnered with YouTube to develop alternative narratives on extremism by artists and creative people. 'YouTube Creators for Change' is a global initiative that spotlights inspirational creators who use YouTube to foster productive conversations around tough issues and make a positive impact. These content creators receive mentorship and promotional support, and make films that tackle a wide range of topics from self-acceptance and showing kindness to others, to celebrating cultures and advocating for global empathy. UNDP and the European Union are YouTube partners supporting this initiative in the Asia region.<sup>172</sup>

**FairBiz.** The Private Sector Advisory Group (PSAG), with its 10 business representatives, is an excellent example of business engagement, although today somewhat underused.<sup>173</sup> A Fair Business Environment Lab was conducted to develop innovative solutions for business integrity, with mentorship and support by the PSAG. The project spearheaded and supported changes in procurement laws in Thailand, with new regulations for the public procurement law issued in 2019.

Under the project, five regional platforms have been established (judicial integrity platform, public procurement platform, business integrity and governance community of practice, diversity and inclusion platform, youth entrepreneurship platform). More than 200 companies in Vietnam received training modules on codes of conduct and internal control systems. Also in Viet Nam, the project has worked on developing a set of standards to promote and enable business integrity practices. Impact investors will be able to use their Responsible Business Practice (RBP) checklist to assess the business integrity standards and practices of potential new business ventures.

In partnership with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), the project developed the Business Integrity Pledge for Business Associations to promote business integrity and compliance with the law.

In Malaysia, a government guidebook has been developed for ministries and government agencies to produce their own anti-corruption plans.

Moreover, a key product, one of the most downloaded tools produced by UNDP BRH is the Business integrity Toolkit for Young Entrepreneurs. This has been requested by a variety of countries, including non FairBiz countries in the region.

---

<sup>172</sup> Source: <https://www.asia-pacific.undp.org/content/rbap/en/home/programmes-and-initiatives/creators-for-change.html>.

<sup>173</sup> Strategy Report: Promoting a fair business environment in ASEAN Jan 2020.

**Youth Co:Lab.** Over a period of just four years, this project has gone from pilot stage to becoming a movement, with 190 Youth Co:Lab Alliance members to date.<sup>174</sup> The project has launched or accelerated more than 650 youth-led social enterprises across 25 countries in Asia and the Pacific.

The project demonstrates the effectiveness of a ‘blended financing’ and ‘impact financing’ approach, with USD 29.1 million raised for Youth Co:Lab from the government and private sector, and USD 1.3 million raised for Youth Co:Lab startups in the Springboard programme.

A major success of the project is the diverse partnerships it has created across UN agencies and in the private sector, and the integration of their work across all GPN areas in BRH. The project ethos of leading from behind is reported during various interviews,<sup>175</sup> and partners appreciate the project’s willingness to share space with collaborators.

The project’s work in the area of innovative financing (Output 5) has led to interaction with the ecosystem of actors and entities in the impact financing space, ranging from venture capitalists and angel investors to foundations, corporations and governments, charting a new course toward creating a collaborative financing model for youth-led social enterprises.

Private-sector partners report that the project shares some of the same challenges that face entrepreneurship generally, involving outreach to the grassroots levels to hunt for talent and mentoring youth to become entrepreneurs. As one private-sector partner noted, “Youth Co:Lab has to move out of the cities into real villages. The dynamics of entrepreneurship and financing are very different there. We are a big tech company, we can work with those who can reach the national incubators, we can also create national incubators for the governments. We need UNDP to add value to the space that none of the ecosystem actors of innovation and impact financing will reach and to which UNDP already has outreach.”<sup>176</sup>

### Efficiency

None of the projects under review have an explicitly defined value proposition. For all projects, however, the implicit value proposition is their ability to use more or less the same amount of funds as a country office project and show results across multiple countries. This was also noted by donors as offering a good value for money (VFM).<sup>177</sup> Other than the GCCF project, there was no easily accessible identification of the main cost drivers or expenditure tracking. GCCF project documents provide a clear articulation of cost drivers, including savings at the activity and output level.

Overall, with the exception of FairBiz, which for a short period was awarded amber in the efficiency assessment (see Box 4), it is fair to say that given the satisfactory effectiveness on the multifaceted goals of the projects, efficiency was also satisfactory. In interviews and consultations with various stakeholders during the information gathering phase of the MTR, donors were asked a direct question about VFM, and nearly all reported that they were satisfied. The only exception to the satisfactory response was in the case of the FairBiz project, where the donor was of the opinion that efficiency both in terms of more ambitious targets and utilisation of funds could be further improved.<sup>178</sup>

The discussion in this section is not based on a VFM analysis. Conceptualising VFM, developing indicators for economy, effectiveness and efficiency relative to spend, and performing calculations for each of the five projects under review is beyond the scope of this report. Moreover, VFM definitions for each project are aligned to donor requirements in each case and vary accordingly, so a simple comparison is not possible. Some observations on the efficiency of the five projects under review are presented in Box 4.

#### Box 4: Efficiency at a glance

Some observations on the efficiency of the five projects under review are presented below.

##### BLIAP

During the MTR period (2018-20), the BLIAP project has built on its previous work to achieve significant gains, particularly with respect to legislative reform in India and Pakistan. Since the project has been working with limited funds during the period covered in this MTR, it may be argued that this constitutes an efficient use of resources. However, it is acknowledged that these wins were built on earlier investments of the project.

##### GCCF

GCCF has reported regularly on unit cost reduction for cost efficiency and savings. In 2018-19 the project was able to use its saving to cover for exchange rate losses. This was made possible due to attention to cost effectiveness.

##### PVE

<sup>174</sup> Discussions with Youth Co:Lab project staff.

<sup>175</sup> Interviews with UN Asia Pacific working group on youth, other UN partners.

<sup>176</sup> Interview with Co:Lab private sector partner.

<sup>177</sup> Discussions with DFID (GCCF), the EU (PVE) and SIDA (BLIAP, GCCF) clearly brought out this aspect.

<sup>178</sup> Donor meeting, FairBiz, 03 September 2020.

At the CO level, there is a fairly even distribution of funds across project outputs. However, it may be necessary to allocate funds according to the contribution of different outputs to the overall value proposition of the project. Efficiency is not necessarily ensured by an even distribution of funds. The project introduced certain efficiency measures that were also acknowledged by the donor. These include a portfolio management system, using COs for project delivery, and joint operations with partners to reduce costs. Overall, the donor communicated satisfaction with efficiency and VFM of the project.

#### Fair Biz

Broadly speaking, the project has remained under the efficiency tolerance levels of 10% variation, which is considered a good project management practice.<sup>179</sup> However the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic affected the project's implementation and delivery significantly in the first quarter of 2020 (last quarter of Year 2) and in its quarterly report assessed financial performance as amber (A), which indicates the forecast to budget variance had increased to 15%. In the following quarter the project regained its G rating.

#### Youth Co:Lab

The MTR reviewed several budget revisions and other documents, which provide granular detail on project allocations and spending. No un-programmed funds are reported. The point to be celebrated is that Youth Co:Lab has offset project spending by already generating USD 1.3 million for youth startups and USD 29.1 million raised from governments and the private sector

### Cross-cutting themes: gender, human rights

All five projects address aspects of gender and human rights. **BLIAP** is de facto a human rights project, working to protect and enhance the rights of LGBTI people in the Asia-Pacific region through a combination of voice, advocacy and inclusive narrative creation. Although the entry point for BLIAP is health, it has gone on to support and facilitate legal and policy changes in many countries. **GCCF** is a gender and human rights-focused intervention, creating mechanisms for public financing to respond to climate change, poverty, gender and human rights. **PVE**, with its work on national action plans, is in a position to undertake advocacy with governments on the inclusion of women and human rights concerns. **FairBiz** works to promote diversity and inclusion by: promoting gender mainstreaming across CoST projects in Thailand and Indonesia; promoting women's inclusion in business leadership positions; advocating for gender equality as a key element of good corporate governance; building capacities of women-led companies on business integrity, transparency and anti-corruption. **Youth Co:Lab** is based on the principle of inclusion, seeking to leave no one behind. While this inclusive approach comes across in individual stories shared, it does not come across in terms of project reporting as a whole.<sup>180</sup>

### Sustainability

Across the globe, COVID-19 has exacerbated existing social, economic and political fissures, further eroding already weakened state structures and social safety nets in many regions, and making it all the more difficult to reach those who are most in need. There is growing recognition that in the post-COVID era, sustainability has to take into account resilience.<sup>181</sup> UNDP in its Offer 2.0 strategy document also acknowledges the need for recovery through resilient social protection, resilient institutions and resilient green jobs.<sup>182</sup> For UNDP regional projects, too, it is important to recalibrate its approach to the sustainability of initiatives and investments.

**BLIAP** has achieved significant success in developing partnerships and platforms for LGBTI rights in many countries in the region. It remains to be seen whether the investment by UNDP was enough to withstand the COVID shock, which has led to the increased alienation of excluded and marginalised groups across the globe, including in the Asia-Pacific region.

**GCCF**, together with SDG financing, is pivoting vital processes for resource allocation to be gender, human rights and climate friendly. The project is already planning for sustainability by working to establish a regional Climate Finance Network (CFN) and a regional SDG financing network.

**PVE** has moved into Phase 2, following a project evaluation earlier this year that took into account issues of sustainability. It is too soon at this stage to make an assessment of sustainability of Phase 2, which launched in May 2020.

---

<sup>179</sup> As per PRINCE 2 financial tolerance. PRINCE 2 is project management method used around the world, including by UNDP as well as the UK government.

<sup>180</sup> Reporting can be improved by disaggregating results around different categories of inclusion, including gender. For example, with USD 1.3 million raised for startups, this amount can be shown in terms of the proportion going to startups and enterprises owned by women, religious or ethnic minority groups, and LGBTI people.

<sup>181</sup> World Economic Forum 2020 Investor Leadership: Retooling for a resilient future.

<sup>182</sup> UNDP 2020 Beyond Recovery: Towards 2030.

**FairBiz** has not been in operation long enough for most of its gains to be sustainable after the life of the project. The business integrity output was clearly designed to achieve a regional public good. However, it had to review the planned activities since the initially planned partnership with ASEAN CSR Network was not finalized. The project is still working and building partnerships with key actors to promote business integrity and sustainable business practices. While best practices like the regional integrity hub are noted by the MTR, the project needs to build deeper roots and wider connections, which will require more time.

**Youth Co:Lab** can only be as sustainable as the social enterprises it helps get off the ground. In other words, if the startups it has identified and supported go on to become thriving businesses, the project will have been sustainable in a broader sense. In the startups ecosystem, too, there is growing acknowledgement of the need to balance innovation and resilience.<sup>183</sup> Going forward, Youth Co:Lab will need to recalibrate its focus to create a better balance between innovation (the ‘unicorn’) and resilience (the ‘camel’) in its portfolio. Another way in which this initiative can have a sustainable impact is to deepen engagement with policy frameworks at the country level, as well as regionally.

#### Changing context: COVID-19

Public health experts and political commentators alike have criticised the lack of a coherent global response to the COVID-19 crisis, noting that world leaders have failed to arrive at a consensus or common understanding that the pandemic cannot be tackled on a country-by-country basis alone.<sup>184</sup> Nearly a year into the crisis, this criticism continues, pointing to the lack of global leadership that has prolonged the pandemic, and noting that national-level responses have had vastly varying results.<sup>185</sup>

Current concerns are around the lack of coordination to ensure vaccine delivery, as and when they become available, as well as ‘building back better’. For UNDP, the concern is also about the relevance and perceived ineffectiveness of multilateralism as a strategic response to global crises.

While all projects have adjusted to accommodate the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, most of this adaptation has taken place in terms of implementation strategies and adjusting activities (see Box 5). None of the five projects under review has revised its TOC to account for the pandemic. Regional projects should consider revisiting their respective TOCs to assess whether the desired changes, change pathways and assumption continue to remain valid in the wake of this major disruption. This issue also highlights the need for a centralised dedicated RBM and M&E function to service all projects.

#### Box 5: Regional Projects COVID response—at a glance

Some highlights of project activities in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis are discussed below, to illustrate the quick response of various projects. This information is not intended to assess each and every COVID-related activity undertaken by the five projects.

##### BLIAP

The project worked through its partners and platforms to gather information on the health and socioeconomic needs of LGBTI people. One challenge was the lack of digital connectivity among many LGBTI people in the region.<sup>186</sup> The project also collaborated with the Interagency Task Team on Young Key Populations, using the latter’s broader network to collect information on the impacts of COVID-19.

##### GCCF

The team in the region (SDG and climate finance) came together to help country offices in conducting a climate analysis of COVID relief packages and applying a COVID-specific lens to budgets.

##### PVE

The project helped national governments with the analysis of COVID-related discriminatory campaigns and hate speech targeted at specific groups, in order to take remedial actions to curb the spread and dilute its effects.

##### FairBiz

In response to the COVID crisis, the project organised and produced 5 webinars between May and June 2020 on issues of transparency, accountability, integrity and gender equality.

##### Youth Co:Lab

<sup>183</sup> <https://hbr.org/2020/10/startups-its-time-to-think-like-camels-not-unicorns>

<sup>184</sup> Devex, April 2020 (<https://www.devex.com/news/a-scattered-mess-global-coronavirus-response-lacks-leadership-experts-say-97135>).

<sup>185</sup> Director General World Health Organization, October 2020 (<https://www.ft.com/content/972b3194-45fc-4635-bb42-39ac9f3d1616>).

<sup>186</sup> This issue was mentioned in the meeting with partner CSOs.

The project conducted a survey of young entrepreneurs to understand the dynamics of the COVID-19 impact on youth, socially excluded youth and youth entrepreneurs.<sup>187</sup> The project also mapped policy responses to COVID-19 across Asia-Pacific, specifically related to small businesses to support advocacy and policy solutions. At national and regional levels the project is directly supporting youth-led social enterprises and startups who are implementing innovative solutions to enable their communities to respond to and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.<sup>188</sup>

Unlike a natural disaster, such as a tsunami or an earthquake, the COVID-19 pandemic is not a discrete event. Rather, it is an ongoing crisis with a long 'tail' that brings in its wake multiple challenges. While the global impact of the pandemic will be felt for many years to come, and the challenges will require major global efforts to address, the crisis has also created opportunities for UNDP that need to be recognised.

As an unprecedented disruptor, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed structural inequalities across the board, which can be seen in health inequities, the lack of inclusive social policy, a largely unequal business and employment market, and an exacerbation of digital and other inequalities. UNDP RBAP has itself recognised the need to reconceptualise the current growth model, the weaknesses of which have been laid bare by the COVID crisis. In its programme document for 2018-21, developed before the pandemic began, it notes: "The growth model that propelled the rise of the region's economic powerhouses is now the cause of current development challenges. Unsustainable production, consumption, and management patterns have serious cross-border consequences."<sup>189</sup>

This moment of global crisis can be a powerful opportunity for UNDP positioning in the region in terms of engaging and supporting countries and promoting regional public good proactively. UNDP's Offer 2.0 is a useful analytical lens through which to explore these opportunities. There is an important role for regional projects in this regard, in line with solutions and pathways set out in UNDP Offer 2.0, which may have been less welcome in a business as usual scenario.

## Lessons learned

### 1. The importance of a regional and collaborative team approach

- An approach that brings together regional projects and BRH advisory services helps achieve better results with respect to uptake of policy advice, and allows innovation to flourish in regional projects with results being taken to scale.
- The SDG finance and climate finance advisory and project teams have integrated teams most effectively. This has resulted in effective cross-fertilisation in SDG financing (AP-DEF, INFF) and climate finance (GCCF), and these efforts seem poised to have greater impact with the involvement of more ecosystem actors, although the initiative is not quite there yet.
- The positive effect of this collaborative approach is clear from discussions with CO teams. The collegial atmosphere could be seen even in a video conference call. Experience was shared of peer learning across COs, which was considered an important aspect of being part of the SDG and climate finance team.
- Experience sharing across the two initiatives within countries takes place to a lesser extent, as suggested by discussions at the CO level. This can be a possible area for greater synergising.

### 2. Alignment of the TOC and RF is important to improve evidence and results reporting

- In project design, coherence between the TOC and RF is critically important to create a logical results chain that can clarify and improve attribution of results.
- It is equally important that the TOC is seen to be a living document that is reviewed and fine-tuned periodically, in order to remain relevant as a guiding strategy to achieve the desired change.

---

<sup>187</sup> <https://www.youthcolab.org/post/young-entrepreneurs-explain-how-covid-19-is-affecting-their-businesses>

<sup>188</sup> <https://www.youthcolab.org/covid-19-response>

<sup>189</sup> UNDP 2017, Regional programme document for Asia and the Pacific (2018-2021).

### 3. Prioritising learning in M&E increases understanding of project impacts and improves results

- For organisational growth, it is important to delink M&E from the compliance function completely, and to understand and manage RBM and M&E as a learning function.
- The TOC-based case study developed by the FairBiz project serves as a good example to understand the process of legal reform in an important area of work. For reporting too, such TOC-based case studies will work well as regular checks for the validity of TOC assumptions.
- The TOC-based case studies of FairBiz, together with the process- and model-based case studies of Youth Co:Lab show that it is possible to capture UNDP's comparative advantage with evidence. A good example of capturing processes was also done by GCCF by using timelines. However, this is just a start and this type of reporting can be developed into a more systematic template, capturing and providing evidence for key lessons and results, specifically in the areas of access and influence.

### 4. Longer-term engagement is needed for impact at scale

- As can be seen from the experience of both BLIAP and GCCF, going from proof of concept into development is a process that requires sustained engagement with ecosystem actors over a longer period.
- Documenting processes also contributes to learning, which should be the key driver for monitoring and evaluation. GCCF is a project that has tracked and documented this process, allowing these methods of engagement to be replicated in other countries in the region.
- Meanwhile, FairBiz in its 2 years of engagement has helped introduce and get Philippines interested in the work of their partner, CoST, in the area of public infrastructure transparency. However, CoST is a membership based organisation and governments have to come on board as members. The gestation period from interest to actual engagement may be longer than the estimated endline for the project (September 2021).

### 5. Do not ignore the grassroots

- UNDP partners and stakeholders for the five projects selected for review appreciate and value its outreach and engagement at the grassroots. As UNDP transforms into an organisation ready to provide innovative and sustainable solutions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, engaging with the private sector, conceptualising the future of work and attracting impact financing, it is important for UNDP to not lose focus on its main constituency, marginalised communities and people. This is important in and of itself, but also allows initiatives to be more effective and responsive to identified needs.
- In BLIAP, for example, legal and policy changes were made possible because the project created a downstream voice mechanism and platforms to amplify and collectivise the voice of the LGBTI communities. In GCCF, upstream changes in budget allocations and expenditure tracking work alongside the voice element of the citizen's climate budget. With PVE, the TOC itself is based on voice and accountability, and regional-level engagement is now being carried out through UNOCT, alongside capturing voices through the 'Extreme Lives' initiative and YouTube content creators to bring grassroots voices into the mainstream.
- With a project like Youth Co:Lab, meanwhile, its ability to fill a major gap in the innovation ecosystem has been limited by the fact that it has not targeted more innovators from low-income groups and rural areas, and has failed to focus on low-tech, low-cost innovations. In other words, by not expanding its outreach to the grassroots, it has missed the opportunity to occupy a niche not usually targeted by largely urban-based incubators and accelerators.

## 6. Building networks and working with partners is essential

- The regional approach would gain momentum and achieve greater impact working directly with regional platforms like ASEAN, the Pacific Island Forum (PIF) and SAARC.
- There was not enough formal engagement with regional bodies. Regional projects provide a viable platform to increasing such engagement.
- The FairBiz project not being able to engage with the ASEAN CSR network seems to be a lost opportunity. As it was a partnership brokered through the donor, they expressed their disappointment that the partnership did not come to fruition. They did however appreciate the due diligence processes of UNDP whereby the ASEAN CSR network could not come on board after the necessary micro-assessment. The FairBiz project has done well to develop a strategy for business integrity whereby it will collectivise learning and tools in a regional Integrity Hub.
- Linkages with the ASEAN business council should also be explored by projects like FairBiz and Youth Co:Lab.
- Collaboration with UNOCT in the PVE project Phase 2 strengthens engagement with regional PVE agenda and may open up further avenues for engagement with ASEAN formal structures.

## 7. Improve curation of social enterprises and innovation financing

- With respect to innovative financing, engagement in the impact finance space needs to be curated for responsiveness to micro-enterprise needs of innovation at the grassroots level across Asia and the Pacific.
- The impact finance space is currently tuned to certain audience, which includes youth from urban areas able to access conferences for their sales pitch. Outreach to more diverse innovators and social entrepreneurs is needed.
- It is important to better understand the range of investments in the impact financing space. Discussion with private sector partners of the Youth Co:Lab show that currently the lower ranges of investment are in the area of USD 30,000–50,000, which may be far greater than the need of grassroots innovators with simpler, low-tech or low-cost solutions.

### **Recommendations**

- Management arrangements are required to enhance MEL. It is recommended that the BRH invest resources in an MEL function within the BRH, that brings together the regional programme coordination function and results-based management function of the regional programme, including regional project results and coordination.
- If the BRH decides to go with a standardised TOC and RRF approach to designing projects, which seems to be the default for all five projects reviewed, then it might be useful to develop standardised guidance on the TOC which underscores minimum criteria on elements for inclusion, with guidance as well on identifying desired change, levels of change, change pathways and causal pathways or causal assumptions, to allow projects to more clearly think through their activities at the strategic level. Most importantly, guidance is required on linking the project TOC with the project RRF in an effective and coherent manner. Online tutorials and sessions on TOC development and integration with the RRF could be introduced for project staff.
- Guidance on TOCs for regional projects could include a set of guiding questions, leading to the thinking through of the desired change and how to achieve it, innovation based. This will help better translate the vision of regional projects around experimental space for development solutions (working with the unusual suspects as ecosystem actors, disrupting business as usual, reframing the problem as a solution, etc.).
- Ideally, project TOCs should be derived from and build upon knowledge of the local or regional context and subject matter, and this should be made explicit in the project TOCs, which would also increase the strategic relevance and effectiveness of interventions.



- The COVID-19 pandemic is just one example of the rapidity and severity with which the operating environment of a project can change. It is not enough to make superficial adjustments to outputs and activities in the face of such dramatic and long-lasting changes. Regular review and revision, as required, of the TOC should be a part of M&E process, making the project more relevant and effective.
- For regional RRF indicators, there should be a balance between innovation-specific metrics and standardised metrics. In line with the innovation aspect of regional projects, while designing the RRF for some indicators the stage of innovation should be taken into account, and metrics for scale and impact should be integrated into the project as well as programme RRF.
- The access and influence contribution by UNDP is not clearly articulated although it is considered a comparative advantage. A small number of case studies based on innovation, on TOCs and on processes would be a useful way to start this process.
- Going forward, Youth Co:Lab needs to curate its portfolio more carefully to ensure that the youth movement it aims to propel does not remain limited to urban, educated and connected young people. Similarly, FairBiz should develop public outreach to create pressure for reform in support of its policy work on transparency and business integrity.

## **Annex 2: MTR TORs**

### **1) BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The Regional Programme for Asia and the Pacific was approved by the Executive Board First regular session 2018, along with the other 4 UNDP Regional Programmes. The RBAP Regional Programme Document (RPD) 2018-2021 captures the multi-faceted nature of the work that is carried out in Asia and the Pacific region, combining mostly inter-country cooperation and the provision of policy and programme advisory services to support the implementation of country programmes in the region. Closely aligned to UNDP Strategic Plan (2018-2021) and its six Signature Solutions, the RPD focuses on implementation of strategic regional projects and initiatives which add value to development results achieved by UNDP Country Programmes in the region and foster relevant complementarity with the Global Programme.

In its decision adopting the Strategic Plan, the Executive Board requested UNDP to present a mid-term review of the RPD. The purpose of this MTR is to measure and assess results and progress against the Asia-Pacific 2018-2021 Regional Programme outcomes. Overall, the MTR will assess progress against the RPD results for 2018 until June 2020, extract lessons learned, and propose corrective actions and recommendations which will inform the Regional Programme activities and budgets during 2021 and beyond.

The regional programme has 3 main outcomes: Outcome 1. Advance poverty eradication in all its forms and dimensions, Outcome 2: Accelerate structural transformations for sustainable development and Outcome 3: Strengthen resilience to shocks and crisis. The financial resources for the RPD for a four-year period are estimated at \$ 110.14m. The core allocation to the regional programme is around 5 million every year, with the expenditure in the first two years of implementation reaching \$ 39.2m. Annually, there are about 17 Regional Projects with the annual portfolio of average \$20 Million contributing to the regional programme, most of them implemented from Bangkok Regional Hub.

Many longstanding development challenges persist in Asia and the Pacific region and the 2030 Agenda provides an overarching framework for analysing and addressing them. In addition, along with the challenges identified in the IWP and/or ROAR, the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic is the defining global health crisis of our time and every country needs to act immediately to prepare, respond, and recover. UNDP supports countries through each stage, with a focus on the most vulnerable.

UNDP's capacity to support countries in the COVID-19 response is in line with its integrator role and its ability to work closely with UN Country Teams and Resident Coordinators on the ground. UNDP and the UN Development System (UNDS) are ideally placed to bridge gaps between the 'global' and 'local' levels, in effect seizing opportunities for tailoring and integrating solutions for countries in Asia-Pacific and helping them achieve the SDGs. The key stakeholders of the regional programme are regional initiatives within the RPD, UNDP Country Offices and implementing partners including other entities within UNDS.

In line with the Mid Term Review of the SP, which includes an assessment of results achieved, cost-effectiveness, comparative advantages and progress made in achieving the vision of the strategic plan; RBAP also aims to conduct a performance assessment of its Regional Programme for 2018-2021 through a MTR. The MTR follows the Regional Programme Document for Asia and the Pacific 2018-2021, and its evaluation plan for the four-year period. This MTR will cover the implementation of the RPD during the period of January 2018 to June 2020. While there are results available until end of 2019 (ROAR), the first half of 2020 can be assessed in view of the responsiveness and agility to a changing context.

The MTR will inform the RPD Advisory Board, Bureau senior management and stakeholders on the status of the regional programme, provide lessons learned and some key findings and recommendations to inform the way forward during the remaining period of the current RPD, focusing particularly on the impact of COVID-19 and how UNDP and the Regional Programme should re-align itself to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the programme results.

### **2) OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND SCOPE OF WORK**

#### **MTR Purpose, Scope and Objectives**

##### **Purpose**

The MTR will support accountability and facilitate learning. It is expected to inform the management and stakeholders of the status of the Regional Programme, allow for adjustments especially due to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic to UNDP programming regionally and in country offices during the remaining programme period, and inform the Regional Programme activities and budgets for remaining months of 2020 and 2021. The evaluation will also take a look into at least one project under each of the 3 thematic outcomes against the evaluation criteria given below.

UNDP has adopted a results-based management approach in its monitoring and evaluation. The Regional Programme establishes clear and measurable indicators of achievement at both the output and outcome levels (please see the Results and Resource Framework in Annex 1).

##### **Scope and objectives**

The proposed MTR will assess progress against the RPD results from January 2018 – June 2020 and propose corrective actions and recommendations (especially in the context of COVID-19) which will inform the Regional Programme activities and budgets during 2020-2021 and beyond.

**The MTR shall:**

- Review the RPD's cumulative development results achieved at the regional level from January 2018 to June 2020, through the implementation of the regional projects and initiatives, both in Asia and the Pacific, and specifically through the implementation of the umbrella Regional Projects, highlighting progress, value add to the CO development results using the regionality principles, drivers of success, main gaps, and recommending mid-course adjustments.
- Review at least three regional projects – two from Asia and one from the Pacific as case studies to investigate in greater depth and provide the evidence needed to showcase results which contribute to the delivery of the RPD/SP Outcomes – and with the intent of contributing to the overall MTR final product.
- Review relevance and effectiveness of the policy advisory services provided in support of the implementation of country/regional programmes in the region. In this regard, review the theory of change and identify the development effectiveness component delivered through support to COs in the achievement of planned development results at the country level.
- Review and clearly identify results of the RPD's multi-faceted nature of the work that is carried out at the regional level supported through global funds and other sources of funding from RBAP. This should include review of the effectiveness and relevance of knowledge products supported by the RPD.
- Assess whether the RPD outcomes are likely to be met by its end period or what are the additional resources and partnerships needed.
- Assess the changes in the programming context, including impacts of COVID-19 pandemic, and review and relevantly update the RPD situational analysis to reflect current situation, context and emerging regional issues in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Examine the extent to which the programme has integrated, fostered and promoted cross-cutting approaches to development by implementing the regional Signature Solutions.
- Review relevance and effectiveness of the policy advisory services provided in support of the implementation of regional programmes in the region. In this regard, review the theory of change and identify the development effectiveness component delivered through support to COs in the achievement of planned development results at the country level.
- Provision of a "way forward" for the RPD that includes both short (during the remaining period of the current RPD) and medium-term recommendations, which inform the programme management about necessary mid-term adjustments and outline corrective actions and which outline future priorities and positioning of the next RPD and beyond given the evolving external and internal UNDP regional development context and the regional level work for the new SDG agenda.

**Scope:**

The MTR should cover the Asia and the Pacific region and provide an initial assessment of the contributions of UNDP to the development results in the areas set out in the RBAP RPD (2018- 2021) and provide recommendations based on an assessment of changes and context specific issues at the regional and sub-regional levels.

Further, the MTR should cover and be informed by areas or issues of special focus for RBAP such as the evolving regional development context, innovations, digital inequalities and how the mainstreaming of the 2030 sustainable development agenda and the SDGs can be a powerful opportunity for UNDP positioning in the region in terms of engaging and supporting countries proactively.

The MTR should assess the extent to which RPD has incorporated UNDP's commitment to rights-based approach and gender-mainstreaming perspective.

**Structure and Content**

RPD MTR will be undertaken and structured around a common set of questions and resultant recommendations aligned with the MTR objective and scope as listed below:

**Relevance:**

- How has UNDP's operating environment shifted in the region since the adoption of the SP (2018-2021) and the RPD? What strategic opportunities and risks are emerging as a result, especially in the context of COVID-19 pandemic? (Update the RPD situation analysis)
- Context analysis and an understanding of how the partnership environment is evolving based on both UNDP and non-UNDP sources of information, and how can the RPD benefit from this?
- Have the gender analysis and human-rights based approach been integrated in the RPD and to what extent appropriate measures have been taken to fully consider and address the different needs of vulnerable groups as identified by RPD?

**Programme Effectiveness:**

- To what extent is the RPD on track to achieve the expected development results at the regional level, mainly guided by the regionality principles, what are the gaps left to achieve UNDP's targets in the region and is the pace good enough to do so?
- What has been the value add of the RPD supported advisory services and products for the achievement of country level development results and development effectiveness;
- What has been the RPD's contributions towards supporting UNDP's role in the Regional undg and engagement with regional bodies?
- What are the underlying causes of underperformance and key drivers of success?
- Where does the RPD and the Regional Projects stand vis-a-vis the corporate quality standards?
- What improvements could be made for improving Regional Program formulation and monitoring in the future? Should the present RPD RRF be revised to reflect necessary updates and changes?

**Programme efficiency:**

- What resources have been used to achieve/produce the results?
- How can the regional projects and programme improve their value for money?
- To what extent have the monitoring systems provided the Regional Programme and its projects a stream of data that have allowed it to learn and adjust implementation accordingly?
- Has there been an effective partnership strategy to leverage resources and collaboration?
- Have resources been used in an efficient way to integrate human rights-based approach and gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring the RPD (e.g. participation of targeted stakeholders, collection of disaggregated data, etc.)?
- To what extent has the programme ensured efficient use of resources to employ a cross-cutting approach to development for achieving the SDGs?

**Sustainability:**

- How is the resource situation evolving with regard to the RPD budget outlay?
- To what extent has UNDP established mechanisms to ensure sustainability of the regional programme outcomes?
- To what extent do partnerships exist with other national institutions, NGOs, United Nations agencies, IFIs, the private sector and development partners to sustain the attained results? To what extent have partners committed to providing continuing support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.)?
- What changes should be made in the current set of regional projects and programme partnerships in order to promote sustainability

**Lessons learnt and recommendations:**

- What are the key thematic, operational and institutional lessons to be drawn?
- What are the main recommendations for 2020-2021 and beyond, including the positioning of the Regional Programme vis-a-vis the SDGs?

**Methodology**

The RPD MTR will be undertaken guided by the Purpose, Scope and Objectives and the Structure and Content outlined above. As this is a mid-term review, particular attention should be given to assessing the performance and contributions of the RPD and identifying possible challenges and issues that should be resolved to enhance the current programme performance. The MTR should also provide the basis for concrete and realistic recommendations for the way forward.

The MTR will adhere to the UNDP Evaluation Policy and undg Norms & Standards with its findings and judgements based on sound evidence and analysis, clearly documented in the review report. Information will be triangulated (i.e. verified from different sources) to the extent possible, and when verification is not possible, the single source will be mentioned. Analysis leading to evaluative judgements should always be clearly spelled out. The limitations of the methodological framework should also be spelled out in the review reports.

The MTR should employ a combination of both qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and instruments. The MTR will employ a participatory approach whereby interviews with key stakeholders will provide and verify the substance of the findings.

The following methodologies for data collection are expected to be applied during the MTR:

- Desk review of relevant literature and programme documentation (Results and Resource Framework, Annual Workplans, Audit Reports, Results-oriented Analysis Reports (ROARs), project evaluations, programme monitoring data, technical and financial monitoring reports, etc.)
- Semi-structured interviews with major stakeholders as agreed in inception report;
- Regular consultations with the regional programme management and regional project managers and staff
- Engagement with Country Office senior management or relevant staff for feedback;

In addition, any necessary methodologies for ensuring that the MTR addresses the RPD's multi-faceted nature of work, changes in programming context and needs of vulnerable groups as identified by the RPD

The final methodological approach including interview schedule, and data to be used in the evaluation will be clearly outlined in the inception report and be fully discussed and agreed between UNDP, stakeholders and the evaluator.

#### **Data Sources and Tools**

A desk review of relevant documents including, but not limited to:

- RBAP RPD (2018-2021), Strategic Plan (2018-2021); the Achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in AP umbrella Regional Project Document and the cumulative progress reporting for 2018 until June 2020.
- Selection of up to 3 Regional projects and regional initiatives which contribute to the RPD in Asia and the Pacific
- Annual workplans (IWPs), annual budget plans, progress reports for the RPD in 2018, 2019 and 2020, Mission reports for BRH Advisory Services on RPD related deliverables from Travel Request App. and other sources.
- ROARs, RPD related decentralized evaluations, evaluations and MTRs of regional projects, relevant external evaluations by donors and partners, etc.
- Progress reports and related documentation of selected regional projects contributing to the RPD results both in Asia and the Pacific, including knowledge products, websites, articles and other relevant reports.
- Annual Advisory Board meetings, Sub-Regional Programme in the Pacific Board meetings, and any other progress reports.
- Regional knowledge products and positioning papers, knowledge management and innovation initiatives supported by the RPD both through the umbrella Regional Project as well as others supported through Global Funds, Global TTFs, other sources of RBAP funding, etc.
- UNDP Structural review information and related documents pertaining to RBAP and the RPD.
- Other relevant non-UNDP sources of information which will in particular benefit and better inform context analysis and an understanding of how the partnership environment, resource mobilization opportunities, development priorities in the region evolving

#### **Semi-structured interviews**

The evaluator must consult with members of the RBAP Senior management, BRH Senior management and the GPN Team leads.

Additional Semi-structured interviews can be held over the phone or through virtual meetings with a sample of key informants, stakeholders and participants bearing relevance to the RPD, drawn from:

- Government stakeholders, including ministries participating in regional project PACs, Steering Committees; Advisory Board members
- Current and potential donors and other external partners, both UN and non-UN
- Selected RRs and DRRs and thematic focal points from countries with RPD related regional project interventions and receiving policy advisory services
- Selected Project Managers and Project Staff (at least in 3 projects) and Regional Programme staff Team
- In-depth interviews by the consultants with relevant staff in BRH, including GPN-AP, RBAP NY, BPPS and CB and other relevant HQ Bureaus, etc.

Undertake detailed case studies of at least three regional projects/initiatives (two from Asia and one from the Pacific) to selectively investigate some results and their value add in greater depth.

Consultations with and inputs from various stakeholders will be critical and will be sought virtually through relevant web-based surveys, virtual meetings, electronic exchanges, use of studies and reviews undertaken by other relevant stakeholders (donors, regional organizations, etc.)

#### **6) PROVISION OF MONITORING AND PROGRESS CONTROLS**

The over-all management of the RPD MTR process will be by the Programme Coordinator, under the guidance of the RBAP Deputy Regional Director (DRD) and Bangkok Regional Hub Manager and supported by the Regional RBM Specialist in BRH and the Strategic Planning Adviser at headquarters in New York.

A Reference Group comprising will be constituted and will include selected members from the GPN-AP Focal Points, the RRs and DRRs from selected country offices will provide advice and support and will be consulted for inputs and feedback on the MTR deliverables.

The MTR will be conducted by two individual consultants for a duration of 25 working days each as per the schedule given above. The consultants are expected to work in parallel as a team and the total duration of the task should not exceed 25 working days. The process is considered complete once the final report has been approved.

One mission to Bangkok will be carried out by the consultant (assuming the consultants are from outside Bangkok) at the beginning of the MTR for relevant briefings and meetings with BRH. If a consultant is hired from Bangkok they will be expected to undertake in-person meetings. If not, an engagement will be taken virtually. The consultant is expected to present drafts and final findings and recommendations to the Reference group and RBAP Senior Management.

The RPD MTR report preparation timeline will be from 1 July 2020 with the Final MTR Report submission to RBAP latest by 15 August 2020 including times for reviews and finalization of report.

### Annex 3: Evaluation Criteria and Questions

This section outlines the main criteria the MTR used to assess performance and includes reference to the main menu of interview questions. Questions were formulated around the core principles of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, lessons learned and recommendations. In addition, following consultation with the BRH issues critical to performance, including the ‘enablers’ referred to in the RPD and TOC, in particular, integration, innovation and development financing. The structure of questions followed the main sequence set out below:

1. **Relevance:** What strategic and relevant results to date has the regional project / BRH policy support contributed to the RPD (outcomes/outputs/indicators)?
2. **Relevance:** How does the regional project / BRH policy support fit and contribute to the RPD theory of change? (What is it seeking to change and how)
3. **Effectiveness:** What was the THOUGHT LEADERSHIP & VALUE ADDITION has been contributed by the regional project / policy support?
4. **Effectiveness:** What RESULTS achieved real and enduring IMPACT at SCALE.
5. **Effectiveness:** How has the regional project / BRH policy support managed to succeed in:
  - i) Integrating issues/inter-connectedness across the breadth of the 2030 Agenda / sdgs (examples)
  - ii) Innovating for success (examples)
6. **Efficiency:** Was there a cost to the CO of the regional project / BRH policy support?
  - i) In your opinion, did this represent value for money?
  - ii) Can the value for money proposition be improved, and if so, how?
7. **Efficiency:** To what extent was financing leveraged by the regional project / policy support maximized via a strategic and collaborative approach by BRH in an attempt to combine
  - i) RBAP core;
  - ii) CO financing;
  - iii) Gov’t funding;
  - iv) UN partner funding, and;
  - v) other sources of external funds to achieve greatest possible results, scale and impact?
8. **Partnerships:** To what extent do partnerships exist in the regional project / policy support? (with international / national Government institutions and bodies, NGOs, United Nations agencies, IFIs, the private sector and development partners).
  - i) Which partnerships have worked well/not well, and why?
9. **Sustainability:** To what extent has the host Government / partners committed to providing continuing / expanded support (financial, staff, aspirational, etc.) For expansion, scale up, or sustainability?
10. **Changing Circumstances (COVID-19):** What strategic opportunities and risks emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
  - i) How efficient and effective was the BRH in responding in a comprehensive and integrated manner?
11. **Gaps:** Comment on any gaps that exist in any part of the regional project or policy support.
12. **Lesson Learned:** In terms of the regional project, policy support or COVID-19 response, what has worked / not worked well (success/under-performance) and why?
13. Were there any other thematic, operational and institutional **lessons learned** from the regional project / BRH policy support?
14. **Recommendations:** Reflecting back over the past two and a half years, are there any recommendations for 2020-2021 and beyond?
15. **Relevance:** To what extent has a human rights-based approach and gender perspective been fully integrated into the design, implementation and monitoring the regional project / BRH policy support? (Give examples)

#### Annex 4: Findings from Survey Monkey

The responses from the survey monkey showed that COs approach advisory services (82%) as well as regional projects (55%) for policy advice<sup>190</sup>. The top 3 thematic areas (signature solutions) identified for advice during the period, Jan 2018-June 2020 were governance, gender and resilience. Among the cross-cutting areas, the top 3 areas for advice were RBM/M&E, Innovation and partnerships. The policy advice was used across different areas of work at the CO and in a majority of cases, it was project design, project implementation, policy dialogue with the government and capacity building for government counterparts. (see table)

Table 1 Use of BRH Policy Advice

| What was the policy advice used for?          |        |
|---|--------|
| Project design                                | 87.88% |
| Project implementation                        | 69.70% |
| Policy Dialogue with the government           | 57.58% |
| Capacity building for government counterparts | 48.48% |
| Piloting initiatives                          | 45.45% |
| SSC   | 6.06%  |
| Other <sup>191</sup>                          | 6.06%  |

Most respondent found the advice very helpful (60.61%) or helpful (36.36%) for achieving the purpose it was used for. On response time for policy advice, a majority (82%) received it in 1 week or less. Whereas 100% respondents reported seeking policy advice from BRH during January 2018-June 2020, 74% reported accessing/using a knowledge product. The range of knowledge products consulted is varied. The use of knowledge products is quite different in emphasis from the use of policy advice. (see table)

Table 2 Use of BRH knowledge products

| What were the knowledge products used for?           |        |
|--|--------|
| Policy Dialogue with the government                  | 39.39% |
| Capacity building for other counterparts (e.g. CSOs) | 21.21% |
| Project design                                       | 18.18% |
| Capacity building for government counterparts        | 12.12% |
| Project implementation                               | 9.09%  |

Among those who used them, COs found the knowledge products a majority found them very helpful (55%) and helpful (42%) in achieving the purpose the knowledge product was used for. In terms of usefulness and convenience, most formats were considered useful by COs. Short briefing notes and regional best practices were considered the most useful knowledge product.

COs (71%) had developed joint knowledge products for with the BRH. These included mostly work with regional projects (32%) followed by SDGs (10%), M&E(10%) and HDR (10%). The remaining two areas were drug pricing analysis and COVID 19.

---

<sup>190</sup> Response received from COs in Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, Philippines, Nepal, Vietnam, India, Malaysia, India, Cambodia, Laos PDR, China, Timor-Leste, Mongolia, Bangladesh and Pacific Office in Fiji

<sup>191</sup> Included Report Review (e.g ROAR) and Health



The survey also asked about COVID 19 response and COs found it helpful (52%) and very helpful (42%) When asked about which areas of support during COVID 19 were most relevant, support in rapid response financial sources concept notes, procurement, business and COVID 19 came up as some responses.

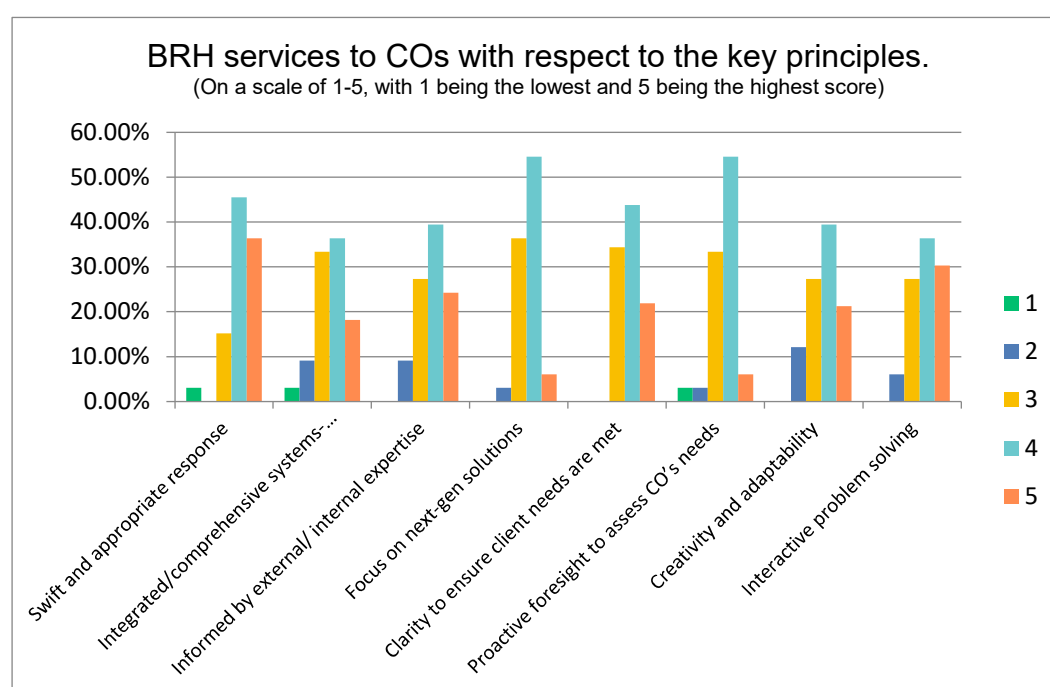
The work from leadership in the region to set the direction for engaging with the COs has yielded results. By and large, COs consider it facilitative in their work do not consider regional initiatives led. (see table)

**Table 3 Perceptions of Regional Initiatives among COs**

| How does the CO perceive regional initiatives, policy support and regional projects and/or funding?   |        |
|---|--------|
| Enablers of expanding CO programming and/or government engagement   | 84.38% |
| Guidance on new and innovative programing or initiatives  | 62.50% |
| An effective way of advocacy and implementing global based agenda's sometimes difficult to pursue in sensitive contexts. i.e. aspects of anti-corruption, human rights etc. | 43.75% |
| Complimentary/catalytic resources   | 40.63% |
| Driven externally with little or no ownership in CO   | 6.25%  |
| Other   | 6.25%  |

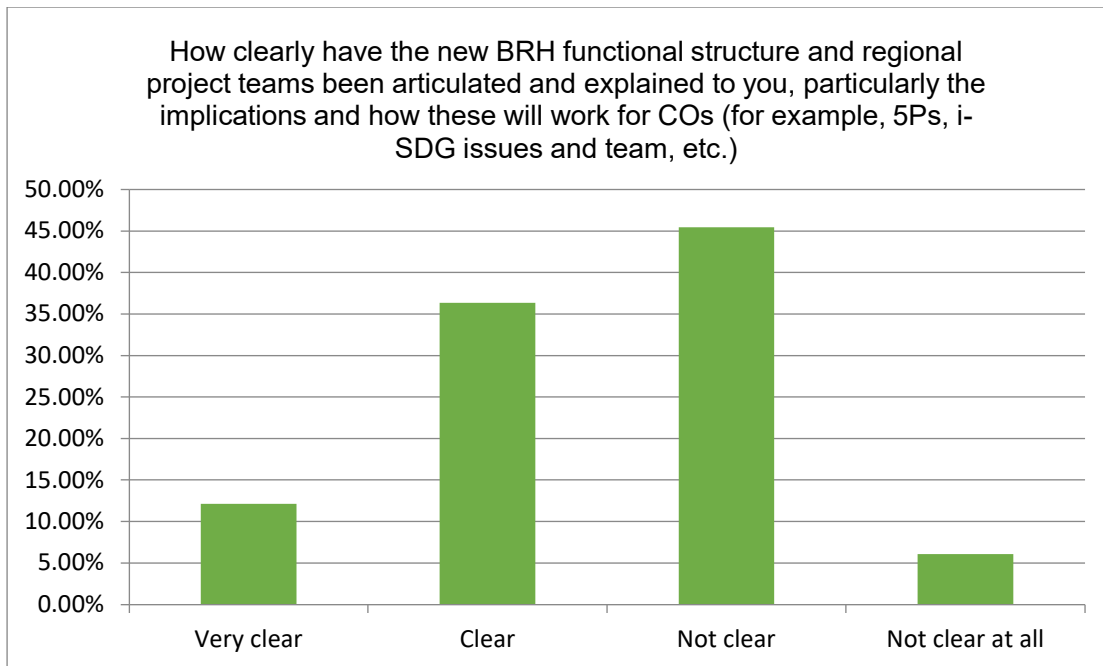
The survey questions had a section on BRH services and how they were ranked by COs. (see fig)

**Figure 6 Key Principles by Advisory Board for BRH Services**



With the recent changes, the COs do not consider that they are very clear on changing role, profiles and nomenclatures within the teams , work streams, portfolios and thematic areas. (see fig)

**Figure 7 Understanding of new BRH structure and portfolios**



## **Annex 5: Sensemaking – Insights from Vietnam and Indonesia**

### **Vietnam CO experience of sense-making:**

“For programming approaches the innovation centre has provided a sense-making, systems approach, exploring the interlinkages across the programme. This has challenged the way we programme. There is a capacity building element, attached to applying the systems approach i.e. not just viewing singular issues. We have tried to see the problems and recognise complexity and offer a portfolio of solutions. We have also combined with the Accelerator Labs teams in the form of matrix management. The BRH innovation team have not prescribed solutions to problems but asked our CO, how are you doing your work. The approach being taken is different – we are beginning to think differently. Our challenge is how we can bring innovation into rigid structures like GEF. We can begin to apply innovation on the ground, but it also needs to be agreed ‘at corporate’.

Now innovation is everyone’s business – we are doing a lot of innovative work, and if we do that together across teams, even better. The CO in Vietnam has since expanded the number of projects designed across teams (US\$ 12m). We have set aside US\$ 1.2m for innovative approaches. We are trying to internalize innovation.

In practical terms, our sense-making ran over three days with national partners. First to explore where they see UNDP can help. We looked at 40 projects through a common theme to identify the big issues. BRH innovation colleagues led the process with CO colleagues so that the process was well internalized. Everyone liked the approach. We followed it up with two further exercises ‘in-house’. We discussed what we wanted to focus on in innovation. In the end private sector engagement at the SME/micro businesses emerged as the priority theme – that’s now our entry point for a lot of our work (across, governance, transformation, gender, HRs, climate, DRR etc).

We now design across teams, with cross-unit teams – innovation, climate change and governance, for example. However, our back-office systems are ‘rigidly projectized’. Hence, one lesson we draw is that we are having to record progress and data outside of ATLAS – since our tools are outdated, so are our M&E frameworks. We now need regional innovation to look at the ecosystem of data management for results/M&E. Our online working tools are not the best. They need to grow with the integrated development solutions

### **Indonesia CO experience of sense-making:**

“We see a shift in the organisation, from ‘implementer’ to working on issues in a different way. We are moving away from coming up with projects for individual solutions, to a system approach. The sense-making exercises have helped us in this regard. There is inertia in the organisation – we know how to programme. We need i) thought leadership on ways of thinking and working, ii) how to work with existing or different partners in a new way to help find solutions. This requires different arrangements. The difficulty is mindset adjustment. There is an increased acceptance internally and externally to receiving advice, with increased receptivity since COVID.

Take the example of the Indonesia CPD. There are core principles for the CPD. The recognition and redefinition of innovation is not just in the exclusive domain of the innovative financing lab. Innovation is a shared commitment. For example, our poverty team said ‘we don’t have many projects on poverty’ – but when we looked again a lot of our livelihoods work is on poverty. Same for governance.

When we used the sense-making exercise, we began asking our questions in a different way, this challenged our problem and solution formulation. We learned that we had to engage ‘not-known’ actors. We have begun to see a change in thinking, mindsets and instruments. It was an integrated and whole of organisation approach. The BRH team were the driving force. We brought in pulse lab Jakarta, the data/digitalization colleagues and Koh on gender. There was a preparatory phase. Then we brought the entire office together for three days through a common theme and consulted on the big themes. We had follow-up reflections, and then an implementation phase – it is a continuous process. All the time we refer back to the sense-making – it’s a point of reference for all of us. We run this exercise periodically. The Governance unit did their own mini-sense-making. It is gradually permeating the whole of the organisation. This enabled us to design our CPD in an entirely different way.

“Sense-making led to our ‘Aha moment’. We already had innovative financing, including aspects of Islamic financing, philanthropy and the green souk. The sense-making enabled us to see the bigger picture – to see and navigate across the integrated financing landscape. To see the circular economy as a whole and to support the Government in crafting a strategy around that. We started with five sectors. Different, but inter-connected issues of ‘waste’, ‘pollution’ and ‘recycling’ emerged as priorities. This was generated from the sense-making exercise.

Our lessons learned include the role of BRH in establishing innovation lab – this was good, but the critical moment came when the BRH innovation team came and sat with the team and partners to establish innovative financing in Indonesia. CO deeply appreciate that. The financing lab was set up with the buy-in of the Gov’t and supported the SDG financing hub. Gov’t see the SDG financing lab as the main brain of their own operations (national ownership). The innovative financing lab engaged with various teams globally and regionally as a platform for different ideas to come to the CO. Provincial governments are now reaching out to UNDP for support.”

## Annex 6: List of Persons Interviewed

**BRH Staff and GPN-AP Team Leads:** Jaco Cilliers, Manager BRH; Christine Wellington Moore, SDG Integration Lead, Sutida Manaspiti SDGI; Patrick Haverman, Partnership Advisor; Cedric Monteiro, Regional Communication Specialist; Ruchi Mohanty, Private Sector Partnership Specialist BRH; Alexandru Oprunenco, Innovation Team Lead BRH; Nicholas Booth, Human Rights Policy Advisor; Francisco Santos-Jara Padron, RBAP Programme Advisor; Hakan Bjorkman, Regional Health & Development Advisor, BRH; Koh Miyaoi, Gender Team Leader; Nan Collins, Project Manager UNSIF; Patrick Duong, Regional Programme Advisor on Local Governance & Decentralization; Radhika Lal, SDG Finance Policy Advisor; Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Practice Coordinator(Disaster); Shairi Mathur, Programme Specialist; Rajesh Sharma, Programme Specialist (Global); Yusuke Taishi, Climate Change Adaptation Regional Technical Specialist, BRH; Karin Takeuchi; Regional Programme Coordinator, BRH; Bushra Hassan, Monitoring & Evaluation, Results-Based Management Specialist,

**HQ Management:** Marta Vallejo, Strategic Planning Advisor HQ/RBAP; Claire Van der Vaeren, Chief, CO Liaison and Coordination (COLAC) HQ/RBAP.

**COSQA:** James George Chacko, Head of East Asia and the Pacific Cluster; Ram Iyer, Management Advisor, RBAP; Mohammad Yunus, Programme Advisor

**BRH Inclusive Growth Team:** Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Programme Specialist; Kieren MCGovern, Consultant; Balazs Horvath, Country Director CHN; Uyanga Gankhuyag, Program Specialist/

**Economist Network:** Uyanga Gankhuyag, Program Specialist/ Economist, Extractive Industries Uyange; Bishwa Nath Tiwari, Programme Specialist; Balazs Horvath, Country Director CHN; Delgernaran Tumurtogoo, Economist MN CO; Tandin Wangchuk, Development Economist, BTN CO; Haniza Khalid, Economist MY CO; Yanki Ukyab, Development Economist, NP CO; Afraa Mohamed, LKA CO

**BRH Livelihoods Team:** Francisco Santos-Jara Padron, RBAP Programme Advisor; Farrah Rao-Hansen, Livelihoods & Economic Recovery Solutions in Asia Pacific Consultant

**Health Team:** Hakan Bjorkman, Health and Development Advisor

**BRH PVE Team:** Mitra Modaressi, Project Manager; PVE COs: Arachapon Nimitkulpon, Project Manager TH CO; David Ennis, Chief Electoral Technical Advisor MY CO; Chetan Kumar, Outcome Leader, Peace Team, PH CO; Priyan Senevirathna, Technical Specialist - Reconciliation and Peacebuilding, LK CO; Yasmeen Rasheed, Programme Manager, MV CO; Misthohizzaman, National Project Manager for PROTECT, ID CO

**DRR:** Rajesh Sharma, Programme Specialist (Global); Sanny Ramos Jegillos, Practice Coordinator(Disaster); Chihiro Bise, Programme Analyst; Shaira Mathur, Programme Specialist; DRR COs: Shairi Mathur, Programme Specialist BRH; Buddika Hapuarachchi, Technical Advisor, LK CO; Sureka Perera, Programme Quality and Design Analyst, Environmental Sustainability and Disaster Resilience, LK CO; Vijaya Singh, Assistant Country Director (Programme), EECDRM Unit, NP CO; Fiji CO: Noud Leenders, Project Manager, Disaster Resilience for Pacific SIDS (RESPAC), Disaster Preparedness and Recovery Advisor

**Youth Co:Lab BRH Team:** Savinda Ranathunga, Regional Youth Project Manager; Beniam Gebrezghi, Program Specialist Civil Society & Youth; Eleanor Horrocks, Impact measurement consultant Economist, Extractive Industries; Phatsaraphorn Champasri, Programme Assistant; Tianyu Meng, Programme Analyst - Inclusive Growth and SDG Finance; Youth Co:Lab CO: Xin Gao. Baotou Youth Forum Coordinator, CO CHN; Lady Diandra, IC For Innovative Financing, IDN CO; Kulunu Tamara Jayamanne, Project Coordination and Partnership Associate, LKA CO; Akbar Durrani, PAK CO.

**GCCF and SDG Finance BRH Team:** Radhika Lal, SDG Finance Policy Advisor; Asad Maken, Governance Specialist; Joan Manda, Climate Change Finance Specialist; Emily Davis, Programme Specialist; Darko Pavlovic, Governance and Climate Finance Consultant; Nunlada Punyarut, Regional Programme Management Officer; Nan Collins, Project Manager UNSIF; Nicholas Booth (Human Rights); Koh Miyaoi (Gender); Thomas Beloe, NY, SDG Finance Advisor; GCCF and SDG Finance COs: A.K.M Mamunur Rashid, Climate Change Specialist, BGD CO; Nuzhat Imam, Climate Change Finance Project Manager BGD CO; Ranjit Kumar Chakraborty, Project manager, IBFCR, BGD CO; Muhammad Didi Hardiana, Head of Innovative Finance Lab , IDN CO; Debi Nathalia, Project Coordinator, SDF Project, IDN CO; Amanullah Khan, ACD and Team Leader Climate Change, PAK CO; Asif Shah, Regional Public Finance Expert, PAK CO; Muhammad Sohail, PO, PAK CO; Vijaya Singh, Assistant Country Director, NPL CO; Apar Paudyal, Team Leader- Climate Proofing Growth and Development (CPGD), NPL CO; Moortaza Jiwanji, Gov4Res, Project Manager (CFN Country Focal Point), FJI CO; Nicola Glendining, Climate and Disaster Risk Advisor, Gov4Res, FJI CO; Matthew Johnson-Idan, Economist (UK based), FJI CO.

**FairBiz Team BRH:** Diana Torres, Project Manager; Liviana Zorzi, Project Specialist; FairBiz COs: Thomas Crick, Project Manager - SARL, MM CO; Wisoot Tantanin, Team Leader/Programme Specialist, TH CO; Arachapon Nimitkulpon, Project Manager TH CO; Aisyah Razihan, Governance Assistant, MY CO; Maria Luisa Isabel Jolongbayan, Outcome Manager,

Institutions and SDG Partnerships, PH CO; Jose Cortez, PROJECT/PARTNERSHIPS FOR SDG - Consultant for Partnerships for SDGs, PHL CO

**BLIAP BRH Team:** Katri Kivioja, Policy Specialist; Hakan Bjorkman, Regional Health & Development Advisor, BRH/HHD; Jawying Lyster, M&E Consultant; Koh Miyaoi, Gender Team Leader; Nicholas Booth, Human Rights; BLIAP COs: Suparnee Pongruengphant, Project Manager - Gender Equality and Social Inclusion CO TH; Catherine Phuong, Deputy Resident Representative LA CO; Sean O'Connell, VN CO; James Yang, CHN CO; Irum Ali, PAK CO; Dieter Wolkewitz, PAK CO; Manish Pant, IND CO; Chiranjeev Bhattacharjya, IND CO; Amar Hassan, PAK CO

**Innovation COs:** Sophie Kemkhadze, Deputy Resident Representative, ID CO; Sitara Syed, Deputy Resident Representative, VN CO

#### **Development Partners:**

**PVE partners:** Cedric Pierard, EEAS-BANGKOK, Attache- IcSP Coordinator for Asia and Pacific; PVE Partner: Ekraj Sabur, UNODC; PVE Partner: Lesli Davis, UNWomen; PVE Partner: Lih Goh, Google; PVE Partner: Hernan Longo UNOCT; Juhi Ahuja and Erin Saltman, Facebook

**GCCF and SDG Finance partners:** Kriangkrai Thitimakorn, Senior Programme Officer, Environment, Climate and Energy Embassy of Sweden, Bangkok (SIDA); Ammar Naqvi, Auditor General Office (Erstwhile Controller General of Accounts), Government Official of Pakistan; Smita Luthra Nakhoda, ADB; Delaine; Jonathan Gilman, UNEP; Inkar Kadyrzhanova, UNWomen; McCullough International Budget Partnership; Djodi Houria, Senior Researcher, CIFOR; UK Aid: Shan Mitra, Harjeet Kaur; Archana Shukla.

**DRR partners:** Animesh Kumar, UNDRR; Prof. Yuichi Ono, Tohoku University; Sanjay Srivastava, ESCAP

**Youth Co:Lab partners:** Anshul Sonak, Intel; Felix Weidenkaff, ILO; Fai Wechayachai, ANDE ; Shalina Miah Regional Manager, Asia Pacific, UNV; Emiliya Asadova, UNV Programme Analyst, UNV

**FairBiz Partners:** Francesco Checchi, UNODC; Clara Feng, COST The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative; FCO UK: Susan Cunningham; Catherine Rham; Jonathan Turner; FairBiz Partner: Leah Ambler, OECD; Shreya Basu, Deputy Director, Country Support, OGP

**Inclusive Growth Partner:** Smita Luthra Nakhoda, ADB; ESCAP Narada Samuel; Stefanos Fotiou; Hitomi Rankine; Ladawan Pitipala

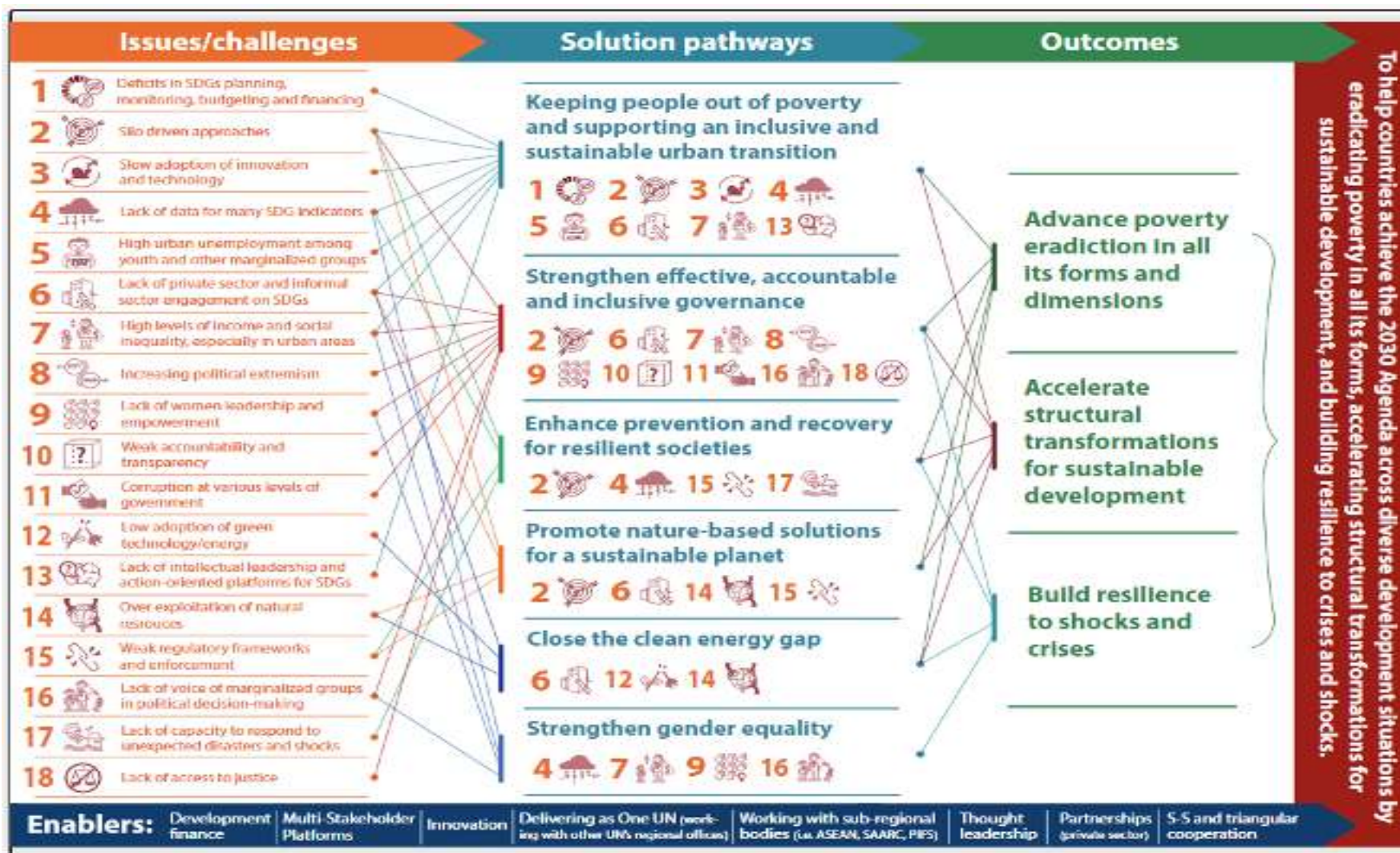
**BLIAP partners:** Tinaflor Chaingam, Project Management Specialist, USAID; Pip Dargan, AP Forum of NHRIs (APF); Ryan Silverio, Regional Project Coordinator, ASEAN SOGIE Caucus (ASC); Hiker Chiu, Intersex Asia; My Dung Ho, Second Secretary (Programme Specialist – Human Rights and Democracy, SIDA

**UNEDAP partners:** Sabrina Evangelista, UNWomen

#### **Annex 7: List of Documents Consulted**

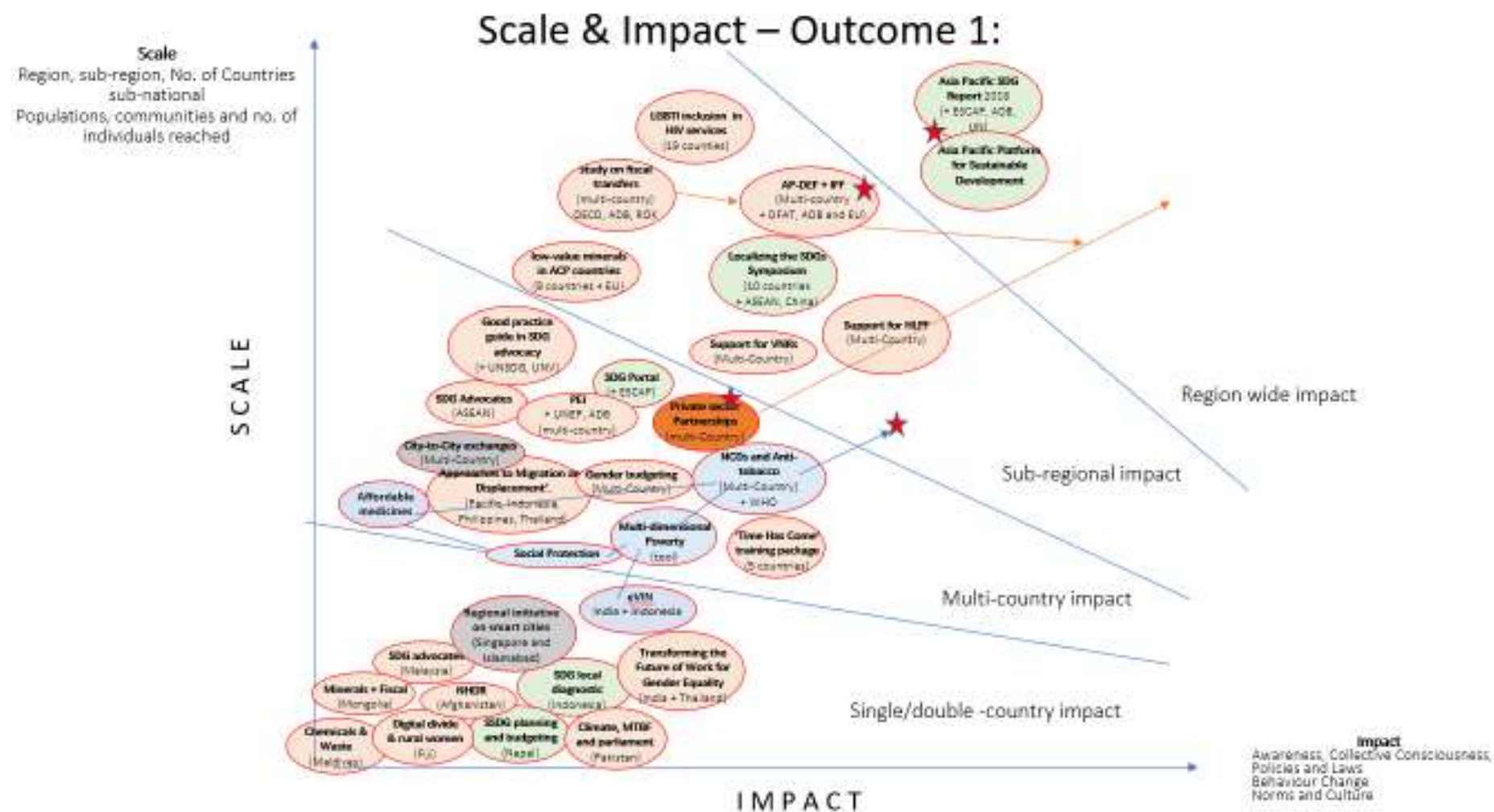
To be provided.

## Annex 8: RPD Theory of Change





## Annex 9: Outcome 1 Mapping of RPD Activities by Scale and Impact





## Annex 10: Outcome 2 & 3 Mapping of RPD Activities by Scale and Impact

