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United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION  
**BARBADOS AND  
THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN**





# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION BARBADOS AND THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

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### INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: BARBADOS AND THE EASTERN CARIBBEAN

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# FOREWORD

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It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation for the United Nations Development Programme in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, which covers the programme period 2017 to 2020.

The Eastern Caribbean islands are among the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world. Hurricanes and extreme weather events, whose magnitude has been exacerbated by the consequences of climate change, are clear symbols of their vulnerability. The COVID-19 pandemic has, however, drawn attention to the multifaceted nature of their vulnerability, and the dependence of their economies and livelihoods on tourism as a driver of development.

The evaluation found that UNDP is a valuable partner in the region. UNDP is primarily perceived to have added value in the area of climate change and natural resource management, where it has appropriately focused its efforts. The UNDP decision to expand its footprint outside Barbados facilitated strong relationships with national governments, and is well aligned with its commitment to strengthen support to Small Island Developing States. With a deeper understanding of the countries' economic fragility, UNDP has gradually shifted its strategic positioning towards a stronger focus on inequality reduction (particularly for women), although following the outbreak of COVID-19 there is room for more support in the area of sustainable employment. Overall, UNDP has engaged in a large number of projects, which stretched both its operational and programmatic capacity. Project implementation was too activity-oriented, with limited attention to outcome achievement.

The evaluation concluded that UNDP should continue to focus its programme in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean on the mitigation of vulnerabilities, with stronger attention to inequality reduction and sustainable employment. To support efficient and effective programme implementation, UNDP also needs to enhance its operational support and project management, to better account for the local context and promote the sustainable development of national capacities.

I would like to thank the Governments of all ten countries and territories covered by the UNDP office in Barbados, national stakeholders and UNDP colleagues for their support throughout the evaluation. I trust this report will be of use to those seeking to achieve a better understanding of the broad support UNDP has provided, including what has worked and what has not, and to prompt discussions on how UNDP may be best positioned to contribute to sustainable development in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in the years to come.



**Oscar A. Garcia**  
**Director**  
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<b>CARICOM</b>	Caribbean Community	<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>CARISECURE</b>	Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean project	<b>MCO</b>	Multi-Country Office
<b>CCA</b>	Climate Change Adaptation	<b>METT</b>	Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool
<b>CDB</b>	Caribbean Development Bank	<b>MPI</b>	Multidimensional Poverty Index
<b>CDEMA</b>	Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency	<b>MSDF</b>	Multi-country Sustainable Development Framework
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus 2019	<b>NAMA</b>	Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions
<b>CREAD</b>	Climate Resilience Execution Agency of Dominica	<b>NAP</b>	National Adaptation Plan
<b>DIM</b>	Direct Implementation Modality	<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>DRR</b>	Disaster Risk Reduction	<b>NIM</b>	National Implementation Modality
<b>E-CPA</b>	Enhanced Country Poverty Assessment	<b>OECS</b>	Organization of Eastern Caribbean States
<b>ECLAC</b>	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	<b>PRMIS</b>	Police Records Management Information System
<b>EWB</b>	Engineers Without Borders	<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator's Office
<b>EWS</b>	Early Warning System	<b>ROAR</b>	Results Oriented Annual Report
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization	<b>RSDS</b>	Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence	<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product	<b>SIDS</b>	Small Island Developing States
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility	<b>SLC-HB</b>	Survey of Living Conditions and Household Budget
<b>IADB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank	<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedure
<b>ICPE</b>	Independent Country Programme Evaluation	<b>SPD</b>	Sub regional Programme Document
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund	<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>JCCCP</b>	Japan Caribbean Climate Change Partnership	<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>LFS</b>	Labour Force Survey	<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>LTA</b>	Long-term agreement		



# Evaluation Brief: Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries enjoy relatively high levels of national wealth and human development. Their sustainable growth is, however, constantly challenged by significant exposure to a number of environmental, economic and social risks, which leave the countries vulnerable. Climate change and the continued overexploitation of natural resources threaten the rich biodiversity of the countries' forest and marine ecosystems. Their strong dependence on international tourism and associated industries, combined with constrained fiscal space and the limited availability of official development assistance, make the countries particularly susceptible to external shocks. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 global pandemic, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) forecast that the decline in gross domestic product across the region could reach 10 to 21 percent.

## Findings and conclusions

In the area of *social protection, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities* UNDP has, until recently, had a limited role. While UNDP importantly introduced methods to look at poverty beyond income limitations, it did not achieve expected results in terms of enhanced capacities for measuring multidimensional poverty. Since 2019, UNDP has positioned itself more in the area of social protection through stronger partnerships with other United Nations agencies, and scaled up its support on Blue Economy issues. The office responded promptly to the COVID-19 outbreak with technical advice, procurement support and the acquisition of protective equipment.

In the area of *climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and clean and sustainable energy*, UNDP was extensively involved in recovery and reconstruction work after the 2017 hurricanes. Prompt support from UNDP was highly relevant to the countries' needs, although the effectiveness of projects was challenged by limited capacities and procurement

delays. UNDP has also enhanced the availability of tools and best practices for early warning, and supported planning and monitoring of adaptation and mitigation measures in some countries. Furthermore, UNDP promoted the use of renewable energy and energy-efficient practices, although many of the supported policies and bills are yet to be approved. Pilot projects at community level enhanced community resilience.

In the area of *natural resources and ecosystem conservation and restoration*, the overall effectiveness of UNDP work on protected areas remains strongly dependent on government approval of proposed actions, as well as the creation of mechanisms for financial sustainability. UNDP built the capacity of communities for better understanding of sustainable natural resource management and incentivized good practices to mitigate the risk of counterproductive behaviours. The lack of baseline assessments and systematic monitoring of key natural resource variables hampered the assessment of conservation gains.

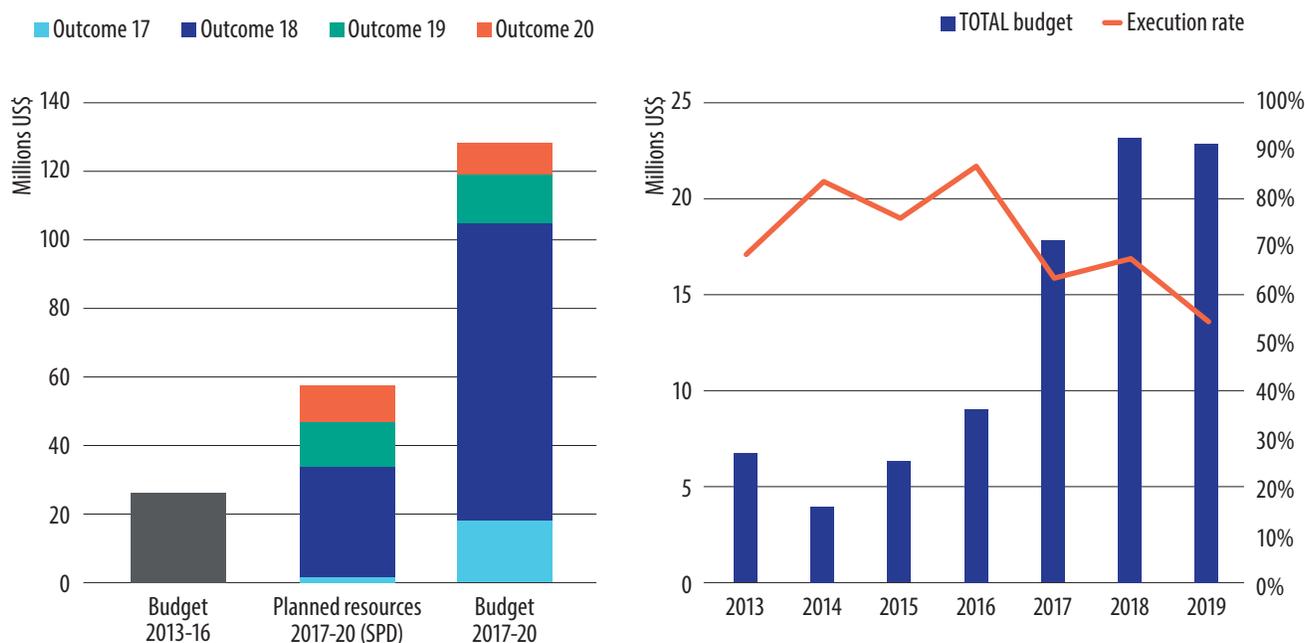
In the area of *access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety*, UNDP set the basis for strengthening national capacity for data collection on the functioning of crime and rule of law institutions, and supported the digital recording of incidents in police stations. While relevant, the effectiveness of the sole project in this area has been significantly affected by ambitious design, budget cuts and procurement challenges.

UNDP mobilized a significantly higher amount of resources than expected. While its financial sustainability remains high risk, revenue from resource mobilization efforts granted the office valuable short-term stability. The inflow of programmatic resources was, however, not accompanied by adequate operational strengthening and risk management. UNDP delivery was affected by significant delays in procurement processes, the limited capacities of national institutions, as well as stretched internal resources to cover the large portfolio.

UNDP effectiveness was also challenged by the breadth of its coverage, with resources thinly spread across countries. While average delivery did not significantly diminish in the case of multi-country projects,

project effectiveness and sustainability appear to be inversely proportional to the number of countries covered, with diminishing returns in particular for large multi-country projects.

### UNDP budget growth and delivery 2017-2020



## Recommendations

To strengthen UNDP work in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean in support of national development priorities, the Independent Country Programme Evaluation made five recommendations:

**Recommendation 1.** UNDP should maintain its strategic engagement in the Eastern Caribbean islands focused on mitigation of the countries' economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities, and with a stronger focus on inequality reduction and sustainable employment.

**Recommendation 2.** UNDP should seek ways to improve the delivery of its projects, by strengthening its operational support and ensuring better integration of procurement in project planning and management.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should enhance the design and management of its projects to better account for the local context, and with activities tailored to promote outcome-level change. Adequate resources should be allocated to provide quality assurance, support delivery, and promote sustained institutional strengthening, particularly in the case of projects under national implementation modality.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP should further leverage its partnerships with United Nations agencies, regional

organizations and non-state actors. Opportunities for UNDP to partner with non-resident agencies in areas of shared interest should continue to be explored.

**Recommendation 5.** UNDP should take measures to ensure the financial sustainability of its office in the Eastern Caribbean, which supports the needs of ten vulnerable countries.

## CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation, as well as the methodology applied. It lays out the development context of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries before introducing the UNDP programme.

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture evaluative evidence of UNDP contribution to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.<sup>1</sup>

This ICPE is the second IEO evaluation of UNDP work in Barbados and the nine Eastern Caribbean countries and territories covered by UNDP Multi-Country Office (MCO): Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.<sup>2</sup> The ICPE covers the period from 2017 to June 2020, in accordance with the evaluation terms of reference (see Annex 1 available online).<sup>3</sup> It assessed the entirety of UNDP activities, funded by core UNDP resources, donor or Government funds. It also considered the UNDP contribution to the United Nations Multi-Country Sustainable Development Framework (MSDF),<sup>4</sup> and assessed the UNDP role as catalyst and convener working with other development partners, civil society and the private sector.

**FIGURE 1. Barbados and the OECS Countries**



Source: UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

<sup>1</sup> <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> The first Assessment of Development Results was conducted in 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Budget and expenditure figures were last updated from Atlas in September 2020.

<sup>4</sup> The MDSF in the Caribbean 2017-2021 covers 18 English- and Dutch-speaking countries and Overseas Territories. In addition to the countries covered by the UNDP MCO, the MDSF covers Aruba, Belize, Curaçao, Guyana, Jamaica, Sint Maarten, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

The ICPE was timed to feed into the preparation of the next Subregional Programme Document (SPD), which will be implemented from 2022. The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP MCO, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, the UNDP Executive Board, and the Governments of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries.

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

### > EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and the sustainability of results?

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process. The evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the UNDP programme by analysing progress made towards the achievement of the expected outputs, and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the intended outcomes, as defined in the SPD and/or reconstructed theories of change by thematic area.<sup>5</sup> To better understand UNDP performance and the sustainability of results, the ICPE then examined the specific factors that have influenced – positively or negatively – the programme. UNDP capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was also examined.

Following the development of the terms of reference, IEO mapped all projects and activities against the MCO intended results and, through stakeholder analysis, identified relevant actors to be consulted. With the outbreak of the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in March 2020, in consultation with the MCO, the ICPE team decided to continue the evaluation remotely, adapting its methodology to the changed circumstances while still guaranteeing respect for evaluation norms and professional standards.<sup>6</sup>

The evaluation relied on information collected from different sources and triangulated, to the extent possible. Data from available documents (strategies, project documents, monitoring reports, evaluations)<sup>7</sup> were complemented with information available online<sup>8</sup> and 117 interviews with UNDP staff and stakeholders.<sup>9</sup> These allowed the team to gain further insights into the effectiveness of programme interventions, determine factors affecting performance, and identify strengths of the UNDP programme and areas for improvement. In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender integration across the country programme and operations. Sex-disaggregated data were collected, where available, and assessed against programme outcomes.

The draft ICPE report went through an internal and external quality assurance process before being submitted to the MCO and Regional Bureau for review and identification of any factual errors, and finally shared with the Governments of the countries and territories covered by the MCO.

### Evaluation limitations

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICPE team was compelled to cancel planned field visits to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, affecting its capacity to visit project sites and interact

<sup>5</sup> The team planned to finalize the theories of change in collaboration with MCO staff during their visit to Barbados. Unfortunately, this did not occur due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and other timing/efficiency constraints.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

<sup>7</sup> The main documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 6 online.

<sup>8</sup> The IEO has conducted an analysis of a purposive sample of Tweets produced by the official UNDP Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean account and/or shared from official management accounts, to assess the breadth of the MCO online communication and used the content as a proxy for the projection of the MCO strategic positioning.

<sup>9</sup> A full list of interviewees is available in Annex 5 online.

with vulnerable groups who benefitted from UNDP assistance. The evaluation was conducted almost entirely remotely (with the exception of a two-day visit to Barbados in March), with a high number of virtual interviews replacing in-person conversations to the extent possible.

The insufficient quality of the programme result framework - combined with the project-based nature of UNDP work - affected the capacity of the evaluation to fully assess the achievement of programme objectives at a higher level than outputs. The reconstruction of theories of change by thematic area helped with the definition of outcomes, but issues with project design and monitoring - including the very limited use of baselines - constrained the team's ability to rely on secondary data for its outcome analysis. Monitoring reports were not always available, though the ICPE had access to a good number of studies and final evaluations commissioned by the MCO, particularly related to the immediate response to the 2017 hurricanes and projects funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

### 1.3 Country context

The countries covered by the UNDP office in Barbados enjoy a relatively high level of national wealth, with five of the islands classified by the World Bank as high-income countries and five as upper-middle income countries. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the countries has remained substantially stable since 2010, with cycles of 1-1.5 percent growth alternating with contractions of the same magnitude.<sup>10</sup> All countries in the subregion rank high in the Human Development Index (HDI),

above the average of Small Islands Developing States (SIDS), with Dominica the only State to experience a decrease since 2010.<sup>11</sup>

The sustainable development of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries is constantly challenged by their high exposure to a number of interrelated environmental, economic and social risks, which leave them vulnerable.<sup>12</sup> The Caribbean suffered the consequences of more than half of climate-related disasters in SIDS between 1966 and 2015, accounting for about 90 percent of deaths and damage costs.<sup>13</sup> The average annual cost of disasters is estimated at nearly 2 percent of GDP, with 9 percent of the disasters having caused losses of up to a third of GDP.<sup>14</sup> In 2017, the Category 5 hurricanes Irma and Maria damaged or destroyed 95 percent of houses in Barbuda, 90 percent of roofs in Dominica, and over 70 percent of houses in Anguilla and the British Virgin Islands. Thousands of people were made homeless, and key infrastructures for transportation, water, health and education were destroyed. The total cost for reconstruction was estimated at US\$ 3.6 billion for the British Virgin Islands (more than 3.5 times its GDP), \$1.37 billion for Dominica (more than double its GDP), \$327 million for Anguilla and \$222 million for Barbuda.<sup>15</sup>

Climate change and the continued overexploitation of natural resources are also threatening the rich biodiversity of the countries' forest and marine ecosystems. From an economic standpoint, the strong dependence on international tourism and associated industries (the countries covered by the MCO feature among the 21 with the highest tourism income/GDP ratio in the world),<sup>16</sup> combined with a reliance on petroleum for primary energy consumption,<sup>17</sup> make the countries particularly susceptible

<sup>10</sup> World Bank, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Barbados is the highest (56th), followed by Saint Kitts and Nevis (73rd), Antigua and Barbuda (74th), Grenada (78th), Saint Lucia (89th), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (94th) and Dominica (98th).

<sup>12</sup> The majority of countries covered by the MCO are classified at a medium-high level of economic and social vulnerability, while the degree of environmental vulnerability varies more across the islands. Source: Measuring Vulnerability - A Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for the Caribbean, Caribbean Development Bank, 2019

<sup>13</sup> PAHO. Caribbean Action Plan on Health and Climate Change, 2019

<sup>14</sup> Gone with the Wind; Estimating Hurricane and Climate Change Costs in the Caribbean, Working Paper 16/199, IMF.

<sup>15</sup> Post Disaster Needs Assessment, 2017

<sup>16</sup> Countries covered by the MCO feature among the top 21 in terms of tourism income/GDP ratio, with three (Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia, and Grenada) among the top 10. Source: ICPE analysis of World Bank data

<sup>17</sup> Petroleum represents 80 percent of primary energy consumption. Source: Financing the Blue Economy: A Caribbean Development Opportunity, Caribbean Development and UNDP, 2018

to external shocks. Fiscal space to support sustainable development is further constrained by high debt-to-GDP ratios (an average of 40 percent in 2018), limited availability of official development assistance, and volatile revenues from foreign investments.<sup>18</sup> The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has predicted that national GDPs in the Eastern Caribbean will suffer a 4.5 to 10 percent contraction in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with further repercussions throughout 2021.<sup>19</sup> UNDP forecast that the GDP decline could reach 10 to 21 percent across the region, depending on the intensity of restrictive measures adopted by the Governments.<sup>20</sup>

Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean countries present persistent inequality challenges.<sup>21</sup> The limited data available show that unemployment has been rising in the past decade, with youth unemployment at 25 percent, three-times higher than adults (8 percent).<sup>22</sup> Gender inequality is perceived mostly in terms of per capita income (a 33 percent gap)<sup>23</sup> and participation in decision-making, with the share of women in ministerial cabinet positions under 15 percent in several countries. The subregion also presents the highest rate of gender-based violence (GBV) in Ibero-American countries.<sup>24</sup>

The Eastern Caribbean islands are affected by high insecurity, mostly related to drugs which are routed through the region from Latin America for distribution and marketing elsewhere. According to the United States Department of State, drug-related crimes remain the second most reported violation (after residential burglaries), with an average of 316 incidents per 100,000 inhabitants in 2018.<sup>25</sup>

Homicide rates have also been increasing, particularly in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, and Saint Lucia.<sup>26</sup>

## 1.4 UNDP programme under review

The UNDP SPD for Barbados and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) 2017-2021 was premised on the priority development areas defined in the MSDF by the United Nations agencies in consultation with 17 Caribbean Governments. The priority areas are aligned with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Strategic Plan 2015-2019, the OECS strategic objectives, and national sustainable development priorities. The SPD for Barbados and the OECS selected specific outputs under three of the four MSDF priorities,<sup>27</sup> with a focus on contributing to “a sustainable and resilient Caribbean” (figure 2). By virtue of its multi-country coverage, UNDP aimed to promote positive change through subregional processes, harmonized approaches to address common issues, and, to a lesser extent, interventions in individual islands. The planned budget for 2017-2021 amounted to \$57.4 million, of which \$1.9 million from core resources.

In the area of *social protection, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities* (outcome 17), UNDP aimed to strengthen national and subregional statistical systems in support of evidence-based planning for the achievement of lagging development goals. This included building capacity for the estimation of multidimensional poverty, as well as supporting the implementation of the OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics.

<sup>18</sup> According to the Eastern Caribbean Development Bank, the debt-to-GDP ratio reduced by only 1 percent since 2015. In Barbados, in 2017 debt represented 1.5 times the GDP, and a change in government led to the implementation of an IMF-supported economic recovery and debt restructuring programme. Source: Caribbean Region Quarterly Bulletin: Volume 8 Issue 1, IADB, 2019

<sup>19</sup> World Economic Outlook, IMF, April 2020.

<sup>20</sup> COVID-19 HEAT reports: Human and economic assessment of impact, 2020

<sup>21</sup> HDI inequality data are only fully available for Barbados and Saint Lucia. When adjusted by inequality, the Barbados HDI falls to 0.675 (a 17 percent loss, higher than the average 10.8 percent loss registered in very high human development countries); Saint Lucia HDI falls to 0.617 (a 17.2 percent loss, in line with other high human development countries). Source: Briefing notes for countries on the 2019 Human Development Report: Barbados and Saint Lucia, UNDP, 2019

<sup>22</sup> The Caribbean Outlook, ECLAC, 2018

<sup>23</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 2019

<sup>24</sup> Gender Equality Observatory, ECLAC, 2018

<sup>25</sup> Barbados and Eastern Caribbean Crime and Safety report, United States Department of State, <https://www.osac.gov/Country/Barbados/Content/Detail/Report/9adf46ca-ddc8-4721-a80d-1848e97f20c8>

<sup>26</sup> UNDP SPD 2017-2021 and United States Department of State

<sup>27</sup> An Inclusive, Equitable, and Prosperous Caribbean; A Healthy Caribbean; A Cohesive, Safe, and Just Caribbean; A Sustainable and Resilient Caribbean.

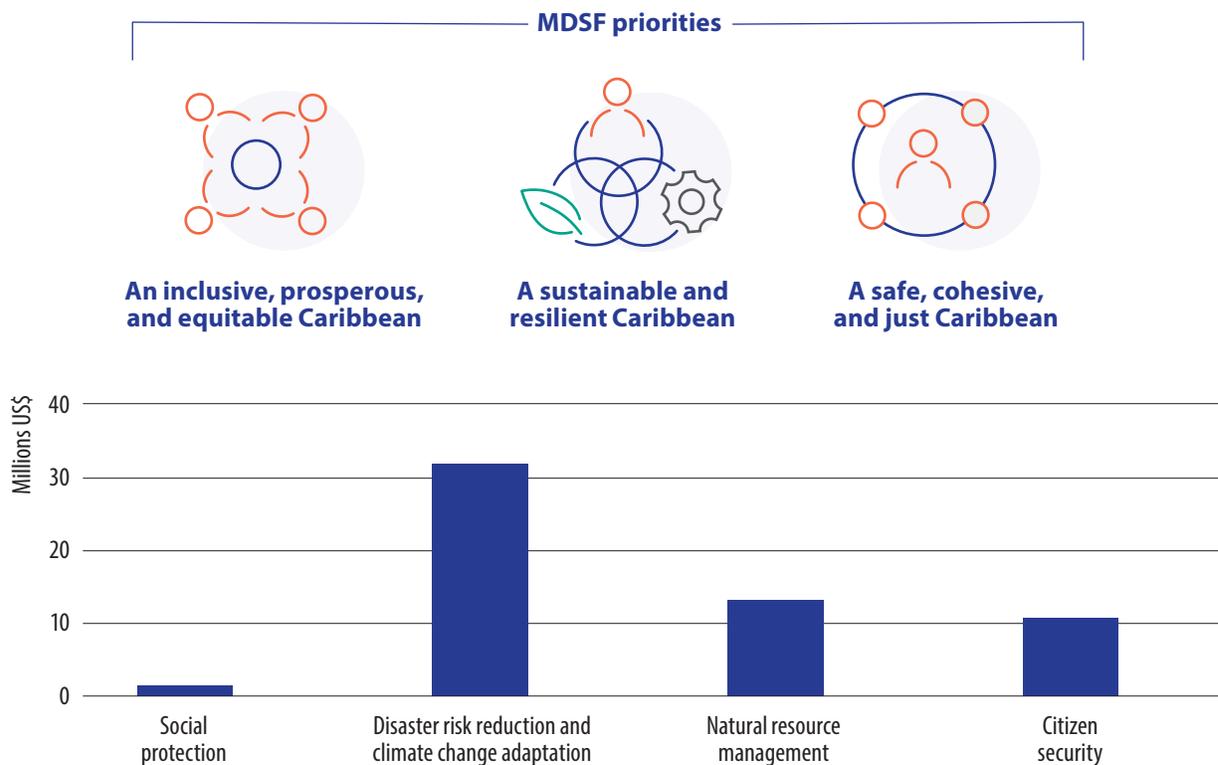
In the area of *Climate Change Adaptation (CCA)*, *Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)*, and *clean and sustainable energy* (outcome 18), UNDP planned to promote solutions for increased energy efficiency and access to modern energy, targeting underserved communities. Through South-South initiatives, UNDP aimed to support the implementation and scaling up of CCA and mitigation actions in line with the countries' nationally determined contributions. Systems to prepare for, respond to, and address the consequences of natural hazards and manmade crises would be put in place at community and government levels.

In the area of *natural resources and ecosystem conservation and restoration* (outcome 19), UNDP aimed to support the implementation of projects for the sustainable management of natural resources,

creating jobs and livelihood opportunities, particularly for women. Strengthened gender-responsive regulatory frameworks, policies and institutions would ensure the conservation, sustainable use and benefit-sharing of natural resources, in line with international conventions.

In the area of *access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety* (outcome 20), UNDP planned to support the improvement of citizen-security data, to facilitate national and regional evidence-based planning and policymaking and strengthen related frameworks and policies by making them more gender-sensitive. Crime prevention capacities, with a focus on GBV, would be strengthened at community level.

**FIGURE 2. UNDP planned contribution to MDSF in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, 2017-2021**



# CHAPTER 2

# FINDINGS



This chapter presents the results of the ICPE outcome analysis, with an assessment of cross-cutting issues and a description of the main factors that influenced UNDP performance and contributions to results. The assessment was based on an analysis of the correlation between project results and their contribution to the expected outputs under each outcome, and consequently to the overall outcome objectives.

## 2.1 Subregional priority 1: Evidence-based policy and planning for improved social protection for multidimensional poor and other vulnerable populations

**MDSF Outcome:** Access to equitable social protection systems, quality services and sustainable economic opportunities improved

**Finding 1. Development and use of statistics.** The role of UNDP in introducing methods to look at poverty beyond income limitations was extensively acknowledged. Without dedicated project resources, however, UNDP did not achieve expected results in terms of enhanced capacities for the sustained measurement of multidimensional poverty. Stronger collaboration with the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) promoted sustainability, but the impact of UNDP work has been constrained by limited data analysis to inform national decision-making.

While challenges in data collection and analysis for decision-making in Caribbean countries are widely acknowledged,<sup>28</sup> donor resources to support national statistics development through international assistance projects have been limited.

UNDP based its projections on resources mobilized under the previous SPD, and the target of \$1.5 million (which represented only 2 percent of planned resources) was partly met. This was thanks to one project, funded by the Government of Chile, which aimed to promote poverty reduction and a more complete understanding of vulnerability through quantitative and qualitative measurements. Most of the results achieved by UNDP in this period, however, occurred through additional core resources and dedicated (yet limited) staff time, building on sustained engagement in this area and effective partnerships with regional and national stakeholders.<sup>29</sup>

Resource availability significantly affected UNDP ability to effectively engage in this area in recent years. However, interviewees all acknowledged the front-running role that UNDP has played since 2013 in introducing countries and regional organizations to the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI). It was estimated that no country would have been able to promote the MPI as a standalone element given their capacity constraints, and UNDP worked to integrate a regionally-adapted MPI into national survey tools, namely the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and the Survey of Living Conditions and Household Budget (SLC-HB). In the current SPD, UNDP has continued working through the OECS Living Standard Measurement Committee (which comprises the Heads of all National Statistical Offices) and other partners to ensure that the measurement of multidimensional poverty remained at the core of survey revisions, and advocate for a gender-sensitive approach with data disaggregated by sex rather than household.

<sup>28</sup> The statistical capacity of OECS countries is below the average of Latin American and Caribbean countries. According to ECLAC, data gaps mostly relate to employment, poverty and income distribution, as well as energy and transport statistics. Data are not adequately available to assess women's political and economic empowerment. The latest poverty estimates were produced by the Caribbean Development Bank's Country Poverty Assessment in 2005-09.

<sup>29</sup> In the SPD 2012-16, resources for this area amounted to \$0.8 million, three quarters of which were channelled through one project in support of the OECS regional strategy on statistics. Resources available to support individual national statistics systems amounted to an average of \$35,000.

Closer relationships with the CDB allowed full integration of questions to provide information from the MPI into the Expanded Country Poverty Assessments (E-CPAs), thus promoting sustainability through partners' work.<sup>30</sup> Although the planned continuation of MPI training did not occur, technical support from the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, facilitated through UNDP, allowed a review of existing tools to ensure alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Since 2017, six (out of 10) countries and territories have conducted annual or quarterly MPI-tailored LFS, while four have conducted either an E-CPA or a SLC-HB.<sup>31</sup> However, often collected data have not been analysed in a timely manner and/or made publicly available, limiting the impact of UNDP work. This is due to limited national resources (budget, staff, and analytical skills) as well as political sensitivities surrounding the data, as acknowledged in both Results Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs) and interviews. While highly valued, technical advice on gender labour statistics and sex-segregation analysis to two National Statistics Offices (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Grenada) was not fully used, as the reports are yet to be internally disseminated to Cabinets. On the positive side, the Government of Saint Lucia has utilized the MPI to inform its approach on cash assistance to vulnerable populations, replacing the old income-based system.

UNDP plans to support five countries to implement the OECS Regional Strategy for the Development of Statistics (RSDS) did not materialize. Given the lack of external support, UNDP opted not to allocate its

limited core resources to this effort, while continuing to participate in the meetings of the RSDS steering committee. Lack of clarity on the strategy's prospective effectiveness at country level<sup>32</sup> led UNDP to consider the RSDS no longer "a viable area of investment to contribute to strengthening statistical capacity".<sup>33</sup>

**Finding 2. Social protection.** Through stronger partnerships with other United Nations agencies, UNDP has positioned itself as more of a player in the area of social protection programming since 2019. Previous efforts on health insurance coverage and human rights, while relevant to the countries' needs and aligned to the principle of leaving no one behind, were too fragmented, with limited effectiveness.

UNDP work in the area of social protection and quality services has expanded beyond the planned focus on statistics, to include different projects on healthcare access, human rights and gender equality. The UNDP portfolio has grown over time thanks to a number of joint programmes, through which UNDP reinforced its partnership with other United Nations agencies and took advantage of joint resources. Building on UNDP work on (a) statistics development, (b) DRR and (c) GBV data collection (see also findings 1, 5, 6 and 11), since the end of 2019 UNDP has engaged in a joint programme on universal social protection,<sup>34</sup> led some components of the Spotlight initiative to reduce violence against women in Grenada,<sup>35</sup> and supported a joint programme on human security, advising on the implications of structural adjustments for women in agriculture and fisheries.<sup>36</sup> Financial incentives linked

<sup>30</sup> The CDB has been supporting E-CPAs since 2016, through a joint programme with the OECS Commission and a multimillion-dollar grant to fund data collection. The E-CPA is comprised of five components: i) an SLC-HB; ii) a Participatory Poverty Assessment iii) an Institutional Analysis which assesses the effectiveness of social development programmes and projects; iv) a Macro Socioeconomic Assessment, and v) a Poverty and Vulnerability Mapping.

<sup>31</sup> Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saint Lucia, Grenada, and Montserrat conducted an LFS. Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Saint Lucia and Grenada conducted an SLC-HB. Saint Kitts and Nevis is the only country to conduct an E-CPA. Source: OECS and ICPE analysis of websites

<sup>32</sup> Some countries found it difficult to conceive the operationalization of the strategy alongside that of CARICOM, given the limited capacity. ROAR 2019

<sup>34</sup> "Enhancing Resilience and Acceleration of the SDGs in the Eastern Caribbean: Universal adaptive social protection modelled at the community, national and subregional levels". UNDP will work on the Saint Lucia HBS with UNICEF, the development of the Core Diagnostic Instrument for social protection assessment with UNICEF and ILO, and the design of financing strategies for adaptive and shock-responsive social protection with WFP. UNDP contribution amounts to \$0.35 million out of a total budget of \$4.8 million.

<sup>35</sup> UNDP manages two of the five pillars of the programme (data and institutional strengthening).

<sup>36</sup> "Building Effective Resilience for Human Security in the Caribbean Countries: The Imperative of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in a Strengthened Agriculture (and related Agri/Fisheries Small Business) Sector." The programme is jointly implemented with the FAO and UN Women.

to the SDG process, donors' calls for greater cooperation, and considerations by United Nations agencies on how to exercise greater influence on national decision-making through collective action, were all said to have played a role in enhancing UNDP participation in joint programming. As the projects had just started, the ICPE was not in a position to assess their effectiveness.

Previous UNDP efforts in this area were limited to two small projects that, while relevant to the countries' contexts, did not achieve intended results due to a combination of design issues, constrained time and resources and limited national ownership. In Grenada, UNDP supported the National Health Insurance Secretariat through the provision of technical advice on services and benefits packages. The project ultimately achieved all of its outputs in terms of studies and draft documents, though its efficiency was hampered by a number of factors which delayed activities for several months, including the 2018 elections, a change in implementing partner and financial challenges. The project was also affected by lack of clarity on roles, limited engagement of some national stakeholders, and inter-institutional/ political dynamics. Eventually, the Government hired a private company with no obligation to use the project's outputs, thus jeopardizing the effectiveness and sustainability of the UNDP contribution.

Through a regional project, UNDP provided small grants to civil society organizations working on Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender and Intersex rights and held some workshops on topics including discrimination in the provision of medical and social services, and effective social media communication. Due to a lack of continued dedicated staff capacity,<sup>37</sup> the project did not achieve the expected visibility and awareness, and a few activities (including dialogues with governments) were not completed as planned. Interviewees considered that, given

the high level of sensitivity surrounding the topic, only broader-scale and more coherent interventions would be effective.

**Finding 3. Sustainable economic opportunities.** UNDP supported the coordination of a joint programme on the green economy in Barbados, which has not delivered expected results mostly due to national institutional capacity challenges in a tight fiscal context. Since 2019, the MCO has scaled up its support through policy advice on the Blue Economy and the creation of the Blue Lab. The office responded promptly to the COVID-19 pandemic through socioeconomic assessments and technical advice, support to procurement, and redirecting resources for the acquisition of protective equipment.

Working together with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the International Labour Organization, and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research, UNDP participated in the implementation of the Partnership for Action on Green Economy in Barbados, with responsibility for coordination and implementation of the youth component.<sup>38</sup> The programme, which started in 2017 and had a re-engagement mission following the elections in 2018, has not produced any of the expected results, despite high-level advocacy. The coordination unit provided advice on fishery measures and the inclusion of green and blue economy elements in the national industrial policy, in an ad hoc manner. Interviewees acknowledged the relevance of the programme as an entry point for discussion among stakeholders, but reported significant challenges for the project to progress through established institutional structures.<sup>39</sup> Other challenges noted included unclear strategic direction, competing priorities, limited capacity of national stakeholders to

<sup>37</sup> A country-level coordinator to cover three islands was recruited in the last quarter of 2018, but left in the third quarter of 2019. The Country Coordinator for Antigua and Barbuda has been covering the project since March 2020.

<sup>38</sup> The project has three expected outcomes: i) reinforced and integrated green economy goals and targets into SDG-aligned national economic and development planning; evidence-based sectoral and thematic reforms implemented in line with national green economy priorities; iii) strengthened individual, institutional and planning capacities for green economy action.

<sup>39</sup> The Cabinet of Barbados has appointed the Technical Working Group on Climate Finance and Climate Resilience as the project's national governance mechanism. The working group comprises 30 members from various specialized departments of 10 ministries. United Nations agencies do not participate in the mechanism but take part in working groups.

implement activities given austerity measures, and administrative hurdles to legally register the project with the Government.

Since 2019, UNDP has positioned itself as a partner on blue economy issues, where most of its recent communication efforts have focused (see also finding 12). Through the Blue Economy and Sustainable Management of Ocean Degradation Lab (Blue Lab) project, UNDP supported small innovations considered to have the potential to be scaled up and replicated. The results are yet to be seen, given the recent launch of the initiatives.<sup>40</sup> Thanks to a renewed agreement with the University of the West Indies, UNDP facilitated policy advice on the blue economy and public financial management in two countries.<sup>41</sup> The experience proved the importance of integrating policy advice into broader processes where financial resources are secured, in order to promote effectiveness and sustainability. Learning from the experience in Dominica,<sup>42</sup> UNDP staggered the development of a blue economy roadmap for Barbados to serve as a baseline for a project financed by the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), thus enhancing the utility of its policy advice and knowledge products. In June 2020, UNDP received resources from the SDG Fund for a joint programme on blue finance to be implemented with UNEP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in Barbados, Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.<sup>43</sup>

UNDP responded promptly to the COVID-19 pandemic, identifying emerging needs. Eight joint country socioeconomic impact assessments were finalized, and support was provided to design a reopening strategy in Dominica. In the British

Virgin Islands, UNDP recommendations helped to shape the Government's COVID-19 response, and built the capacity of the Ministry of Finance to forecast the impact of future shocks to the economy. Through core resources, dedicated funds from the Government of India and redirected project budgets,<sup>44</sup> UNDP provided protective equipment to police forces and GBV frontline workers (in partnership with the CDB), supported the procurement and/or import substitution of health supplies in four countries,<sup>45</sup> and provided guidance to small and medium-size enterprises to retool and reach customers.<sup>46</sup> The Blue Lab also promptly reoriented its work to mitigate, through technology support, the economic vulnerability of workers whose income depended on tourism. Resources have been identified to meet most of the identified financial needs for digital transformation and import substitution of small and medium-size enterprises, as well as resilient health procurement, and \$5.1 million (76 percent of the target) has been pre-approved.

**Finding 4. SDGs.** Until January 2019, UNDP led the United Nations efforts to support planning for the achievement of SDGs, though with few results reported to date. The effectiveness of work in this area was constrained by an unclear division of labour with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC).

UNDP supported four countries to conduct Voluntary National Reviews, Rapid Integrated Assessments and Mainstreaming Acceleration and Policy Support processes, with the backing of headquarters and the Regional Bureau.<sup>47</sup> As of March 2020, Saint Lucia is the only country with a draft SDG roadmap. Some interviewees considered that Governments were

<sup>40</sup> On bioplastic creation, waste-made biogas, coral reef mapping and traceable fisheries using blockchain.

<sup>41</sup> The study on the transition from education to employment in Grenada and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was postponed due to COVID-19.

<sup>42</sup> The first report on blue economy in Dominica was conceived as a stand-alone policy tool. When looking for resources to implement some of the proposed solutions, the Government did not manage to secure funding from the CDB given the tight fiscal constraints.

<sup>43</sup> The project aims to create an enabling environment for financing the blue economy through an Integrated National Financial Framework. It will support national, subnational and regional entities to ensure that public funding is mobilized, and private capital is attracted into the region to fund strategic initiatives in the context of the blue economy.

<sup>44</sup> E.g. CARISECURE and EN-Gender projects

<sup>45</sup> Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, and Saint Lucia.

<sup>46</sup> In June 2020, UNDP committed to provide \$40,000 to support 10 businesses in the British Virgin Islands, equipping them with tools to transition to a digital modus operandi.

<sup>47</sup> Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Barbados, and Grenada.

keen to receive UNDP support for SDG planning, though others commented that a lack of dedicated support had impacted on UNDP ability to effectively engage with the Governments. The plan to produce a regional SDG progress report has not materialized.

The UNDP relationship with ECLAC in the provision of support to SDG planning and monitoring was reportedly very challenging, as acknowledged in the 2019 ROAR report. Despite meetings to harmonize support for the SDGs, different perspectives on the roles of each in the provision of technical assistance persisted. This resulted in parallel missions organized at country level and a the non-participation of UNDP in a number of ECLAC workshops on SDG implementation in the Caribbean. Both agencies confirmed that the working relationship has improved over time to some extent.<sup>48</sup>

## 2.2 Subregional priority 2: Climate change, clean energy and disaster risk management

**MDSF Outcome:** Policies and programmes for climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction and universal access to clean and sustainable energy in place

**Finding 5. Disaster response.** Propelled by a sizeable injection of resources after the 2017 hurricanes, UNDP was extensively involved in recovery and reconstruction work in three islands. The prompt UNDP support was highly relevant to the

countries' dire needs and acknowledged as a valuable contribution to their recovery. Partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) helped to 'Build Back Better'. The effectiveness of the projects was, however, challenged by limited capacities and notable delays in the procurement process.

The UNDP planned programme in the area of DRR/CCA was significantly altered by the magnitude of hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017, and their impact on the Eastern Caribbean. Leveraging its global and regional resources to promptly respond to the countries' immediate needs, UNDP supported Post Disaster Needs Assessments<sup>49</sup> and Building Damage Assessments in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda to successful completion, collecting a vast amount of geo-localized data, and providing a timely analysis of the most critical reconstruction needs. Partnership with Microsoft, and the involvement of local stakeholders, were deemed to be highly valuable in overcoming technical and logistical glitches during the assessments. The initial omission of vulnerability data in the Household and Building Damage Assessment (to enable better targeting and priority-setting) was solved in subsequent versions of the tool, which includes sex-disaggregated data and is aligned with the World Food Programme (WFP) Vulnerability Needs Assessment.<sup>50</sup> An online Post-Disaster Needs Assessment training was developed in partnership with the World Bank, the European Union and other members of the United Nations Development Group, and made publicly available on UNDP learning platforms. 119 representatives of national institutions and OECS were trained, and recommendations made on how to improve national processes, leaving national stakeholders to implement them.

Notwithstanding the "overall consensus [...] that the deployments of first responders and surge advisors had been quick and of high quality",<sup>51</sup> interviewees

<sup>48</sup> UNDP is collaborating with ECLAC for the approval of the Escazù Agreement (on access to information and civic participation around environmental issues) in Dominica.

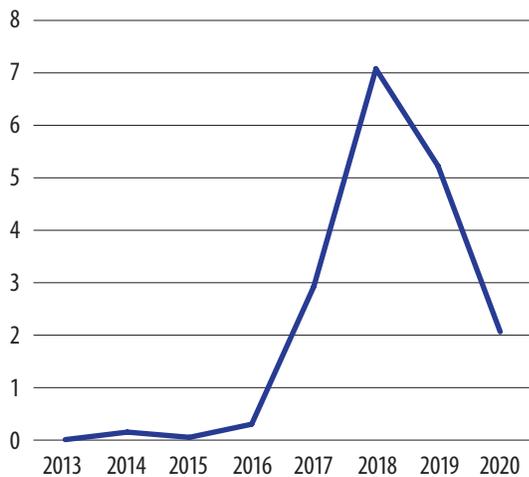
<sup>49</sup> The Post-Disaster Needs Assessments were led by the World Bank, with collaboration of the European Union, CDB, OECS and the Eastern Caribbean Central Bank.

<sup>50</sup> The tool has been integrated into the UNDP Crisis Bureau kit and used since in Bahamas and Albania. <https://www.undp.org/content/buildingdamageassessment/en/home.html>

<sup>51</sup> The After-Action Review of UNDP response to hurricanes Irma and Maria, Julian Murray Consulting, 2018

confirmed that the initial analysis and coordination work was affected by critical shortages of UNDP programme and operational staff - with the office in Barbados already working at capacity at the time of the hurricanes – and a lack of technical expertise. Prompted by the considerable amount of fund inflow (see figure 3), UNDP expanded its presence to the three most affected islands (Dominica, British Virgin Islands, and Antigua and Barbuda), and focused its work along three axes: cash-for-work programmes for debris and waste management;<sup>52</sup> roofing and reconstruction of public buildings and houses; and policy and institutional support. The magnitude of the resource increase and the type of capacity required for the implementation of reconstruction projects, however, continued to place significant strain on UNDP capacity (see also finding 15).

**FIGURE 3. Recovery and reconstruction portfolio, expenditures 2013- 2020, (Million US\$)**



Through funding from the People’s Republic of China, the Government of India, the European Union, and additional resources provided by UNDP through the regional Caribbean Resilience Recovery

Programme, UNDP supported the roofing and repair of hundreds of houses in Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda (with 130 more to be completed in 2020-21), as well as some public buildings such as schools, hospitals and a post office. The after-action review of the response to the hurricanes questioned the opportunity cost of UNDP involvement in reconstruction work,<sup>53</sup> but interviewees felt strongly about the relevance of UNDP interventions, the benefits of its faster procurement and its role in financial oversight. The added value of UNDP was considered to be in the provision of training and technical assistance for the construction of buildings, and the review of housing standards and associated guidelines to make the building code more accessible to construction workers, in partnership with Engineers Without Borders (EWB) in Dominica. In Barbuda, UNDP supported the development of housing prototypes (approved in August 2019), though additional training on the Build Back Better principles and updating of the building guidelines have not yet occurred. Challenges in procurement processes and the limited availability of qualified national expertise (which UNDP partly overcame by utilizing Cuban and other international engineers) significantly affected the timeliness of delivery, which many interviewees considered to be unrealistic in the first place. Inspections by EWB in Dominica confirmed that most of the houses had been restored according to standards, to withstand future storms. Despite the guidelines and training, some poor building practices by NGOs and building contractors were reported.<sup>54</sup> Bringing houses to full standard remains a challenge, requiring continuous training and frequent inspections by the Government to ensure that the industry respects the building codes. Dealing with this challenge effectively will be critical in minimizing the costs of future hurricanes.

<sup>52</sup> While in Antigua and Barbuda and the British Virgin Islands UNDP hired local NGOs to clean the debris and waste, in Dominica the programme relied on the existing National Employment Programme and its community network but suffered delays in funding disbursements. The 2018 ROAR indicated that UNDP involved a total of 210 households across three islands. Galvanized roofing material, scrap aluminium and domestic waste were recycled to some extent.

<sup>53</sup> In Barbuda, UNDP efforts to provide roofing materials for over 250 houses had a gross cost (logistics included) of \$8,000 per roof or \$4,000 per person. Source: After-Action Review of UNDP response to hurricanes Irma and Maria, 2018

<sup>54</sup> Programme-level report on EWB efforts in disaster recovery for UNDP Dominica Hurricane Maria, EWB, 2019

At policy and institutional level, UNDP supported the conceptualization of the Recovery and Development Agency in the British Virgin Islands,<sup>55</sup> and the Climate Resilience Execution Agency in Dominica (CREAD),<sup>56</sup> playing a valuable role in facilitating communication and effective partnerships between stakeholders. In the British Virgin Islands, UNDP support to national stakeholders (through training, procurement and institutional coordination support) for the implementation of a rehabilitation and reconstruction loan awarded by the CDB, was appreciated, despite some efficiency challenges, and considered a possible model for replication in countries where concessional lending is an opportunity.<sup>57</sup> In Dominica, the establishment of CREAD, strongly advocated by donors to facilitate the coordination of national reconstruction efforts, has not achieved the intended results, due to management challenges and limited sustainability. At the time of the ICPE, CREAD was suffering a leadership vacuum, with stakeholders reporting challenges with oversight and engagement capacity. Thanks to additional funding by a second donor, the Dominica Climate Resilient and Recovery Plan development was finally approved in April 2020, with a two-year delay and issues linked to a yet-to-be approved monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, as well as inadequate coverage of gender issues.<sup>58</sup> Institutional challenges notwithstanding, in May 2020, the Government of Dominica and UNDP agreed to establish a facility to support the operationalization of the Recovery Plan and the country's vision to become "the first climate-resilient country in the world", including through the reconstruction of critical infrastructure (see also finding 14).<sup>59</sup>

**Finding 6. Disaster preparedness.** Through a multi-partner agreement and sustained engagement, UNDP has enhanced the availability of tools and best practices for early warning, and strengthened the knowledge of regional and national stakeholders. Direct UNDP support at country level, including through community training, was highly valued, although limited evidence was available to gauge its effectiveness. Inadequate national capacities were said to affect the continued impact of the supported mechanisms.

UNDP has strengthened community and national resilience through improved early warning systems (EWS) across the region since the 1990s, most recently with the support of the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office. In the current SPD, UNDP worked in close partnership with the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) and the International Federation of the Red Cross to support the integration of EWS best practices and tools at regional level. An EWS tool kit (including multiple guidance instruments) was made available on the CDEMA website, and a number of outreach events and workshops were organized to promote the integration of the tools into national programmes. Available evidence shows limited use of the guidance instruments so far: according to the latest available data (April 2019), out of 30 tools available, only the multi-hazard EWS checklist was integrated in all four OECS target countries, with the hazard vulnerability risk study methodology for intense rain adopted in two countries, and four other tools in one country. To incentivize cooperation and information sharing, UNDP also supported the development of a regional EWS policy (approved

<sup>55</sup> <https://bvirecovery.vg/>

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.creadominica.org/about-us-1>

<sup>57</sup> UNDP received approximately \$3.9 million to manage a \$65 million loan by the CDB. UNDP supported sourcing and procurement of goods and services for 18 works in the transport, water, governance, education and national security sectors. In addition, UNDP supported inter-institutional coordination between ministries and between the agency and other government entities. UNDP encountered a number of procurement challenges related to the lack of qualified proposals, outdated specifications, a high number of parallel small value procurements, and delays in reviews and approval by government authorities. The fact that some viewed UNDP as a consultant to the Ministry of Finance also reportedly affected its ability to engage with other parts of the Government. Source: Terminal report and After-Action Review of UNDP response to hurricanes Irma and Maria, 2018

<sup>58</sup> In January 2020, a workshop was organized to gather feedback on how to improve the M&E and gender coverage of the Plan. As of June 2020, an updated version of the budget, workplan and M&E tool is yet to be approved. UNDP has recruited a consultant to provide M&E support to CREAD.

<sup>59</sup> The Dominica Development and Reconstruction Facility aims to support the a) rehabilitation and reconstruction of critical infrastructures, with focus on resilient housing and public works; ii) the implementation of social protection programmes; the implementation of programmes to mitigate the adverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

in November 2019) and the creation of an EWS consortium composed of 17 representatives of national and regional organizations. Multiple sources commented on the relevance of UNDP work in this area, as it responded to priority needs and focused on “a better understanding of the linkages between natural hazards and climate change, and their effects on community resilience”.<sup>60</sup> Stakeholders also recognized the value of working through CDEMA to continue supporting national organizations, which all have limited human resource capacities. Despite evidence of high rates of return,<sup>61</sup> getting national governments to commit the resources required to improving early warning remains challenging, as recognized in different reports and interviews, and requires continued support from CDEMA, whose capacity is also stretched.

UNDP support to strengthen national preparedness systems in selected countries was highly valued. Analyses, checklists and costed roadmaps, developed with the participation of national stakeholders, helped in identifying bottlenecks and detailed actions to improve information sharing and inter-institutional communication in case of disaster. Together with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, UNDP supported the implementation of specific activities, including some identified in the roadmaps, such as training of national specialists, improvement of water data monitoring, communication campaigns and the distribution of equipment in Saint Lucia, Dominica, Antigua and Barbuda, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. UNDP support was more extensive in Dominica, where it also conducted a study to support the standardization of EWS tools, trained local disaster response personnel on the gender-inclusive Community Emergency Response Teams programme, and installed an innovative Wi-Fi network system not reliant on electricity (though it

still depends on Government funding for continued operation). Available data do not allow the ICPE to draw conclusions on the effectiveness and financial sustainability of the established mechanisms or ascertain the level of awareness at community level. Interviewees reported enhanced understanding of preparedness measures within communities and a closer relationship between national Government stakeholders and the population as a result of project activities. They also raised the need to continue integrating preparedness into more holistic livelihood projects and community development plans, in order to ensure stronger ownership.

**Finding 7. Climate change adaptation and mitigation.** UNDP enhanced planning and monitoring of adaptation and mitigation measures in five countries, contributing to the promotion of some policy changes. Pilot projects at community level enhanced community resilience. The impact of UNDP projects will largely depend on political and financial commitments to provide an enabling environment for investments and scale-up of successful measures. The engagement of national stakeholders has at times been challenged by limited resources, producing better results in larger initiatives with dedicated support.

Working through different initiatives, UNDP supported the establishment of planning and monitoring tools to support climate change adaptation/mitigation and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in five countries. Though two earlier projects (with smaller budgets) to set up monitoring, reporting and verification systems in Barbados and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines were not effective,<sup>62</sup> the larger Japan Caribbean Climate Change Partnership (JCCCP) project succeeded in supporting the submission of two National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and three Nationally Appropriate Mitigation

<sup>60</sup> Final evaluation of the Strengthen Integrated Early Warning Systems for More Effective Disaster Risk Reduction in the Caribbean Through Knowledge and Tool Transfer project, April 2019

<sup>61</sup> The Global Commission on Adaptation identified disaster risk management systems as a key adaptation priority, providing extremely high rates of return, and assessed the benefit-cost ratio of investments in early warning systems to be 10:1. Source: Global Commission on Adaptation, *Adapt Now: A Global Call for Leadership on Climate*, 2019

<sup>62</sup> Source: interviews and monitoring reports

Actions (NAMAs) for approval by national cabinets.<sup>63</sup> The high involvement of stakeholders throughout, including through in-kind contributions, was considered an important factor behind the success of the JCCCP project. To overcome the limited institutional capacities for implementation, national focal points and nine thematic experts were hired to support the preparation and approval of pilot project proposals. The ICPE was able to find a few examples of policy changes to which the project contributed. In Saint Lucia, the Government developed a Water Sectoral Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (2018-2028), and national resources have been allocated to replace approximately 13,500 lights with more efficient LED tubes. This will be supplemented by the installation of solar systems for power generation in primary and secondary schools.<sup>64</sup> In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, the electric vehicles policy promoted by another UNDP GEF-funded project was linked to the transport sector component of NAMA. According to the final evaluation of JCCCP, the great majority (84 percent) of stakeholders consulted were positive about the ability of NAMAs and NAPs to contribute to building climate change resilience.

Working across projects,<sup>65</sup> UNDP supported the implementation of 50 small-scale initiatives at community level,<sup>66</sup> providing grants and/or introducing climate-smart agriculture and water management practices to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations. The degree of completion of project activities varied by country and type of initiative, with an average of 65-70 percent fully completed at project closure. Some of the key results included: the installation of a 3,000-gallon capacity water system in Dominica to augment sporadic supply at municipal level; an increase of over 130 percent in income for some farmers in Saint Vincent and the

Grenadines thanks to water management and agriculture practices; and in Grenada the extension of 300 meters of drains for flood protection and drip irrigation and the construction of large-scale greenhouses to restart citrus production after the industry had been decimated by new pests in 2016.<sup>67</sup> UNDP contributed to enhancing the knowledge of communities about climate change risks and mitigation measures, through workshops and study tours. Both projects documented lessons learned and success stories, and made them available online.<sup>68</sup> Among others, lessons included: the value of having community liaison officers to ensure technical follow-up; the need to support community-based organizations when inviting them to submit proposals; and the higher sustainability of projects focused on commercial production and infrastructure improvements, when combined with capacity building for maintenance, as opposed to projects aimed only at raising awareness. From a project management perspective, interviewees and documents reported that the high number of pilots supported was a challenge (see also finding 16). The Enabling Gender-Responsive Disaster Recovery, Climate and Environmental Resilience in the Caribbean project, which UNDP started in 2019 with funding from Global Affairs Canada and the United Kingdom Department for International Development, will build on results of the JCCCP project to further integrate gender considerations into the implementation of NAPs and NAMAs.<sup>69</sup>

**Finding 8. Sustainable energy.** UNDP promoted the use of renewable energy and energy-efficient practices, playing an important role in institutional strengthening, although many of the supported policies and bills are yet to be approved. A number of pilot projects have strengthened the islands'

<sup>63</sup> NAPs for Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; NAMAs in Grenada, Saint Vincent, and Saint Lucia. Dominica, which had already submitted its NAMA, cancelled the request for assistance for the preparation of the NAP as a result of a national reprioritization effort after the 2017 hurricanes.

<sup>64</sup> <https://ndcpartnership.org/news/saint-lucia-commits-us23-million-domestic-funding-ndc-execution-cabinet-approves-ndc>

<sup>65</sup> JCCCP and the German-funded programme on integrated climate change adaptation strategies.

<sup>66</sup> Thirty-five in Grenada, seven in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, five in Dominica, and three in Saint Lucia.

<sup>67</sup> Project monitoring reports, evaluations, and ROAR 2019

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/projects/japan-caribbean-climate-change-partnership> and <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/projects/bf-grenada>

<sup>69</sup> In July 2020, project support was expanded to protect vulnerable people (mostly women and children) against the heightened risk of GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by social isolation, movement restrictions and increased economic pressure.

resilience, and reportedly resulted in savings. UNDP maintained a focus on key facilities, including airports and public buildings.

With GEF funding, UNDP has put significant efforts into supporting the improvement of the regulatory environment for renewable energy in the Eastern Caribbean, through the review of policies and acts and capacity development of national stakeholders and institutions to facilitate investment in this sector.<sup>70</sup> The added value of UNDP support to stronger public policies and institutional dialogue was well acknowledged, and its support deemed pivotal for the implementation of renewable energy projects, but effectiveness in terms of policy approval and implementation is yet to be seen in most cases. Across projects, the ICPE noted unresolved challenges in relationships between governments and utility companies, with license processes still under negotiation.

UNDP supported several renewable energy demonstration projects across the islands, through which more than five megawatts of solar photovoltaic installations were put in place, mostly benefitting government and public buildings such as community centres, airports, correctional facilities, sports pavilions, schools, and polyclinics, as well as farms. National stakeholders indicated that photovoltaic systems are performing well and provided savings for communities and the Government,<sup>71</sup> while also supporting long-term resilience to natural disasters in communities, as some of the retrofitted buildings function as emergency shelters. Most projects included a focus on underserved communities, though no specific indicators or targets to provide measurements to this end were included.

A number of workshops and events to promote renewable energy were organized, including a national energy expo to better connect supply and demand, and workshops on photovoltaic installation in partnership with the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council and private companies. Through the Ten Island Challenge project, UNDP modelled several resource-conservation measures for health centres and, in partnership with the Caribbean Community Climate Change Centre, created an energy retrofit guide for Caribbean healthcare facilities. The project also supported the establishment of a knowledge sharing platform for the renewable energy community of the Caribbean Electric Utility Services Corporation, which is still operational thanks to funding from other sources.

The impact of UNDP work is tied to the availability of financial resources to de-risk investments in this sector.<sup>72</sup> As shown in feedback forms collected after the 2018 Barbados expo, only 10 percent of individuals who attended the event felt in a position to switch to renewable energy, due to the high costs and limited incentives, and fewer than 5 percent actually did so in the following months.<sup>73</sup> UNDP included financial sustainability considerations in the design of its projects to a large extent, by coordinating with initiatives of the international financial institutions, as occurred in Barbados,<sup>74</sup> or directly working to promote public and private investments. In Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, UNDP attracted \$4.65 million and the interest of 100 independent power producers, and in Saint Lucia, the Ten Island Challenge project led to the mobilization of \$6 million to produce clean electricity, covering the needs of 3,500 houses.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Reviewed policies and acts include the Electric Light and Power Act in Barbados; the National Energy Policy and Action Plan, the policy for the promotion of Energy Efficient and Electric Vehicles, the National Energy Transition Strategy and Integrated Resources Plan, the Energy Supply Act, and the Geothermal Exploration Bill in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, and the RE Transition Strategy in Saint Lucia.

<sup>71</sup> The photovoltaic system set up at the correctional facility in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines was expected to save the prison an estimated \$3,300 in electricity costs and abate approximately 58 tonnes of emissions annually. The installation at the airport halved the costs.

<sup>72</sup> Financial de-risking instruments transfer the risks that investors face to public actors, such as development banks. These instruments can include, for example, loan guarantees and public equity co-investments. Efforts to reduce risks can be supplemented by direct financial incentives (price premiums, tax breaks, carbon offsets, etc.) to compensate for residual incremental costs and increased returns.

<sup>73</sup> Disaster Risk and Energy Access Management project, Programme Implementation Report, 2019

<sup>74</sup> The UNDP Disaster Risk and Energy Access Management project cooperated with the Public Sector Smart Energy Programme, funded by the IADB and the European Commission. The IADB has provided resources of \$17 million under a loan agreement, while the European Commission provided grant resources of approximately \$7.7 million.

<sup>75</sup> The Ten Island Challenge project was part of a much larger Island Energy Programme by the Rocky Mountain Institute. GEF and UNDP funding constituted about 0.5% of the resources. 98 percent of the resources were planned to come from the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, a United States development finance institution which was dissolved in 2019. According to the 2019 Project Implementation Report, the project was able to mobilize a total of \$13.65 million against a target of \$63 million.

In Dominica, the Low Carbon Development Path project has not achieved expected results, partly because of the impact of the 2017 hurricane. A no-cost extension of 18 months was requested, but it is not guaranteed that this project will be able to achieve its objectives.

## 2.3 Sustainable ecosystems and natural resources

**MDSF Outcome:** Inclusive and sustainable solutions adopted for the conservation, restoration, and use of ecosystems and natural resources

**Finding 9. Protected area management.** With significant delays in the completion of project activities and limited engagement at higher levels, the overall effectiveness of UNDP work on protected area management is uncertain. This work remains strongly dependent on government approval of proposed actions, as well as the creation of mechanisms for financial sustainability. This effectively occurred in Saint Kitts and Nevis, where management capacity improvements have been registered. However, the lack of baseline assessments and systematic monitoring of key natural resource variables across countries hampered the assessment of conservation gains.

Through its GEF-funded projects,<sup>76</sup> UNDP supported the promotion of protected areas in Dominica, Grenada, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, by building

capacity mostly at institutional and organizational levels. UNDP promoted an enabling environment through the development and/or review of several acts and policies,<sup>77</sup> and supported the drafting of management and financial sustainability plans covering both terrestrial and marine protected areas in all three countries.<sup>78</sup> As of May 2020, most of the plans have been finalized, although some still require cabinet validation. The approval of policies and acts by national governments and parliaments, on which the implementation of some of the management measures will depend, has experienced delays of up to three years in all countries. Partially as a result, the functioning of institutional and management mechanisms for protected areas is limited. Quarterly meetings of the interim structure created for protected areas in Saint Kitts and Nevis have yet to be convened after two years, while change in leadership and limited clarity about roles delayed the designation of members of the protected areas committees in Grenada, and an inter-institutional committee has not been established in Dominica. From a financial standpoint, government resources have been secured to pay park rangers in Saint Kitts and Nevis, while the establishment of the interim intersectoral committee in charge of strategic investments in Grenada is awaiting cabinet approval. Interviewees appreciated the importance of the work of UNDP, while acknowledging its limited capacity to influence change at higher levels without stronger advocacy by senior management and/or physical presence in the countries.

At organizational level, UNDP supported infrastructure improvements, such as interpretation centres in Saint Kitts and Nevis and Grenada, and carried out workshops to enhance the capacity of around 140 local staff across countries on sustainable protected area management and ecological

<sup>76</sup> Supporting Sustainable Ecosystem by Strengthening the Effectiveness of Dominica's Protected Area System; Implementing a Ridge to Reef Approach to Protecting Biodiversity and Ecosystem Functions within and around Protected Areas (Grenada); Conserving Biodiversity and Reducing Habitat Degradation in Protected Areas and their areas of influence (Saint Kitts and Nevis).

<sup>77</sup> These comprise the National Conservation and Environmental Management Bill in Saint Kitts and Nevis, the revised National Protected Areas Policy in Dominica, and the review of sections related to protected areas in the National Forest Policy and Strategic Plan, the Environmental Management Act 2014, the National Parks and Protected Areas Act, the Forest Soil and Water Conservation Act, the Fisheries Act, and the National Heritage Protection Act in Grenada.

<sup>78</sup> In Saint Kitts and Nevis, the development of a separate marine management plan did not materialize as expected.

data assessment. Government personnel were trained in the use of drones for information gathering, although drones have yet to be employed for mapping. Biodiversity inventories and threat assessments were not finalized as planned, with issues of data quality and consistency raised in addition to delays in the recruitment of consultants.<sup>79</sup> As data for the Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) exercises were not systematically collected, the ICPE could not come to a definite conclusion on whether the implemented interventions have enhanced national capacities across countries. Only in Saint Kitts and Nevis, the METT index saw an average improvement of 24 points, with better results registered in marine areas.<sup>80</sup> UNDP procurement support allowed significant delays in the acquisition of technology components to be overcome, and a full information management system was installed in 2020. The Department of Physical Planning and Environment in Nevis reported stronger regular monitoring of wetlands, with trained park rangers collecting biodiversity data and geo-referenced information to update the protected area maps. However, stakeholders commented that measures for sustainable geospatial data acquisition and management should have been better considered at project inception stage.

In the absence of baselines and assessments, and with the delays incurred by the projects, the evaluation could not determine the extent to which projects are on track to achieve planned conservation results in terms of enhanced biodiversity. The passage of the National Conservation Bill in Saint Kitts and Nevis (under review at the time of drafting) will increase the surface of protected areas by 3,250 hectares, and create an additional 300 hectares as a formal reserve at Booby Island, with

expected conservation benefits. In the two other countries, specific actions to promote reforestation and seagrass conservation have not started.<sup>81</sup> Mangrove and coral reef restoration are still ongoing, with the achievement of results contingent on a project extension being granted.

**Finding 10. Community sustainable natural resource management.** UNDP built the capacity of communities for better understanding of sustainable natural resource management, and incentivized good practices to mitigate the risk of counterproductive behaviours. No evidence of economic gains and/or conservation benefits derived from community-level work is available. The continued involvement of communities in co-management arrangements will require more established frameworks.

UNDP promoted public awareness on the importance of conservation activities through education and communication campaigns targeting students and the public in two out of three countries. While no evidence of the impact of this workstream exists, national stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE indicated that educational events, video productions, display boards, and the appointment of students as “conservation ambassadors” have all contributed to enhanced awareness, and to some extent will support the sustainability of project results.

UNDP provided a number of training and livelihood opportunities for local communities living in and around protected areas. Workshops taught youth and other community members (around 30-40 in each country) how to sustainably obtain economic value through the cultivation of sea moss, the introduction of climate-smart and pesticide-limited agricultural practices, and the promotion of

<sup>79</sup> In Saint Kitts and Nevis, challenges with consultancy management delayed the finalization of an inventory of biodiversity in territorial protected areas. Stakeholders interviewed for the evaluation indicated that the inventory provided qualitative but not quantitative information, limiting thus its utility. In Grenada, assessments on biodiversity threats, use of pesticides and fertilizers or soil erosion, water quality for marine protected areas have not been systematically conducted. In Dominica, contracting is still in progress.

<sup>80</sup> METT monitors progress towards worldwide protected area management effectiveness. In Grenada, no METT capacity assessment was conducted during the midterm review. In Dominica, there has not been a midterm review.

<sup>81</sup> Evidence of the 1,980 hectares increase of the Grand Anse marine protected area mentioned in the 2019 ROAR could not be validated.

bird-watching tourism.<sup>82</sup> In Dominica, discussions on how to best adapt the project to respond to the needs of communities affected by the hurricanes resulted in the provision of cash to farmers.<sup>83</sup> Small grants were provided to purchase the tools necessary to shift to more sustainable production methods, including organic fertilizers and seeds, as well as water tanks and climate-resilient greenhouses. In Grenada, UNDP collaborated with a Fishermen's Association to provide training on fish-aggregating devices, intended to support livelihoods and also provide data to improve the management of the marine protected area. Overall, the ICPE has no information on whether the implemented activities have contributed to changes in practices, beyond the descriptive narrative from one field visit about the farmers' shift to compost to fertilize the soil in Dominica. Planned Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs surveys have not been completed.<sup>84</sup> The online ROAR output monitoring does not report against the "new jobs and sustainable livelihood alternatives for women" SPD indicator.

In Dominica and Grenada, UNDP involved communities in informal co-management models and the formulation of policy frameworks and legislative reviews, with limited effectiveness to date.<sup>85</sup> While the involvement of communities was very important to ensure ownership and inclusion, in the absence of a legal basis and with limited recognition of the model at government level, the sustainability of co-management arrangements remains uncertain.

## 2.4 Prevention of violence and protection of vulnerable populations

**MDSF Outcome:** Equitable access to justice, protection, citizen security and safety reinforced

**Finding 11. Citizen security data.** UNDP set the basis for strengthening national capacity for data collection on the functioning of crime and rule of law institutions, in line with international standards, and supported the digital recording of incidents in police stations. While relevant to the countries' goal of reducing crime and violence, the effectiveness of the one UNDP project in this area has been significantly affected by the ambitious design, budget cuts and procurement challenges, resulting in reduced national ownership and affecting the likelihood of sustainable results.

Driven by the 2012 Caribbean Human Development Report on citizen security,<sup>86</sup> UNDP has been engaged for some time in efforts to reduce crime and violence in the region, with a focus on vulnerable youth. Under the current SPD, for the first time UNDP could rely on a sizeable amount of external resources to implement a project on Strengthening Evidence-Based Decision-Making for Citizen Security in the Caribbean (CARISECURE).<sup>87</sup>

<sup>82</sup> Projects in Grenada and Dominica used the 2012 environmental and social screening template; the project in Dominica applied the 2015 UNDP Social and Environmental Standards. In St Kitts and Nevis, a socioeconomic assessment to identify livelihoods needs and opportunities that are compatible with conservation and sustainable natural resource management was prepared but not used. According to the ROAR, the report did not "reflect the nuances of gender, livelihoods, and sustainable use of ecosystems, with core gender issues not well integrated".

<sup>83</sup> UNDP continued to express concerns with the transparency and efficacy of the scheme, in addition to the fact that some recipients have not received funds yet.

<sup>84</sup> A knowledge, attitude, practices and beliefs survey aims to collect information on what is known, believed and done in relation to a particular topic within a target population.

<sup>85</sup> In Grenada, community-based rules for applying integrated natural resource management have not been set. In Dominica, four community resource management plans for buffer zones have been drafted but not yet finalized (due to COVID-19).

<sup>86</sup> Human development and the shift to better citizen security, 2012, [www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/Latin%20America%20and%20Caribbean%20HDR/C\\_bean\\_HDR\\_Jan25\\_2012\\_3MB.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/corporate/HDR/Latin%20America%20and%20Caribbean%20HDR/C_bean_HDR_Jan25_2012_3MB.pdf)

<sup>87</sup> In the previous SPD, UNDP implemented two projects for a total budget of \$0.7 million, relying entirely on core resources: Engaging Caribbean Youth on Citizen Security (\$0.2 million) and Strengthening Citizen Security in the Eastern Caribbean (\$0.485 million vs. an initial budget proposal of \$7 million). The CARISECURE project had an initial budget of \$14 million to cover 10 countries and territories.

Through a number of workshops, UNDP facilitated agreement among nine countries on a regional Citizen Security Indicator Framework and toolkit, including instruments for the collection of sex- and age-disaggregated data. The toolkit, which was formally endorsed by the Cabinets of all countries in 2018, included indicators for the most common crimes and also allowed for measurement of the efficiency and effectiveness of national rule of law institutional processes.<sup>88</sup> This was aligned with other major reporting tools, so that the information could also be used for reporting progress towards SDG16<sup>89</sup> and the United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems.<sup>90</sup> Concerns about the consistent use of terminology remained, and in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the project supported the development of national correspondence tables to map laws and policies against the indicator framework. At the end of 2019, only Saint Lucia finalized the coding and classification exercise, while four other OECS countries reported partial completion.<sup>91</sup> In 2019, also in collaboration with UNODC, UNDP supported the roll-out of a crime and victimization survey in Saint Lucia, which included sexual crimes and domestic violence issues.<sup>92</sup> Budgetary constraints affected the capacity to support Barbados and Saint Kitts and Nevis, where UNDP focused on enumerator training.

The project goal of setting up national crime information management systems was realized to a much lesser extent than originally planned. Revised cost estimates, significant budget cuts (from \$14 to 9.5 million) and delays in project implementation meant frequent changes in the course of action. Finally, a decision was taken to focus only on the

Police Records Management Information System (PRMIS), for which equipment has been distributed in all countries.<sup>93</sup> As of May 2020, PRMIS has been functioning only in Grenada, where all 16 stations have reportedly started recording incidents digitally. Connectivity issues, combined with limited capacity and rotation of personnel, have hampered implementation in other countries. The project midterm evaluation acknowledges that “the project’s efforts have, for the most part, not yet resulted in the replacement of traditional data-handling methods at law enforcement agencies, where crime and detention incidents and records are compiled and searched by hand”.<sup>94</sup> This affects the capacity of national police to use data for decision-making. Monitoring reports stressed that more needs to be done for the full operationalization of PRMIS, including the definition of standard operating procedures and a broader communication strategy to involve lower ranks. Interviews and reports acknowledged that the provision of equipment would not be sufficient to reinforce the crime analysis capacities of the police, without dedicated human resources assigned by Police Commissioners to this end. The project supported some training, but full technical assistance to national observatories was cancelled. UNDP support to the establishment of a subregional crime observatory within the Regional Security System has yet to produce any effects. With concerns about the availability and confidentiality of national data still unresolved, the effectiveness of the observatory is uncertain. Overall, given the project’s implementation status, the countries’ self-reported improvement in crime data since 2017 could not be attributed with any certainty to CARISECURE. However, a contribution analysis in the four countries

<sup>88</sup> The framework includes 122 indicators.

<sup>89</sup> The ICPE found full or partial alignment with six SDG16 indicators. Only two relevant ones (child abuse by caregivers and unsentenced detainees in prisons) were not included in the framework.

<sup>90</sup> The UNODC survey was reviewed and relaunched in 2018.

<sup>91</sup> Project annual report, 2019

<sup>92</sup> At the time of the ICPE, the National Statistics Office reported being in the final stages of the fieldwork.

<sup>93</sup> UNDP provided core funding to support the Royal Saint Lucia Police Force, as the Leahy Law prevented the United States from allocating resources to Saint Lucia.

<sup>94</sup> The project midterm evaluation reported that equipment was installed in a limited number of stations in four other countries, one of which had moved to testing. Further funds by a different donor will allow acquisition of additional hardware and the establishment of PRMIS in all countries.

for which baseline data were collected showed a difference in performance between priority countries and others.

All stakeholders interviewed for the ICPE praised the relevance of CARISECURE, the value of its original plan to involve different institutions to discuss citizen security issues, and its flexibility in adapting to respond to Governments' needs. National buy-in and limited capacity were reported as the most important factors affecting performance, and several interviewees questioned management choices in terms of coherent and realistic planning, priority actions and resource allocations. Insufficient capacity, including for procurement, affected staff morale, with a high turnover and low delivery (see also finding 16).<sup>95</sup> Given the project's limited progress in terms of the digitalization of records and the exclusive focus on police incident reporting, the achievement of key results such as the institutionalization of rule of law indicators, the extension of information management systems, and the analysis and use of data for decision-making, will rely on national authorities and/or the availability of additional external resources.<sup>96</sup>

The SPD outputs on "strengthened national and regional legislative and policy framework on citizen security" and "strengthened capacities for gender-sensitive crime prevention" were not achieved. Given implementation delays in CARICURE and limited involvement in this area,<sup>97</sup> the ICPE was not in a position to assess UNDP contributions to the reduction of victims of homicide and GBV.

## 2.5 Overall programme implementation

**Finding 12. Strategic positioning.** UNDP was considered a valuable partner by both national and international stakeholders. The UNDP comparative advantage of the largest physical presence among United Nations agencies, and its engagement with national Governments, was well acknowledged. The added value of UNDP was mostly seen in the areas of DRR, CCA and natural resource management, and recent efforts to promote stronger strategic positioning as a provider of high-level technical advice was appreciated. Cooperation between countries through the exchange of information and practices could have been further promoted.

The 2019 functional review stated that UNDP derives added value from being part of the world's largest network of development thinkers, having a cross-cutting mandate, and promoting policy innovations.<sup>98</sup> Evidence collected by the ICPE confirmed that national and international stakeholders overall appreciated the UNDP role as a neutral provider of technical assistance, particularly in some areas. Almost all surveyed partners agreed on the value of working with UNDP, even if its alignment with national priorities and perceptions of UNDP accountability and transparency have somewhat diminished compared to 2017 (figure 4).<sup>99</sup> Partners and interviewees particularly acknowledged UNDP work on DRR and CCA, and its support to gender equality and the empowerment of women (although the latter has declined over time), while noting a gap in the area of governance and less-defined positioning on inequality reduction and social

<sup>95</sup> Key positions (such as the Deputy Team Leader, the Communication Analyst, and one project associate) remained vacant for extended periods of time. The search for different expertise to match the change in project scope, delays in recruitment processes, and challenges in recruiting qualified national candidates in priority countries also affected the implementation. The September 2020 project board approved a revised work plan aiming to address the challenges identified in terms of scope and prioritization.

<sup>96</sup> Countries' average commitment for the implementation of PRMIS was \$22,000. Only Saint Lucia was able to commit more, thanks to a World Bank grant to upgrade communication infrastructure.

<sup>97</sup> In 2020 UNDP completed a needs assessment of the judicial system in nine countries in the region. UNDP indicated that the report would possibly lead to a new project, with funding from the European Union.

<sup>98</sup> The functional review also stressed the importance of effective resource management and the ability to flexibly adapt to emerging challenges. These issues are dealt with in findings 15 and 16.

<sup>99</sup> 77 percent of respondents thought that the UNDP programme was aligned to national priorities (compared to 93 percent in 2017). 62 percent rated UNDP accountability and transparency positively, compared to 76 percent in 2017. Source: Partnership survey, UNDP, 2017 and 2020

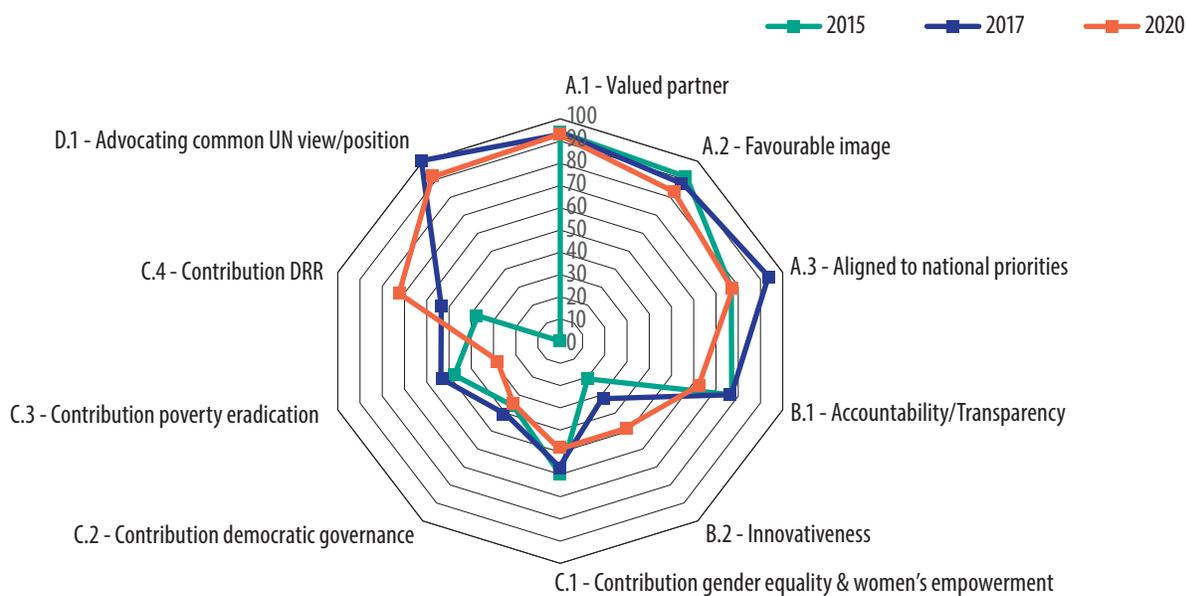
development issues.<sup>100</sup> UNDP social media engagement also reflected the MCO focus on recovery and climate resilience, followed by gender equality awareness, blue economy and biodiversity. Other areas of work, namely statistics and crime reduction, have not featured significantly.<sup>101</sup>

The leadership of UNDP senior management and the UNDP presence on the ground allowed for more sustained dialogue with governments, and reinforced UNDP positioning as a provider of technical advice, including on issues of sustainable economic development, filling noteworthy gaps. UNDP reports that its presence in countries other than Barbados was also instrumental in accelerating the delivery of programmes which needed more in-country support. The Government’s contribution to the Dominica Development and Reconstruction Facility (see findings 5 and 14) appears to signal a

high-level of trust in the capacity of UNDP to deliver, which some key informants linked to its steady engagement with the Government for the country’s restoration following the hurricanes. The authorities of the British Virgin Islands expressed interest in the establishment of a permanent UNDP presence in Tortola to support the Government with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, with \$200,000 earmarked for that purpose.

The MCO has been active in headquarters-led discussions on SIDS, and facilitated South-South cooperation and triangular exchanges with Central American countries (Cuba, Jamaica and Belize) and other islands (Japan and Seychelles), although sometimes too late to benefit the participating projects, as was the case with JCCCP. The collaboration between Cuba and Dominica and the second phase of the regional EWS project were considered particularly

**FIGURE 4. Partnership survey results 2015-2020**



<sup>100</sup> UNDP positioning on DRR/CCA was rated 15 points better than the regional average in 2020. Positive responses to the UNDP role on issues of gender equality and women’s empowerment have declined from 60 percent in 2015 to 48 percent in 2020.

<sup>101</sup> 49 percent of the Twitter sample analyzed revolved around issues of climate resilience and recovery. Gender equality and women’s empowerment, and Blue Economy, followed at distance, by 9 and 8 percent of Tweets, respectively.

beneficial. Exchanges between countries participating in the same project or implementing similar activities could have been further explored.

Partnership surveys and the 2018 global staff survey results rated the MCO as less innovative than other offices in the region and UNDP globally, while noting an improvement since 2017.<sup>102</sup> The creation of the Blue Lab project (see finding 3) has addressed the request for more innovation and flexible approaches to meet the countries' needs, although much remains to be done to integrate Blue Lab work and approaches into the wider UNDP programme of work.

**Finding 13. Partnerships.** UNDP has worked with other United Nations organizations, including non-resident agencies, to provide technical assistance, with mixed feedback from partners about the quality and effectiveness of the collaboration. Since the end of 2019, joint programmes have increased significantly in number, though they remain a small proportion of the portfolio. With few exceptions, partnerships with other actors (regional organizations, private sector and civil society) have been limited.

During the current cycle, UNDP has collaborated with a number of United Nations partners, including non-resident agencies, across its areas of work. These included UN Women in the area of post-disaster needs assessment, gender statistics and GBV, UNODC in the area of crime classification for statistical purposes, and the Office of Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the International Organization for Migration and others in the area of early warning and disaster response. Until recently, engagement with the GEF Small Grants Programme, FAO and UNEP (beyond the joint programme, see finding 3) has been more sporadic, limited to the provision of advice on specific outputs, with vertical funding considered less of an incentive to coordination than bilateral resources.

Since 2019, UNDP has significantly enhanced its participation in joint assessments and programming (see also findings 2 and 3) and established a memorandum of understanding with UNEP to share project resources for the implementation of conservation activities in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. UNDP also strengthened its programmatic collaboration with the GEF Small Grants Programme in two projects in Dominica, with an additional joint proposal submitted to the Green Climate Fund. Enhanced participation in joint programmes was said to result both from requests and incentives put in place by donors and headquarters, as well as good relationships established between agencies at country level. This has not, however, eliminated competition for resources, which remained intense in the case of Spotlight, for example. Interviewees explained that, while the limited capacities of United Nations agencies and national stakeholders should encourage collaboration, reliance on modest official development assistance, the absence of large pooled/joint funds, and the high transaction costs of joint work create powerful incentives for competition.

Interviews provided both positive and negative feedback on the perceived quality and effectiveness of partnerships. On the one hand, UNDP was considered a natural partner because of its large footprint in the region,<sup>103</sup> allowing more sustained engagement with national governments. Interviewees also volunteered that UNDP had a very good track record in mobilizing resources and creating networks. On the other hand, some interviewees commented that partnerships were more opportunistic than strategic, and pointed to the risk of UNDP spreading its resources too thinly, becoming invested in too many projects without sufficient capacity to follow-up. The 2019 functional review partly addressed this latter point by appointing a dedicated staff member to work on joint programmes. Experiences with jointly-implemented programmes revealed the value of regular meetings to keep delivery on target and ensure coherence, and the need for further work

<sup>102</sup> Fewer than half of respondents to the 2020 partnership survey considered UNDP as a provider of innovative solutions. This is 5 percent less than the global average, and 7 percent less than the regional bureau.

<sup>103</sup> Source: United Nations MCO review, United Nations Development Coordination Office, 2019

on the harmonization and synchronization of administrative procedures and reporting. The delinking of the Resident Coordinator from UNDP was considered both an opportunity for UNDP to free up more resources to support its programmes, and a challenge to better define its identity. The MCO Review recommendation to the Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) to enhance out-posted capacities raised questions on how to most effectively coordinate UNDP programmatic country support, which at the time of this ICPE were yet to be answered.<sup>104</sup>

With the notable exception of CDEMA (see finding 6), and to a limited extent some other projects in the area of renewable energy (see finding 8), UNDP has not worked significantly with regional organizations. In the absence of core resources to support its limited implementing capacity, collaboration with OECS has not featured highly in UNDP work, with the Commission mostly relying on the assistance of international financial institutions to support its work on statistics development, marine resources management and juvenile justice. Support to OECS was limited to the area of statistics development, and decreased over time. The involvement of the CARICOM Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, which was intended to host the network for the regional information system under CARISECURE, did not materialize as planned.

Beyond recent Blue Lab efforts, UNDP did not extensively partner with the private sector or promote public-private partnerships. Collaboration with civil society organizations has also been fairly limited, although the partnership with the University of the West Indies has resumed importance, with a number of collaboration opportunities leveraged through the new Memorandum of Understanding on the Blue Economy.

**Finding 14. Financial resources.** UNDP mobilized a significantly higher amount of resources than expected, mostly addressing reconstruction and recovery needs after the 2017 hurricanes and the COVID-19 response. Funding to other areas of work was in line with targets, and derived from more diversified sources than in the past. While financial sustainability remains high-risk, revenue from resource mobilization efforts, including the cost-sharing agreement with the Government of Dominica, granted the MCO valuable short-term stability.

The impact of the 2017 hurricanes significantly altered the UNDP programme of work, compelling national governments, international organizations and donors to refocus their priorities and reorient their programmes of work to provide support to the countries' most immediate needs. In 2017, more than 90 percent of mobilized resources supported the disaster response,<sup>105</sup> and in the following years UNDP, international and bilateral partners provided dedicated resources to this end for a total of \$14.8 million.<sup>106</sup> Some projects also adapted their activities to support livelihoods in the affected countries (particularly Dominica).<sup>107</sup>

Given the funding mobilized to support the hurricane responses, and the agreement signed with the Government of Dominica to promote climate-resilient infrastructure development and social protection, the total UNDP budget for 2017-20 reached \$128.2 million, surpassing the target for the entire SPD (2017-2021) by 2.24 times and nearing five times the budget of the previous SPD (figure 5). Resources were mostly allocated to DRR and CCA (68 percent), followed by activities categorized under outcome 17 (including the COVID-19 response) (14 percent), natural resources

<sup>104</sup> Acting on a request by General Assembly resolution (A/RES/72/279, 2018), the MCO review recommended enhancing United Nations outposted capacities in the Caribbean, providing three options: i) coordination officers in all or a subset of countries; ii) outposting a senior officer in Barbados while considering country coordination officers in a sub-set of countries; iii) increasing technical capacities in some countries according to needs, vulnerabilities and existing support, such as for example a resilience and disaster risk management/response coordinator. The draft roadmap for implementation of the MCO review (August 2020) foresees the establishment of a Regional Coordination Office in Barbados and seven outposted coordination officers in the Caribbean.

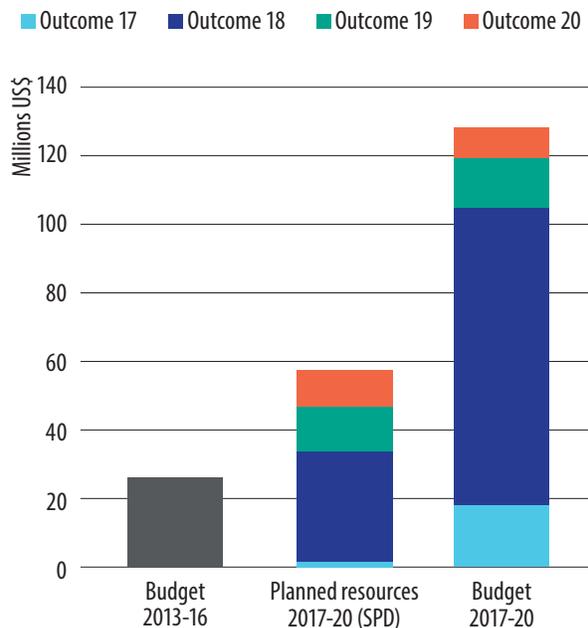
<sup>105</sup> ROAR 2017

<sup>106</sup> Source: ICPE analysis of data extracted from Atlas

<sup>107</sup> The JCCCP project accommodated some recovery interventions, using the Post Disaster Needs Assessment to focus its work. The request advanced by the Governments to redirect GEF resources to communities impacted by the disasters could instead only partially be met, as it fell outside the agreed framework.

and ecosystem conservation (11 percent), and citizen security (9 percent). Within the DRR and CCA portfolio, despite the considerable growth of reconstruction and recovery expenditure, resources allocated to climate change, disaster preparedness and renewable energy remained higher in absolute terms than response funds. This suggests a continuous and growing interest by some donors and governments to support longer-term climate change adaptation and mitigation (figure 6). With the portfolio growth, the MCO staff configuration also visibly changed, with human resources doubling from 2016 to an average of 45 personnel in 2020. These included service contractors and staff members in six countries other than Barbados, whose presence was reportedly very important not only to support the hurricane responses, but also to enhance relationships with national governments.<sup>108</sup>

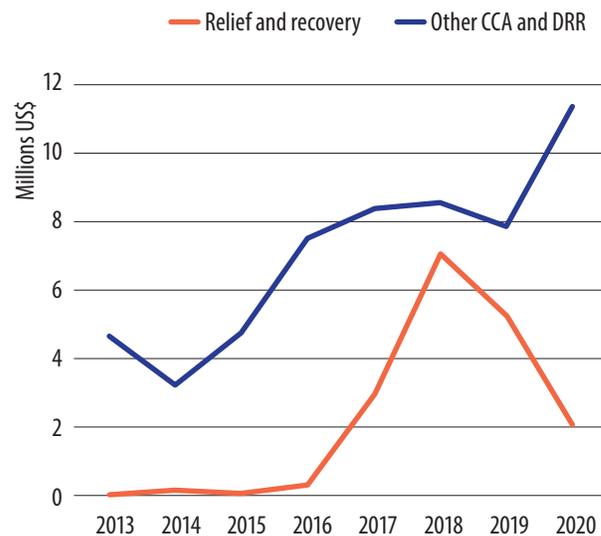
**FIGURE 5. UNDP resource increase (compared to planned resources and previous cycle)**



The ICPE was not able to run a precise analysis of resource allocation by country, as regional and multi-country projects on Atlas did not always disaggregate the budget figures accordingly. This resulted in a disproportionate amount of resources seemingly being allocated to Barbados (as the central office of UNDP in the region, see figure 7). As far as the system allowed, the ICPE found that, compared to the previous SPD, resource allocations had increased in all countries, with the highest change recorded in countries hit by the 2017 hurricanes (Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda in particular) and/or propelled by national resources (Dominica).<sup>109</sup>

Until recently, GEF has remained the main donor to the UNDP programme (\$23.1 million over 2017-20). However, UNDP was able to mobilize a more diversified funding base, which is vital to MCO functioning given the very limited amount of core resources available (an average of \$0.52 million per year). Thanks to larger contributions by the Governments

**FIGURE 6. UNDP CCA/DDR portfolio: recovery and reconstruction vs other resources**



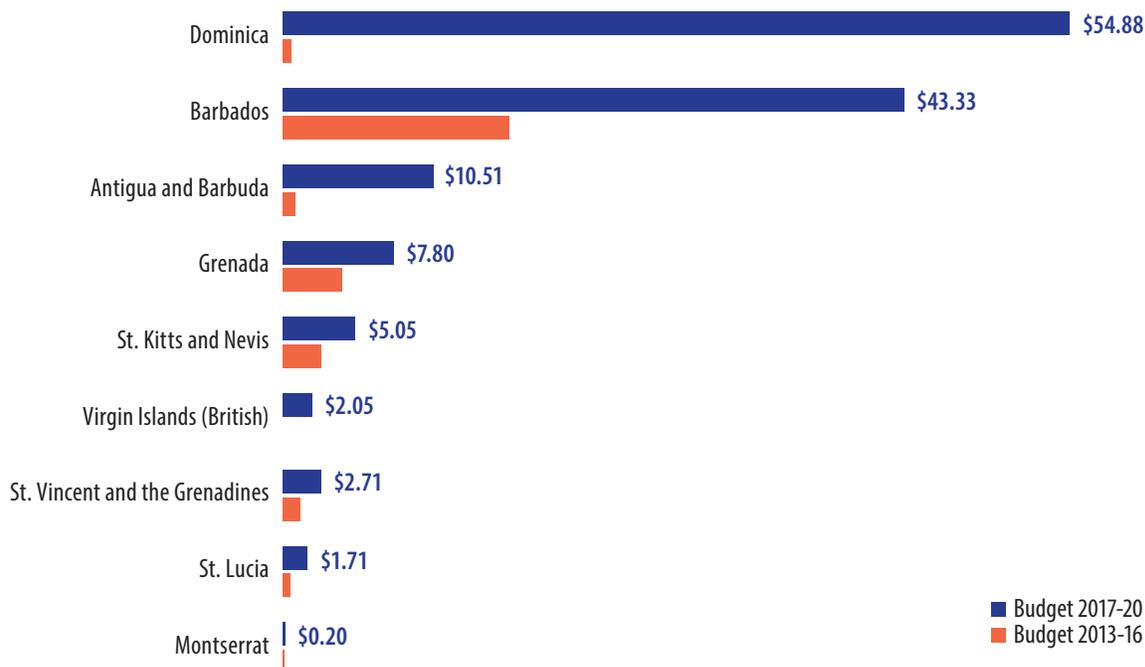
<sup>108</sup> In 2020 the MCO had 15 local staff, five international staff, 19 service contracts and two United Nations Volunteers Programme (UNV) volunteers. 46 percent are male. Source: UNDP office in Barbados; Atlas for the number of service contractors in countries other than Barbados.

<sup>109</sup> Dominica saw a record 84 x increase in its resources, followed by Antigua and Barbuda (x 11) and British Virgin Islands (which had not received dedicated resources in the previous SPD). In the other countries, the resource increase ranged from 36 percent (Montserrat) to 226% (Saint Lucia).

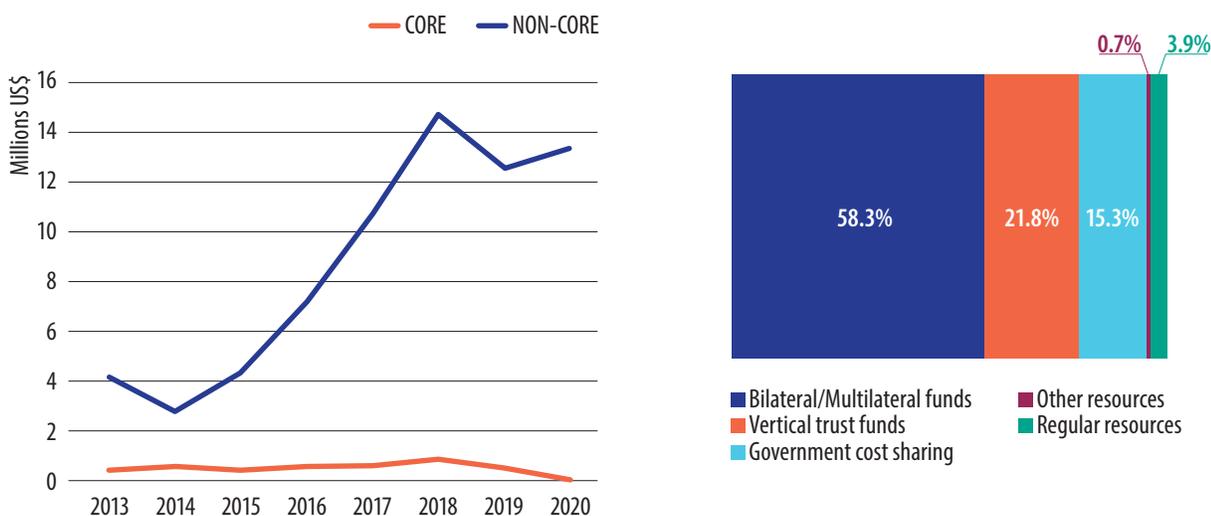
of Japan, the United States of America, the People’s Republic of China, India and the European Union, bilateral and multilateral funds have become the main source of UNDP funding (58 percent of expenditure over 2017-20). The increased portfolio brought

UNDP \$4.1 million in direct project costs and general management support fees between 2017 and 2019.<sup>110</sup> Government cost-sharing remained very limited until 2020,<sup>111</sup> when the MCO signed an agreement with the Government of Dominica (see finding 5).

**FIGURE 7. UNDP budget by country, (Million US\$)**



**FIGURE 8. UNDP resources (core and non-core) and expenditure sources**



<sup>110</sup> Source: UNDP MCO data

<sup>111</sup> Only the Government of the British Virgin Islands provided \$1 million to support reconstruction efforts.

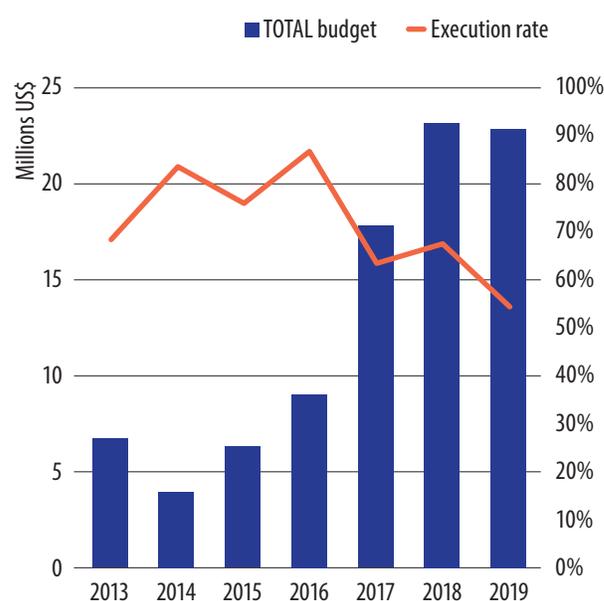
Despite notable growth in resources mobilized overall in the period 2017-2020, UNDP dependence on external funds continues to raise concerns about its financial sustainability. As acknowledged in the 2019 functional review, the phasing out of large projects such as JCCCP and CARISECURE, and the gradual transition out of recovery, means that UNDP needs to “aggressively pursue other opportunities”. While some stakeholders argued for a review of the criteria for core resource distribution in highly vulnerable SIDS countries,<sup>112</sup> others considered it necessary to continue pursuing alternative funding opportunities. Without a resource mobilization strategy, in 2019-20 the MCO has created an ambitious pipeline<sup>113</sup> and successfully sought opportunities for joint programming, cost-sharing and new projects (funded by GEF, the Government of Japan and the Government of India) on climate-resilient agriculture, gender-responsive disaster management, and the COVID-19 response. The partnership for the Caribbean with international financial institutions has not materialized as planned. While recognizing the value of UNDP technical assistance to the implementation of loans, interviewees expressed some scepticism about the financial and political appeal of the proposal, with international financial institutions seeing UNDP as more of a competitor. Resources from the Green Climate Fund were not pursued as planned in the SPD. Interviewees also expressed different opinions on the possibility of further cost-sharing by Governments. Despite the agreement with Dominica and dialogue with the British Virgin Islands about opening a new office, stakeholders remained uncertain about the overall ability of governments to contribute their own resources to UNDP-managed projects, given their high debt-to-GDP ratios and the current financial climate.

**Finding 15. Efficiency.** The inflow of programmatic resources for disaster recovery and the implementation of a few large projects in other areas was not

accompanied by adequate operational strengthening and risk management. UNDP delivery was affected by significant delays in procurement processes, limited resources of national institutions for project management, and stretched internal resources to cover the larger portfolio.

The three-fold increase in budget allocations in 2017-2019 compared to the previous three-year period was accompanied by a notable decrease in programme delivery (figure 9), with an overall reduction in the execution rate from 87 percent in 2016 to 54.5 percent in 2019.<sup>114</sup> The execution rate was particularly low in the area of sustainable ecosystem management, where GEF-projects (which started in 2014-2016) all obtained a 12-18 month extension (until 2020-2021), yet still reported an average delivery rate of 51.5 percent.<sup>115</sup>

**FIGURE 9. UNDP budget and execution rate, 2013-2019**



<sup>112</sup> See also the Secretary-General's report on development cooperation with middle-income countries (A/RES/72/730) and “Measuring vulnerability: A Multidimensional Vulnerability Index for the Caribbean”, CDB Working Paper No. 2019/01

<sup>113</sup> The 2019-22 pipeline included 21 projects for a total budget of \$110 million, seven of which classified as hard/soft pipeline. This represents a significant increase in ambitions from the 2017-2020 pipeline, which included 16 project ideas for \$41.4 million. Of the \$110 million, \$31 million are categorized under outcome 18; \$17 million for outcome 20; and \$8 million for outcome 19 and blue economy. The remaining \$59 million is not classified.

<sup>114</sup> 2020 figures have not been included in this analysis, as they would have provided only a partial reflection of delivery.

<sup>115</sup> Delivery rate was highest for outcome 20 (69.9 percent), followed by outcome 17 (63.9 percent) and outcome 18 (62.6 percent). Source: ICPE analysis of Atlas data.

Based on interviews and desk reviews, the ICPE identified three key drivers behind the reduced execution rate. First, as UNDP decided to implement high-intensity procurement reconstruction projects, the limited availability of equipment in the region, modest interest by international suppliers for small procurement volumes, and a technologically inadequate banking system all challenged timely delivery, resulting in important delays. These were most apparent for interventions that required several small technical procurement processes. While challenging external circumstances played an important role, documents and interviews acknowledged that UNDP was initially ill-equipped to support the hurricane response, due to limited staff resources, lack of standard operating procedures to secure proper management of large procurement contracts, and no pre-existing agreements with suppliers.<sup>116</sup> The recruitment of an international operations manager and a dedicated procurement assistant, together with the support of the regional hub and headquarters, gradually contributed to improving processes and strengthening operational capacity.<sup>117</sup> Procurement delays continued to be registered across all areas, however, with two officers covering a large portfolio, mostly implemented through Direct Implementation Modality (DIM),<sup>118</sup> and with a high number of consultants recruited to provide services. Reports and final evaluations commented on the need for better planning to avoid delays in the procurement of relevant goods and services. The importance of considering procurement as an integral part of any technical support was unanimously shared as a key lesson learnt.<sup>119</sup>

The limited human resource capacities of national institutions were a second factor affecting the timely delivery of projects. This was particularly so for National Implementation Modality (NIM) projects,

which reported a lower average execution rate (54 percent) than DIM projects (65 percent).<sup>120</sup> In several cases, project partners could not implement the agreed deliverables on time, with only a few national officers acting as focal points for multiple projects and organizations, amidst competing national priorities. General elections and government restructuring brought shifts in ministerial portfolios which required re-engagement, delaying project delivery. Ineffective planning and management played a further role, with 54 percent of the NIM projects sampled by the ICPE considered to have poor sequencing of activities (*vis-à-vis* 20 percent of DIM projects).<sup>121</sup> Audit reports and other spot-checks by the MCO noted insufficient supporting documentation as well as inconsistent verification of assets and equipment, financial management deficiencies and ineffective oversight, and commented on the limited capacity of national implementing partners to undertake procurement and contract management in a timely and transparent manner, at times forcing a change in implementing partner.<sup>122</sup> Acknowledging the capacity gap, stakeholders advocated for closer collaboration through projects, including when relying on external expertise, to facilitate knowledge transfer and build more sustainable capacities. Interviewees also advocated for training of national counterparts on United Nations procedures as a measure to reduce backlogs and delays.

The limited absorption capacity and high staff turnover of the MCO constituted a third, albeit less significant, factor affecting delivery. Despite growth in the number of staff and service contract personnel, resources were stretched, with one programme staff member supervising the entire outcome 18 and 19 portfolio, and one covering support to statistics, SDGs, the health insurance project, new projects on social protection and the integration of gender into

<sup>116</sup> The MCO had only one associate covering both technology support and procurement.

<sup>117</sup> UNDP secured the delegation of increased procurement authority; established a SOP for procurement; automated the vendor management processes; and established long-term agreements with travel agencies and unarmed security management services for the entire United Nations.

<sup>118</sup> 74 percent of expenditures fell under the DIM category and 26 percent under the supported NIM.

<sup>119</sup> Interviews and document reviews, including: the audit of the UNDP country office in Barbados (2017), the After-Action Review of UNDP response to hurricanes Irma and Maria (2018), and the Identification of lessons learnt from the response to hurricanes Irma and Maria (2019) and several project evaluations.

<sup>120</sup> ICPE analysis of Atlas data

<sup>121</sup> ICPE analysis of a purposive sample of UNDP projects

<sup>122</sup> Audits were conducted for seven projects. In 2018, UNDP conducted a spot check of GEF projects in Dominica.

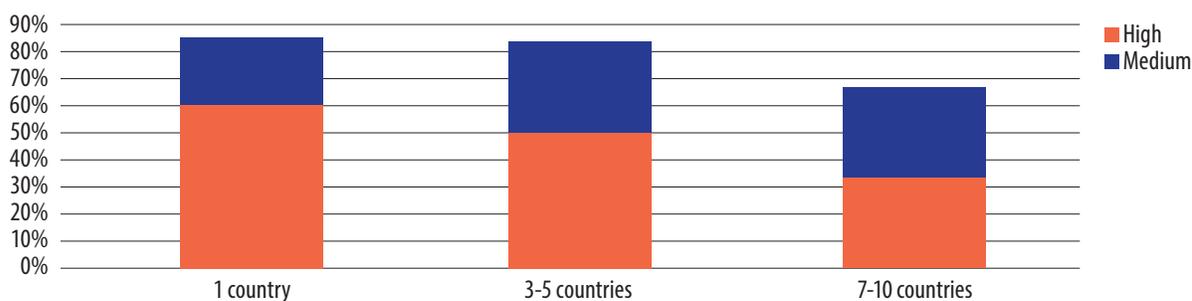
other portfolios. The MCO also experienced delays in project staff recruitment and high turnover.<sup>123</sup> At the same time, until May 2019, the Deputy Resident Representative was performing the function of interim Resident Representative. Acknowledging these challenges, the 2019 functional review promoted, amongst other measures, the separation of the prevention and recovery portfolio from GEF projects on sustainable ecosystem and renewable energy, and the reinforcement of positions to cover the poverty reduction and inequality portfolio. Given the challenging financial situation of the MCO (see finding 15) and the need to retain resources in case of another extreme weather event, a number of project personnel were transferred from concluding DRR/CCA projects to other areas. This was advantageous in terms of continuity and efficiency, while losing some depth in terms of technical expertise.

**Finding 16. Multi-country coverage.** The effectiveness of UNDP was challenged by the breadth of its coverage, with resources thinly spread across countries. While the average delivery of multi-country

projects did not significantly diminish, project effectiveness and sustainability appear to be inversely proportional to the number of countries covered, with diminishing returns for multi-country projects, in particular those covering more than seven countries.

The UNDP programme in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean featured a combination of national, multi-country and regional projects, each covering an average of five countries.<sup>124</sup> As in other MCO contexts, overall project effectiveness is challenged by two opposing considerations: on one hand, physical presence at country-level and targeted support to governments is deemed more conducive for stronger and effective relationships with national stakeholders; on the other, a mandate to cover multiple countries with different institutional structures, limited financial resources and high travel costs favours more normative or standardized initiatives, and more regional mechanisms for tools and guidance which can later be institutionalized at national levels.

**FIGURE 10. Medium-high effectiveness and sustainability perspectives of projects by number of countries covered**



	Gap between 1 and 3-5 countries	Gap between 1 and 7+ countries	Gap between 3-5 and 7+ countries
High-medium effective	2%	18%	16%
High effective	10%	27%	17%

<sup>123</sup> The UNDP human resources function covers recruitment for UN Women, UNV and RCO. The MCO reported an average of 24 vacant positions /recruitment processes in 2019-20. Turnover was particularly noted in the case of the CARISECURE, the Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity of Women, and GEF outcome 19 projects. Of the three GEF conservation projects, only one kept the same coordinator and assistant through its duration. The project in Dominica has had three project coordinators and two project assistants in four years. In Grenada, the official project coordinator was hired in November 2018 (four years after the project start), and a financial and administrative assistant six months later. In the case of the Women in Disaster Risk Management project (which started in April 2018), an interim project coordinator was hired in September 2019, the call for the gender analyst position was relaunched for the third time in November, and the project associate was expected to be on board from January 2020.

<sup>124</sup> Projects that started in 2020 were not included in the analysis as too recent to allow an adequate assessment of their effectiveness.

Notwithstanding the challenges encountered with procurement and delivery (see finding 15), to a great extent the ability of UNDP to execute projects has not been determined by the size of the programme or number of countries covered. ICPE analysis revealed that, when disaggregating delivery data by the number of countries covered and weighting financial delivery by project duration, the average execution rate did not significantly differ by number of countries covered, with a minimum of 59 percent (for projects that covered 3-5 countries) and a maximum of 63 percent (for those covering one country). Projects that covered more than seven countries and had more staff capacity, including support to procurement, were in-between, with an average execution rate of 62 percent. However, this analysis did reveal diminishing returns in terms of the effectiveness and sustainability perspectives of multi-country projects, as shown in figure 9.<sup>125</sup> The percentage of projects rated as having medium-high perspectives of effectiveness and sustainability diminished from 85 percent in case of one-country projects to 83 percent for projects covering three to five countries, and 67 percent when more than seven countries were targeted. When isolating highly-effective projects, the gap between one-country and multiple-country projects increased, while not much difference was reported between multi-country projects covering three or more countries.

Although the number of projects analysed does not allow for broader generalization of findings, interviewees agreed that multi-country projects, particularly those targeting seven or more countries, faced significant challenges in terms of effectiveness and sustainability, for “they give management little choice than adopting a standardized approach instead of meeting countries where they are, starting from zero where some capacities already existed

and going too fast in countries which needed more support”.<sup>126</sup> Interviewees and evaluations acknowledged that the time and resources needed to work with individual governments (rather than through regional organizations, as in the case of regional projects) had been significantly underestimated at the time of planning, resulting in delays, numerous adaptations, and some confusion over timelines and expected results. In both the CARISECURE and JCCCP projects, the management decided to shift to a more focused approach to implementation midstream, cutting some project components and reducing the duration of the pilot initiatives. This was deemed appropriate, but affected relationships with some national stakeholders and the morale of community participants, “as if the momentum was lost”.

In terms of institutional mechanisms, the creation of national task forces (such as CARISECURE) or technical working groups (such as the Multidimensional Poverty project) in every country, while generally praised for information sharing and the promotion of institutional change, did not work as well as expected, and the majority of stakeholders reduced engagement over time.<sup>127</sup> Where national project coordinators with clear mandates existed, they played a role in ensuring better performance and ownership, although not enough evidence was available to establish a causal relationship. The MCO assumption of responsibilities beyond Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean was said to have worked well, once clarity had been achieved around roles and expectations vis-à-vis the regional hub, and funds had been distributed to countries to create more ownership. However, in the case of the Ten Islands Challenge project, the lack of direct contact with countries outside of the region before the project started created inefficiencies during implementation.

<sup>125</sup> The ICPE used a traffic light system to assess the effectiveness and likelihood of sustainability of a purposive sample of projects. A total of 29 projects (20 covering one country; six covering three-five countries; and three covering more than seven countries) were rated according to a three-scale system: effective projects (on track with delivery, or have already achieved outputs which are likely to contribute to the intended outcomes with good perspectives in terms of sustainability); somewhat effective projects (outputs will in some cases lead to the expected behavioural/institutional change, impacting the project’s overall sustainability) and not effective projects (outputs not likely to contribute to the expected change at outcome level).

<sup>126</sup> Extract from an interview.

<sup>127</sup> The midterm evaluation of the CARISECURE project acknowledged that “a non-trivial number of agencies appeared to show unfamiliarity with the project or to be disengaged from its work”.

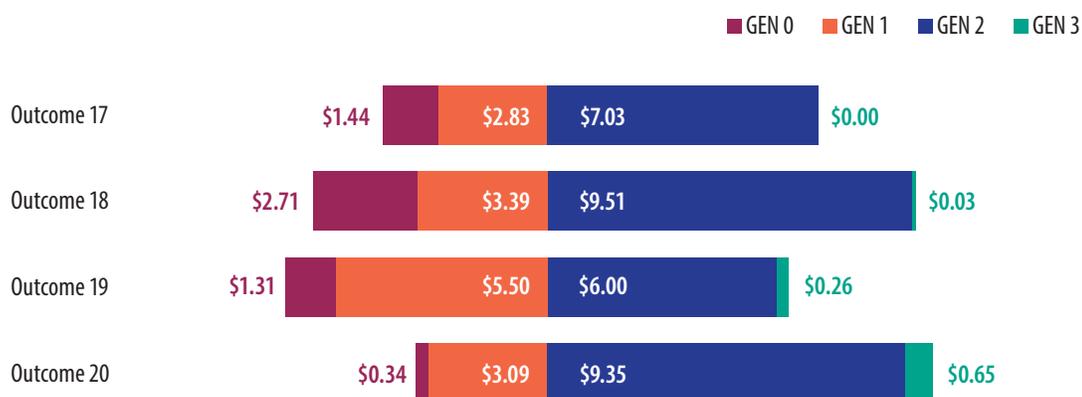
**Finding 17. Gender.** UNDP has not sufficiently considered gender in the planning and implementation of its work. Until recently, most of its capacity-building interventions have only been gender-targeted, with a focus on participation and data disaggregation. Almost no initiative had a gender-responsive or transformative approach.

Most UNDP capacity-building interventions have been gender-targeted, with attention paid to the number of women involved in project activities including training and pilots, and with an average 30 to 45 percent of beneficiaries being women. Data disaggregation was an integral part of UNDP work on national statistics development and citizen security, with dedicated support to crime victimization surveys that covered GBV. The involvement of the UNDP regional team in the regional EWS project ensured that gender considerations were included in checklists, to the extent possible.

Until 2019, the UNDP programme did not include any gender-responsive or transformative projects.<sup>128</sup> While the majority of expenditures were labelled as GEN2,<sup>129</sup> document reviews and interviews recognized that gender equality had not been a significant

objective, with some projects not meeting the GEN2 requirement as planned. Weaknesses in project design and limited integration of gender analysis prior to the development of outputs affected the extent to which projects were able to promote gender equality and equity. In the area of natural resource conservation, for example, no robust gender analysis taking into account women’s access to resources and opportunities was conducted, with the only gender-responsive socioeconomic assessment in Saint Kitts and Nevis not being used due to its low quality. The after-action review of the 2017 hurricane response also indicated that consideration of gender equality and the empowerment of women had been weak at all levels of analysis, planning and programming. As acknowledged in the final evaluation of the Ten Islands Challenge project, “unless a specific gender approach that fully addresses the different needs of men or women is developed early on, the promotion of gender equality will not occur”. This trend was reversed by the approval in 2019 of the Strengthening Disaster Management Capacity of Women in Dominica” project (whose title is misleading in terms of women-specific targeting), the En-gender joint programme, and UNDP participation in Spotlight (see findings 2 and 7).

**FIGURE 11.** Expenditure by gender marker and outcome, 2017- 2020, (Million US\$)



<sup>128</sup> IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale

<sup>129</sup> UNDP gender marker system. GEN0: outputs are not expected to contribute to gender equality/women’s empowerment; GEN1: outputs will contribute in a limited way; GEN2: gender equality/ women’s empowerment is a significant objective of the output; GEN3: gender equality/women’s empowerment is the principal objective of the output.

Following the expressed commitment to strengthen gender mainstreaming in the MCO programme of work (Integrated Work Plan 2019), senior management appointed a gender focal point and developed standard operating procedures for more systematic integration of gender equality in projects. These standard operating procedures have yet to be completed, however, and neither have the development of the MCO Gender Equality Strategy or implementation of a comprehensive training programme materialized as planned.

**Finding 18. Results-based management. Poor design and inadequate resources affected the ability of UNDP to effectively measure behavioural and institutional changes promoted at programme and project levels. In addition to planned evaluations, a few studies on the response to the 2017 hurricanes provided important corporate-level lessons.**

The framework defined in the SPD, and monitored annually through the ROARs, does not provide a full and valid reflection of the results targeted and achieved by the MCO. This is, in part, a result of the UNDP need to adapt its workplan to support the 2017 hurricane responses. Furthermore, a planned revision was never realized. In any event, the SPD results framework does not allow assessment of UNDP contributions to results at levels higher than outputs, as the selected outcome-level indicators do not provide a meaningful measure of targeted behavioural change or aggregate impact. For example, the results framework provides no information on the intended conservation benefits of UNDP work, nor the ultimate goal of UNDP support to national statistical development. Furthermore, the use of “number of countries” to measure change at output level limits measurement of the extent of UNDP support. Only in a few cases do indicators refer to specific measures implemented at country level.

Design and resource issues affected monitoring at project level. Because of the complex nature of some multi-country projects, frequent changes in project plans, and/or limited internal discussion on how to move from design to implementation, project reporting (including through the resources and results framework) was focused on individual activities and outputs, without systemic conceptualization of changes that would promote higher-level effectiveness and sustainability. Reviews and evaluations often commented on poor/ambitious project designs with unclear outcome indicators. Budget constraints affected the capacity of programme officers and coordinators to conduct regular monitoring (outside of participation in steering committee meetings), and field visits were said to vary extensively, depending on the type of project, the coordinator’s workload, and – at times – personal preferences. Interviewees and reports noted the importance of building trusted relationships for efficient project implementation, acknowledging the value of regular bilateral meetings to facilitate decision-making. Providing access to organizational knowledge and project management tools, as well as advocacy by UNDP senior management, allowed some of the bottlenecks to be overcome and helped to enhance national buy-in.

When resources allowed, as in the case of the JCCCP project, the presence of a dedicated M&E function significantly improved project monitoring and research. Overcoming challenges in the design of the results framework,<sup>130</sup> monitoring tools with quarterly targets were developed, and periodic site visits were organized, with the help of third-party monitoring. The Integrated Climate Change Adaptation Strategies programme in Grenada also hired a consultant to support data collection against selected indicators, and produced a manual for monitoring community-level climate change adaptation projects, although little could be done to compensate for inconsistent tracking and recording by the pilot

<sup>130</sup> The midterm evaluation indicated that the project results framework was not adequately results-oriented, with clearer indicators and end of project targets.

project leads.<sup>131</sup> In the case of CARISECURE, the ambitious M&E plan was implemented in a very limited fashion, as the monitoring function was integrated into the deputy team leader position, which had long been vacant.

At corporate level, a dedicated M&E function was considered an important added value, but a difficult position to maintain given the high workloads and limited capacities of the office. Audit reports and strategic documents acknowledged that “maintaining a consistently high level of programme quality required improved tools and systems [...], coupled with effective training for project and programme teams to effectively apply them”,<sup>132</sup> the MCO did not allocate adequate resources to this end. The M&E specialist hired in 2018 focused on other office priorities until mid-2019, and continued to work mostly on programme implementation after that. A revision of the project monitoring template following the recommendation of the 2017 audit did not materialize as planned, with limited management support to overcome organizational inertia. Cooperation between programme and financial quality assurance has not worked as effectively as expected, with the respective oversight roles yet to be clearly defined. Some improvements were registered in terms of the better integration of Project Approval Committee recommendations into project design, and in follow-up actions to evaluation recommendations. In August 2020, as a result of the functional review, UNDP strengthened its M&E corporate function by hiring a dedicated officer.

Since 2017, the MCO completed nine project evaluations, covering 31 percent of the programme budget.<sup>133</sup> All large projects have been (or plan to be) evaluated, in alignment with the UNDP Evaluation Guidelines,<sup>134</sup> with the exception of the Regional Recovery Plan for the Caribbean Post Hurricanes and the engagement facility for DRR/CCA. Importantly, two reports on lessons learnt from the UNDP initial hurricane responses were produced, with important lessons to be shared and learnt at corporate level in terms of effective response to disasters.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>131</sup> The project demanded use of the UNDP Vulnerability Reduction Assessment approach to monitor and evaluate community-level interventions. The M&E manual is available at <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/resources/manual/monitoring-and-evaluation-manual-community-climate-change-adaptation-fund>

<sup>132</sup> ROAR, 2017

<sup>133</sup> Four GEF project evaluations and five evaluations of other donor-funded projects (European Union, GIZ and Japan). IEO has quality assured three of the reports: two were considered “moderately satisfactory” and one “moderately unsatisfactory”. Five additional project evaluations (including four for GEF projects) are planned until 2021, covering 48 percent of the programme budget.

<sup>134</sup> <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/guideline/section-2.shtml>

<sup>135</sup> After Action Review of UNDP response to hurricanes Irma and Maria (2018) and Lessons Learnt to improve UNDP multi-country operational response in SIDS contexts (2019)

## CHAPTER 3

# CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



This chapter presents the evaluation conclusions on UNDP performance and contribution to development results in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean, alongside recommendations and the management response.

## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** Through strong leadership, effective resource-mobilization efforts, and extended partnerships with other United Nations agencies, UNDP has significantly enhanced its programme in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean. With a larger physical presence in the region, UNDP has promptly responded to the different priorities and emerging needs of Governments, though attempts to create networks and partnerships between and within countries were somewhat less effective.

Since 2017 the UNDP programme has grown in size and breadth, with the mobilization of a significantly higher amount of resources than planned in support of the sustainable development of Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean States. The UNDP decision to expand its footprint outside Barbados is well aligned with the UNDP commitment to strengthen support to SIDS, and facilitated strong relationships with the national Governments and a prompt response to the countries' emerging needs. With few exceptions, the UNDP approach to change has been primarily "vertical" - in direct support of government priorities - with fewer opportunities for partnerships and collaborations with private sector and civil society explored. UNDP potential to facilitate knowledge exchange among countries, including across the OECS, has not been fully leveraged.

**Conclusion 2.** UNDP work in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean has appropriately focused on environmental vulnerability and climate change, addressing the risks and effects that shocks to the countries' fragile ecosystems can have in terms of biodiversity conservation and socioeconomic development. Insufficient resources were made available to support inequality reduction and reduce economic vulnerability, with stronger positioning through partnerships since 2019.

Due to their marine and coastal ecosystems, the Eastern Caribbean islands are among the most important biodiversity hotspots in the world. UNDP work in the region has aptly responded to the need to mitigate vulnerability to environmental degradation (on which much of their tourism economy also depends) and respond to natural disasters, whose magnitude has been exacerbated by the consequences of climate change. UNDP support to national plans and energy regulations, as well as pilot interventions at community level across the region, provided valuable contributions to mitigate or reverse the effects of climate change, although it is still too early to assess their impact. Other UNDP portfolios have been significantly less developed. This is partly as a result of the limited resources available from donors, but also due to a narrower vision of UNDP contribution to poverty eradication focused on data, where UNDP lost ground to CDB poverty assessments. With a fuller understanding of the countries' economic fragility, UNDP has gradually shifted its strategic positioning to a stronger focus on inequality reduction (particularly for women), although there is space for more support in the area of sustainable employment following the outbreak of COVID-19. UNDP work on governance and citizen security issues, which is relevant to partner countries' needs, remains less well-defined.

**Conclusion 3.** Driven by the commitment to respond promptly to countries' needs and, to some extent, mobilize resources to sustain its work, UNDP has engaged in a high number of projects. This has stretched both its operational and programmatic capacity, with important lessons to be learnt for future project planning and management.

With UNDP core funds tied to countries' income levels, the MCO capacity to sustainably support the Eastern Caribbean countries' priorities and mitigate their multipronged vulnerabilities remains dependent on external funding and its ability to mobilize

resources. The prompt engagement of UNDP in reconstruction efforts and its efficient response to countries' requests for assistance signalled its strong commitment to provide support. However, the sizeable increase in portfolios challenged the limited capacity of the MCO and enhanced the risks of untimely delivery. In this context, larger projects with adequate staff support proved more effective overall.

**Conclusion 4.** The multi-country coverage of the MCO challenged project effectiveness and the sustainability of results. Project implementation was too activity-oriented, with limited attention to theories of change and the achievement of outcomes. Adequate consideration of context and capacities, as well as the availability of resources for monitoring support, proved to be key determinants of performance.

The business model of multi-country offices - combined with the small size and relatively high-income of the territories covered - has

traditionally encouraged the implementation of projects that address common priorities across multiple countries. While this model has proved effective in the case of normative work that promotes good practices and knowledge exchange between countries, the use of standardized approaches was not well suited to the complexity of change processes in operational projects, affecting their ability to achieve intended outcomes and promote sustainability. UNDP has been able to ensure delivery, despite the logistical challenges and high costs, but its limited resources have at times been spread too thinly across activities and countries, reducing its ability to tailor support at country level and effectively engage with national counterparts. Across portfolios, and independently of the number of countries covered, projects were often too ambitious in their design and did not adequately take into account national capacity constraints. With few exceptions, inadequate attention has been paid to results pathways and sustainability in project design.

## 3.2 Recommendations and management response

### RECOMMENDATION 1.



**UNDP should maintain its strategic engagement in the Eastern Caribbean islands focused on mitigation of the countries' economic, social and environmental vulnerabilities, and with a stronger focus on inequality reduction and sustainable employment.** The impact of extreme weather events has traditionally signalled the importance of continuing support to the islands' resilience, and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed the magnitude of their economic vulnerability. UNDP should continue to support Barbados and other OECS countries in their conservation efforts, to protect the marine and coastal resources which remain an important asset to their development. At the same time, UNDP should reinforce its portfolio on the reduction of poverty and socioeconomic vulnerability, given the impact of COVID-19 on jobs and livelihoods. UNDP should also take a more deliberate stance in targeting marginalized and at-risk communities throughout its portfolios. In this respect, the MCO should develop a gender equality and women's empowerment policy and standard operating procedures, with a specific focus on mainstreaming gender in DRR/CCA and natural resource management projects.

**Management response: AGREE**



The MCO agrees with the recommendation to expand its capacity to respond to needs related to poverty reduction, inequality reduction and sustainable employment to reduce socioeconomic vulnerability and target marginalized and at-risk communities, including women. To this end, a new programmatic cluster has been established with a focus on building a more robust response to poverty eradication and reducing systemic inequalities through improved governance. A gender equality and women’s empowerment policy will be developed in 2021. Resilience is at the core of the MCO programme, as the Prevention, Recovery and Resilience cluster shows. Social protection initiatives are being led by WFP and UNICEF, and expanding programming on poverty reduction will be constrained since fewer donor resources are available for poverty and governance issues than other thematic interventions, such as energy and climate change.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
Recruit a Gender Focal Point to support gender mainstreaming across the MCO programme	Oct 2020 (completed)	Senior management
Develop and operationalize a Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Plan	June 2021	PGME cluster
Develop standard operating procedures for gender-responsive programme design and implementation, with a specific focus on mainstreaming gender across the portfolio	June 2021	PGME cluster
Develop a resource-mobilization strategy for expanding MCO support, including poverty reduction and governance cluster and others	March 2021	Senior management

**RECOMMENDATION 2.**



**UNDP should seek ways to improve the delivery of its projects, by strengthening its operational support and ensuring better integration of procurement in project planning and management.** UNDP should increase its operational support to projects, particularly for higher-budget programmatic offers, to avoid delays and promote efficient delivery. Procurement officers should be kept systematically apprised of operational support needs and involved in key project management meetings. To ensure more efficient support to future recovery and reconstruction projects, working with the Crisis Bureau and the Regional Hub, UNDP should map out existing support capacities and prepare a roster of construction companies and suppliers of goods and services in the region. The opportunity to enter into long-term agreements (LTAs) with some of them should be considered.

**Management response: AGREE**



Given the increased delivery of the MCO, that has doubled since 2017, the ICPE comments about the need to strengthen operational capacity are very relevant. Specific actions to boost the capacity of procurement and human resources have started in 2020, including recruitment of a new procurement analyst (NOB), development of project-level procurement and human resources plans, launch of a procurement business processes review, and procurement training sessions for programme colleagues. Additionally, the MCO has recruited additional capacity in finance, human resources and in the Dominica team. Beyond additional human resources, the MCO has planned missions from headquarters and Regional Hub experts on procurement and human resources to revise business flows, provide training and sensitize other United Nations agencies and RCO so their demands and expectations are aligned with team capacities. These support missions needed to be cancelled due to COVID-19 and are now taking place remotely.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
MCO procurement capacity enhanced with the recruitment of a Procurement Analyst (NOB)	Nov 2020 (completed)	Senior management
Project-specific procurement plans elaborated on annual basis	Oct 2020 (completed)	Cluster leads and Procurement Unit, with support from senior management
Procurement team takes part in Programme and Operations meetings	Ongoing since 2019	Senior management
Procurement team participates in project approval committees	Jan 2021	Senior management
Establish a roster of construction companies; options to enter LTAs will be explored.	by June 2021	Procurement Unit
Facilitate support from HQ and Regional Hub experts on procurement to revise business flows, provide training and sensitize other United Nations agencies and RCO so that their demands and expectations are aligned with team capacities.	Nov 2020	Senior management
Human resources capacities enhanced with additional staff and personnel (Strategic Advisor and Human Resources Officer)	Nov 2020	Senior management
Project specific human resources plans elaborated on annual basis	Oct 2020 (completed)	Cluster leads and Human Resources Unit, with support from senior management
Procurement team takes part in Programme and Operations meetings	Ongoing since 2019	Senior management
Facilitate support from HQ and Regional Hub experts on human resources to revise business flows, provide training and sensitize other United Nations agencies and RCO so their demands and expectations are aligned with teams capacities.	Nov 2020	Senior management

### RECOMMENDATION 3.



UNDP should enhance the design and management of its projects, to better account for local context and with activities tailored to promote outcome-level change. Adequate resources should be allocated to provide quality assurance, support delivery, and promote sustained institutional strengthening, particularly in the case of NIM projects. UNDP interventions should be based on clear and realistic theories of change, with sustainability strategies informing the results pathways. In the case of multi-country projects, UNDP should promote targeted activities and outputs for each country, adapting to and building on existing institutional structures and capacities. Results frameworks should be improved, to ensure that outcomes reflect the behavioural and institutional change that UNDP aims to contribute to, rather than focusing on the number of countries in which outputs will be achieved.

### Management response: **AGREE**



With increased donor reporting requirements, corporate data requirements and increasing focus on adaptive management, the MCO has recognised the need to enhance monitoring and evaluation functions across all phases of the project and programme cycles. To date, the MCO has already recruited a dedicated M&E analyst (Sacha Lindo), with no other management responsibility, who is responsible for providing guidance on programme and projects and coordinating M&E functions. The MCO also agrees with the recommendation for UNDP to more actively build on existing national capacities, but recognises that there are often significant national capacity and financial constraints. Taking into account this recommendation, the MCO will apply a more focused approach. Therefore, small interventions that encompass different countries will be disfavoured against bigger programmes implemented in only one or two countries.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
Full-time M&E analyst recruited	Aug 2020 (completed)	Senior management
Develop and deliver training to enhance the capacity of national institutions and implementing partners to develop, implement and evaluate development projects	June 2021	PGME cluster
Develop SOPs for project design to ensure that the Procurement Unit, M&E and Gender Analyst are fully integrated into the design of theories of change, results frameworks and workplans	March 2021	Procurement Unit, PGME cluster
Implement SOPs for project design to ensure that the Procurement Unit, M&E and Gender Analyst are fully integrated into the design of theories of change, results frameworks and workplans	April 2021	Procurement Unit, PGME cluster

#### RECOMMENDATION 4.



**UNDP should further leverage its partnerships with United Nations agencies, regional organizations and non-state actors. The opportunity for UNDP to partner with non-resident agencies in areas of shared interest should continue to be explored.** Ahead of the next SPD, and in light of the implementation of the MCO review recommendations, UNDP should engage with the Office of the Resident Coordinator to define how best to configure its support to the Eastern Caribbean countries outside of Barbados. In this context, and in partnership with other United Nations agencies, UNDP should hold country-level consultations to identify opportunities for joint/ coordinated interventions to meet the countries' unmet needs, in line with the SDGs. In consultation with the regional bureau, UNDP should consider ways to strengthen its partnership with OECS, not only through direct support but taking advantage of the Organization's convening power to share knowledge and good practices. UNDP should be more innovative and promote further partnerships with the private sector and civil society, building on the example set by the Accelerator Lab.

#### Management response: **AGREE**



The MCO currently leads or participates in 5 joint programmes, participates in 2 multiagency projects and is engaged 4 joint initiatives. In addition to the MCO deepening its cooperation with UN Women, UNICEF, ILO, UNEP and other agencies on ongoing initiatives, including the SDG Fund Joint Programmes, the Trust Fund on Human Security programme and the Spotlight Initiative, the MCO also continues to work closely with other partners including the University of the West Indies and CDEMA and three non-resident agencies are active partners across these 11 ongoing initiatives. In addition, UNDPs field presence in OECS countries is actively collaborating and exchanging knowledge with other UN Agencies as is the case with PAHO, IOM, UNOPS and others; collaboration that is likely to increase with the future deployment of RCO Coordination Officers and other Agencies (e.g. WFP) planning at opening field offices in countries such as Dominica and Antigua. Moreover, in response to COVID-19, the UNDP MCO is working collaboratively with other UN agencies under the Multi-Sector Response Plan (MRP) to leverage the comparative advantages of specialised agencies and non-resident agencies to deliver its mandate as UN lead for the COVID-19 socio-economic response. To support this work, the MCO has recruited a dedicated Joint Programme coordinator to manage all elements of UNDP's contribution to the various initiatives, including the UN Trust Fund on Human Security Programme and the Joint SDG Fund Social Protection Programme. Acknowledging that engagement with some partners is facilitated through the RCO, the MCO agrees with the recommendation to more actively engage with partners, including the OECS, and in consultation with the regional bureau, to identify and develop better opportunities for joint/coordinated interventions to meet the countries' needs related to the SDGs.

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
The UNDP MCO will continue to work closely with the RCO to identify opportunities for SDG policy mainstreaming as well as other joint programme opportunities that allow agencies to leverage their comparative advantages	December 2021	All programme clusters
MCO will reach out to OECS for knowledge sharing and good practices	December 2021	Senior management
UNDP will play an active role in the formulation of Country Investment Plans	2021-2022	All clusters in support to the RCO
Private sector engagement strategy developed for the MCO	June 2021	Senior management

**RECOMMENDATION 5.** 

**UNDP should take measures to ensure the financial sustainability of its office in the Eastern Caribbean, which is supporting the needs of ten vulnerable countries.** UNDP should formulate a resource mobilization strategy for the next SPD, encompassing bilateral and vertical funds (such as GEF, the Green Climate Fund and the Adaptation Fund) as well as further exploring the opportunities for government contributions. At the same time, given the limitations and unpredictability of donor funding, the MCO should engage in a discussion with headquarters on the opportunity to receive extra core resources to mitigate the countries' vulnerabilities to environmental and socioeconomic shocks, in line with the recommendation of the evaluation of UNDP cooperation in middle-income countries.

**Management response: AGREE** 

The MCO fully supports the recommendation for improved financial sustainability and increased engagement with headquarters to receive extra core resources. Moreover, a resource mobilization strategy will be developed, and government cost-sharing agreements further explored now that the MCO has signed its first agreement of this nature. Additionally, and after the positive experience during 2020, the MCO will consolidate its partnership with the CDB. Additionally, the MCO will continue supporting initiatives to increase access to funding in the region including headquarters and regional efforts for the elaboration of a new economic classification of the Caribbean countries and the formulation of a new vulnerability index.

Key action(s)	Time-frame	Responsible unit(s)
Develop a resource mobilization strategy during the upcoming CPD development cycle for 2022-2026	December 2021	Senior management
MCO will engage in a discussion with headquarters on the opportunity to receive extra core resources	December 2021	Senior management

# ANNEXES



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/adr/barbados-oecs.shtml>

- Annex 1.** Terms of reference
- Annex 2.** Country at a glance
- Annex 3.** Country office at a glance
- Annex 4.** List of projects for in-depth review
- Annex 5.** People consulted
- Annex 6.** Documents consulted
- Annex 7.** Status of country programme action plan outcome indicators







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