

Independent country programme evaluation

MAURITIUS

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# Evaluation Brief

## Country context and UNDP programme

Over the past decade, Mauritius has achieved sustained improvements in GNI per capita, which at current levels ($12,050) places it in the top tier of upper-middle-income economies. Mauritius is currently pushing towards the World Bank’s threshold for achieving high-income status. Mauritius has done well on many social indicators, and absolute poverty is minimal. Reflecting this, Mauritius is ranked 65 in the world and second in Africa (behind Seychelles) in the 2018 Human Development Index.

Because of Mauritius’ upper-middle-income status and small population, UNDP’s resource base is constrained. UNDP’s core funding allocation to Mauritius is just $150,000 annually and given Mauritius is a donor orphan, there are few alternative sources of finance available. This means there is an almost exclusive dependence on vertical funds for programming. Within these constraints, the UNDP country office has been successful in mobilising resources from the Global Environment Facility, Adaptation Fund and the Green Climate Fund for work to address climate change mitigation and energy efficiency, climate change adaptation, biodiversity protection and management of chemicals, and hazardous waste.

## Findings and Conclusions

Government partners were complimentary about the quality and influence of UNDP’s work and continue to see the relevance and value of assistance from UNDP. Mauritius Government informants highlighted specific problems where technical support of the kind that UNDP is capable of sourcing, would continue to be valuable. They emphasized that graduation to higher income levels had not fundamentally altered the value they placed on external assistance and that as a small island state, this played an important role in helping to provide access to specialised skills which are in short supply locally.

UNDP’s strongest results have been in the contributions it has made to improved environmental management. In particular, it has provided momentum to the Government’s efforts to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar PV energy sector. It has also enabled a more comprehensive consideration of options for protecting coastal communities and assets than the Mauritius Government could have achieved on its own, supporting it to incrementally adapt to rising sea levels caused by climate change.Overall, UNDP was recognized as playing an important role in smoothing and facilitating access to funding available through global environmental and climate change organisations. Without UNDP’s local presence, it would have been much harder for the government to have accessed the quantum of support that it has.

While the environment program is performing well, a key risk and constraint relates to its reliance on external funding sources. In particular, there is a risk that the program will become fragmented, and that Government partners will be overwhelmed with the task of managing multiple environment projects. This risk is increased by the fact there is a lack of flexible resources to offset limitations that come from working within the parameters and requirements of the external funders. Given the environment portfolio is projected to expand from a portfolio value of $26 million in 2015 to one potentially worth over $100 million by 2020, there are also some significant emerging risks related to procurement, which was one of the few areas of complaint from the Mauritius government about UNDP’s support.

The program has done some useful work in the past in the governance area, but the scale of the current program is very small, and UNDP’s influence has declined with declining resources. Currently, none of the governance activities managed by the country program are operating at a large enough scale to be able to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them. Unless limited TRAC resources can be used to leverage external resources for a long-term program of work in governance, then the transaction and opportunity costs of the current TRAC funded governance engagement will be increasingly harder to justify.

UNDP’s country program document for Mauritius lacks realism about UNDP’s capacity and influence and is insufficiently prioritised. Existing human resources are too thinly spread across too many partners and activities, and performance frameworks and reporting promote an overly optimistic representation of UNDP’s capacity to influence change in the areas it works in. This tendency to spread resources thinly helps to generate goodwill across government but reduces UNDP’s capacity to increase its role as a knowledge provider and broker, which is where UNDP can be of greatest value, given Mauritius’ stage of development.

Overall, resource constraints have limited the country programme’s scope to have a significant impact on gender equality and there are no realistic mechanisms for the office to pursue UNDP’s corporate target of 15 per cent of all country programme and project budgets allocated to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women as their principal objective (GEN3). The use of the gender marker substantially overstates the program’s contribution to gender equality. Current coding practices present a risk that the UNDP management and the board will be misled about the extent to which UNDP programs are effectively promoting gender equality.

## Recommendations

The next Mauritius CPD should be far more focussed and realistic that the current one, reflecting more accurately the country office’s capacity and resources. CPD objectives, targets and indicators should only be included if there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them. Results reporting should focus on indicators that have a moderate or higher level of significance in terms of the scale or the substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has sufficient resources to make a substantive contribution to results achieved against them.

In developing its next country program document UNDP should position the program and align staffing structures and resources to support and enhance the performance its growing environment and climate change portfolio, and mitigate the risks associated with this growth.

Core funding allocations for governance in the CPD should be contingent on resource mobilization at minimum levels, or the ability of these funds to leverage contributions for UNDP’s global and regional network, or from the UN system. If additional resources cannot be mobilised for existing democratic governance work, the country office should allocate its core resources to strengthen engagement in policy development relevant to the work being undertaken in the environment portfolio.

The country office should develop a strategy for addressing gender equality that is founded on a clear-headed assessment of the scope provided by different activities to do so. This strategy should outline how gender equality will be addressed by different activities and the extent to which these can reasonably be expected to produce significant and consistent gender equality outcomes. Gender marker coding should be annually reviewed, and coding updated where necessary to ensure the data provides an accurate picture of the level of focus on gender equality of UNDP’s programmes.Acknowledgements

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP would like to thank all those who have contributed to this evaluation.

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| **IEO Team****Directorate:** Indran Naidoo (Director)Arild Hauge (Deputy Director)**ICPE Section Chief:** Fumika Ouchi**Lead Evaluator:** David Slattery**Research consultant:** Elizabeth Wojnar | **Evaluation Advisory Panel member:** Thomas Schwandt**Evaluation consultants:** Laurence Reno**Publishing and outreach:** Sasha Jahic**Administrative support:**Antana Locs |

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| **Stakeholders and partners****UNDP Mauritius staff**: Amanda Serumaga (Resident Representative), Christine Umutoni (former Resident Representative), Sujitha Sekharan, Satyajeet Ramchurn, Renooka Beejan**Other stakeholders and partners:** Government of Mauritius, representatives of the United Nations agencies, civil society, nongovernmental organizations and bilateral and multilateral development partners. |

# Foreword

It is my pleasure to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of UNDP’s work in Mauritius over the period 2017 to 2020.

The vulnerability of small island states such as Mauritius is well understood. In combination, factors such as small population, geographic isolation, limited land mass and resources, make island states particularly exposed to external shocks. The costs of adapting to climate change will be high and felt through increased coastal erosion and damage to coastal infrastructure, and salination of soil and aquifers. This risk is made more acute by Mauritius exposure to major storms.

This evaluation provides affirmation of the continuing value of the support UNDP is providing Mauritius to meet these challenges. In particular, UNDP has provided access to specialized skills which are in short supply locally (given Mauritius small population size) and has played an important role in supporting Mauritius access to external climate change and environmental management financing. Without UNDP’s local presence, it would have been much harder for the government to have accessed the quantum or quality of the support that it has accessed.

I would like to thank the Government of Mauritius, national stakeholders, and colleagues at the UNDP Mauritius country office and Regional Bureau for their support throughout the evaluation. I hope that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy.

Indran A. Naidoo

Director

Independent Evaluation Office

# Acronyms and Abbreviations

# Chapter 1. Background & Introduction

## Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP’s contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP’s strategy in facilitating and leveraging national effort for achieving development results. The ICPE addresses four key evaluation questions:

* What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
* To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
* What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP’s performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?
* What can UNDP learn from the evaluation about how it can best position itself to support small island states that are pushing towards graduation, or have graduated from ODA eligibility?

UNDP’s Mauritius current country programme runs from 2017 to 2020. This ICPE was conducted in 2018–19 to feed into the development of the Mauritius program beyond the current cycle. Intended audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Executive Board, UNDP country office, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and the Mauritius Government.

## Country context

Mauritius is a small island state in the Indian Ocean and has many of the vulnerabilities typically faced by countries in this grouping.

It is small, with a population of just under 1.3 million (158/235) in the United Nations list of the world countries and areas ranked by population. This creates labour market and capacity constraints, and also a constrained tax base from which to cover the costs of government.

It is geographically isolated, with its nearest neighbours over 1,000km away from its centre. This imposes high costs on trade. Imports are costly, and exports are less competitive. The costs of service delivery to people in remote islands is prohibitively expensive.

It is an ocean state, with limited land mass and resources, but a large marine area. Mauritius is among the largest marine territories in the world with an Exclusive Economic Zone of 1.9 million square km and a co-managed economic zone with Seychelles of 0.4 million square kilometres.

It is vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. As a coastal nation, Mauritius will have to bear the costs of sea level rises, including likely increases in coastal erosion, damage to coastal infrastructure, and salination of soil and aquifers. This risk is made more acute by Mauritius exposure to major storms. Mauritius is amongst the worlds most exposed countries to cyclones.

Mauritius strong performance demonstrates that the challenges it faces as a small island states are not insurmountable. Over the past decade, Mauritius has achieved sustained improvements in GNI per capita, which at current levels ($12,050) places it in the top tier of upper-middle-income economies. It is currently pushing towards the World Bank’s threshold for achieving high-income status. Absolute poverty is minimal, and Mauritius has done well on many social indicators. Reflecting this, Mauritius is ranked 65 in the world in the Human Development Index and is ranked second in Africa behind Seychelles.

The 2018 Global Gender Gap Report ranks Mauritius 109 out of 149 countries for gender equality.[[1]](#footnote-1) Gender inequalities in Mauritius are mainly evident in women’s low political and economic participation, despite equitable rates of educational attainment.[[2]](#footnote-2) Women represent just 11.6 percent of the parliament, and 10 percent of ministerial positions. The 2011 Local Government Act which established a one-third women quota for local election candidates has increased local representation, but Mauritius has not yet established a quota at the national level.[[3]](#footnote-3) In 2018, women’s labour force participation rate was estimated to be 45 percent, 28 points lower than the rate for men and the gender wage gap is 32 percentage points.[[4]](#footnote-4)[[5]](#footnote-5)

Notwithstanding these persistent gaps, the direction of change is positive. Women’s labour force participation increased steadily over the last decade. More women are occupying high positions in government services. The proportion of women in the most senior positions has increased from 20% to 37% over the past 20 years[[6]](#footnote-6). The government enacted the 2008 Equal Opportunities Act which prohibits gender discrimination, includes provisions against sexual harassment in employment, services, and education, and established an enforcement Equal Opportunity Commission in 2012.[[7]](#footnote-7) Gender Mainstreaming was one of the top ten priorities of Mauritian Government Government as described in the Three-Year Strategic Plan 2018/19-2020/21.

Preservation of environmental and marine assets is a significant feature of Mauritius national development strategy. This reflects the importance of marine resources to its economy, including fisheries and tourism. Tourism accounts for around 13 per cent of GDP and is an important source of foreign exchange. Gross Value Added (GVA) at current basic prices of the Tourism Sector was 8.6% in 2018.[[8]](#footnote-8)

Mauritius emphasis on environmental sustainability in their development plans reflects its vulnerability to the impacts of climate change. Given it is an insignificant contributor to global greenhouse gas emissions, efforts to develop renewables and improve energy efficiency are driven less by mitigation objectives than by offering an alternative to their dependence on imported fossil fuels which is a source of economic vulnerability.

## UNDP programme under review

Over the last six years there have been large reductions in core resource allocations to Mauritius, with core allocations in 2017 coming to just one third of allocations in 2012. Access to TRAC funds is currently very limited (roughly $150,000 annually) and as a donor orphan, there are few alternative sources of finance available. Available sources are almost entirely from environment and climate finance funds, which the Mauritius office has been successful in accessing, working with different parts of the Mauritius Government. UNDP Mauritius does receive a small amount of Government cost sharing contributions, for implementation of their programmes. The country office also received a small ($136,452) allocation of TRAC2 resources in 2019, for innovation initiatives.

Currently UNDP’s portfolio in Mauritius consists of around nine projects that are at different stages of completion (see Annex 2). All but one is climate or environment related projects funded through vertical funds including GEF (five active projects), GCF (one active project) and Adaptation Fund (one active project). There are four main areas of focus:

* ***Improved public sector management:*** The focus on governance includes support for the development of Mauritius social protection policies and systems, support for the Gender Caucus of the Mauritian parliament, and support for public sector management through work to develop business intelligence tools and client and citizen feedback mechanisms. This work is constrained by a lack of finance but continues to be a focus through a small TRAC funded project to strengthen the integration of the planning, budgeting and execution to improve public sector efficiency and achieve inclusive growth.
* ***Climate change mitigation and energy efficiency:*** Work on climate change mitigation is supported by the largest single grant mobilized by UNDP Mauritius for a $28.2m renewable energy investment project through the Green Climate Fund. This project, of a total value of $191.4 m, will be executed by the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development with support from UNDP. In addition to the GCF grant, the project financing comprises $37.9m loan from the French Development Agency (AFD) to the Central Electricity Board, $123.9m grant financing from the Mauritian government and a $1.4m contribution from UNDP.
* ***Climate change adaptation:*** With the support of the Adaptation fund UNDP is supporting the Mauritius Government to develop its approach to protecting coastal communities and assets that are under threat from climate change.
* ***Biodiversity protection:*** With funding from the GEF, UNDP has a major focus on biodiversity protection in Mauritius, supporting the Mauritian Government to develop and manage its system of protected areas covering both land and marine resources.
* **Sustainable management of chemicals, and hazardous waste:** Through GEF, UNDP is supporting the development of Mauritius systems for management, handling and disposal of chemical and waste.

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| Table 1: Mauritius Country Programme outcomes and indicative resources (2017-2020) |
| Country Programme Outcome | **Indicative resources****(US$ million)** | **Expenditures as at 5 April 2019 (US$ million)** |
| Improved public sector management supporting poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality is promoted through responsive strategies. | **Regular:** 0.9**Other:** 0.9 | 0.6 |
| Design and implementation of a portfolio of activities and solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, integration of ecosystem services approaches, sound management of chemicals and waste while ensuring that climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation are fully addressed | **Regular:** 0.1**Other:** 46.9 | 12.3 |
|  | 48.8 | 12.9 |

Source: UNDP Mauritius Country Programme Document 2017-2020 (DP/DCP/MUS/4)

Resource mobilization for governance has fallen short of expectations set out in the CPD. Opportunities to mobilize resources from bilateral donors are constrained. Mauritius strong economic performance has affected aid allocations (Figure 1). ODA has been volatile, reaching a high of around $160m in 2012, but has declined since that time, and was just one-quarter of that amount in 2016.

Figure 1. ODA to Mauritius from Official Donors, 2007–2016, constant (2017) prices, USDm

Source: OECD stat

As a middle-income country, the window for Mauritius to access development finance is still open, and the recent mobilization of a large GCF grant ($28.2m) and $37.9m French Government loan for a renewable energy project shows there are still such opportunities to do so. However, Mauritius is pushing towards graduation. With a GNI per capita of $12,050 in 2018, Mauritius is not far off the threshold for high-income status ($12,376), if the current rate of growth continues.

UNDP’s average annual spend in Mauritius has been around $6 million per annum over the last five years. With declining ODA, this makes UNDP a significant partner in Mauritius, having delivered roughly 25 per cent of Mauritius ODA receipts in recent years, largely through global environment funds.

UNDP is in the process of developing a strategic partnership framework to formalize its work in Mauritius, and it has also completed a CCA to position the UN system in the country and inform programming decisions. Reflecting the small number of resident agencies, there is no United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Mauritius.

Only three United Nations agencies are represented in Mauritius (the World Health Organization, the International Organization for Migration, and UNDP).

## Methodology

The evaluation was guided by the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms & Standards and Ethical Code of Conduct.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The evaluation approach involved a one-week fieldwork mission, 20 days of support from a national consultant, and approximately 30 days of work from the lead evaluator. The method included interviews with over 70 informants from UNDP and 16 partner organizations along with examination of government data and documentation, project documentation reporting, media reporting and previously completed, independent reviews and evaluations.

The limited time available for fieldwork meant that systematic collection and analysis of beneficiary views on project implementation and outcomes could not be gathered, nor could extensive outcome mapping be done to examine unintended consequences of projects on non-target beneficiaries. With the exception of data collected from stakeholder interviews and field observations, the evaluation did not involve primary data collection. Given these constraints, the rigour of the evaluation’s outcome assessments depends on the quality of the available documentation about the objectives and outcomes of UNDP’s work. To offset this limitation, the evaluation sought to tap into a diversity of data sources, including government data and documentation, project documentation reporting, media reporting and independent reviews and evaluations.

The projects selected for examination are identified in Annex 1. They accounted for 83 per cent of programme expenditure from 2016 to 2018. Selection was based on the following three criteria:

* the project is currently (or was) active in the current CPD period, or was a precursor to an ongoing project;
* the project is evaluable in the sense that it is mature enough (has been a focus for UNDP over a long enough period) to be able to say something meaningful about its progress and outcomes;
* the project is large enough in terms of scope, breadth of audience and investment to warrant specific attention.

To the extent allowed by existing data, actual or likely gender equality outcomes were assessed for each project included in the scope of the evaluation.

The extent to which the evaluation was able to assess outcomes from different aspects of UNDP’s work depended on the stage of completion of different components of the work. Where projects were in their early stages, the focus of the evaluation was on whether there is evidence that their design reflects learning or builds on outcomes achieved from previous projects.

The evaluation methodology included an attempt to assess the significant of UNDP reported results against objective and outcome statements included in the country programme document. This loosely follows a contribution analysis methodology developed by Clear Horizon titled [“Significant Instances of Policy and Systems Improvement”](https://www.clearhorizon.com.au/f.ashx/%24165852%24SIPSI-technique.pdf), with adaptations made to reflect the resource constraints on this evaluation.

The draft ICPE report was quality assured by two IEO internal reviewers, as well as an external expert (member of IEO Evaluation Advisory Panel), then submitted to the country office and RBA to check for factual errors and finally to the government and other national partners for comments.

# Chapter 2. Findings

This chapter outlines the findings of the evaluation about UNDP’s effectiveness in achieving its objectives in the country programme document, for each programme outcome and cross-cutting area. It also described the main factors that influenced UNDP’s performance and contributions to results. The assessment, which is qualitative in nature, was based on an analysis of the correlation between reported project achievements, their contribution to expected outputs under each outcome, and consequently the overall outcome objectives.

## Improved public sector management

## **Output 1:** Social workers and public institutions are enabled to perform core functions to fight poverty through implementation of the Marshall Plan Against Poverty

## **Output 2:** Measures in place to increase women’s capacities to participate in decision-making processes at all levels and to fight gender-based violence

## **Output 3:** Institutions enabled to optimize use of foresight and e-learning techniques, performance management tools and citizen feedback mechanisms for enhanced public sector performance

 Related CPD Outputs

**Finding 1. UNDP expected its regular resources would amount to less than USD 250,000 annually and would be able to mobilize a similar amount from other sources. Actual TRAC resources have been even less than the small amount anticipated ($150,000), and external resource mobilisation for governance activities has been limited to a small amount of Government cost-sharing (around $100,000 in 2018). To put this in context, total public-spending in Mauritius is anticipated to come to over USD 3.7 billion in 2017–18.[[10]](#footnote-10) Given these very limited resources, it is unrealistic to expect that all the activities associated with the governance objective could be addressed in any meaningful way.**

The Mauritius program’s objectives for improving governance in the 2017–2020 CPD is: *‘improved public-sector management supporting poverty reduction, social inclusion and gender equality is promoted through responsive strategies.’* Within this broad objective a wide variety of activities are identified including, working with social workers and service providers to improve services to the poor; promoting women’s leadership and decision making “at all levels”; fighting gender-based violence; developing public sector use of e-learning; improving the public sector’s use of foresight techniques, improving public sector performance management; and improving the collection and use of citizen feedback by public institutions.

The governance program is implemented by a small team of one UNDP staff member the head of the unit), and two National service contractors: a gender expert based at the Parliamentary Gender Caucus and a social protection expert (partially funded by Government Cost sharing) based at the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment. A United Nations Volunteers monitoring and evaluation officer position (fully funded by Government Cost sharing) at the Ministry of Social Integration and Economic Empowerment is vacant and expected to be filled in mid-2019. The program should theoretically have access to support from a senior international economist, but has been unable to access this support since end-2017. The economist is based in Zimbabwe, and the country office has had insufficient funding to support in-country missions required for the economist to support the work of the office.

Reflecting staffing constrains and limitations on the availability of TRAC funding, the work done under each of the three public sector management outputs is small scale compared to what is suggested by the output descriptions in the CPD. For 2018, the main activities under each of the outputs was as follows:

* ***Output 1.*** Technical assistance supporting the implementation of the Marshall Plan including staff training, analytical work , and advocacy and support for implementation of aspects of the plan that have not yet been implemented. This is a continuation of the work UNDP has done under previous strategies in support of Mauritius’ developing welfare system, including in the formulation of its Marshall Plan to fight poverty, which has been commended at the highest levels of the Mauritius government.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* ***Output 2.*** Commissioned a gender audit of the Mauritius civil service, conducted capacity building and workshops with civil servants on gender issues, and provided technical assistance to set up the Parliamentary Gender Caucus.
* ***Output 3.*** Supported a scoping mission to explore the possibility of a United Nations Technology Innovation Lab in Mauritius in collaboration with the United Nations Office of Information and Communications Technology. Also supported the Ministry of Civil Service in conducting the 9th Regional Southern African Development Community United Nations Public Administration Network Portal workshop in collaboration with UNDP South Africa and the Centre for Public Service Innovation.

The work carried out by this small team is well regarded and has been well-received and is valued by the Mauritius Government. However, the scale of the influence UNDP exerts through it is very limited.Currently none of the governance activities managed by the country program are operating at a large enough scale to be able to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them.Reflecting the resourcing trends, the extent of UNDP’s influence has declined in recent years.

Environment and natural resource management

## **Output 1:** Scaled-up action on climate change mitigation across sectors, funded and implemented

## **Output 2:** Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and subnational levels

## **Output 3:** Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, ecosystem services, chemicals, and hazardous waste

 Related CPD Outputs

The Mauritius program’s objective for improving environment and natural resource management in the 2017–2020 CPD is:

*Design and implementation of a portfolio of activities and solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources, integration of ecosystem services approaches, sound management of chemicals and waste, while ensuring that climate change challenges in terms of adaptation and mitigation are fully addressed.*

**Finding 2. Although the Mauritius program’s objective for improving environment and natural resource management is ambitious, the mobilisation of significant resources from environment funds has enabled UNDP to mount a credible response to it.** Given progress at the three-year mark of the four-year CPD, the country offices CPD delivery target of $46.9 million for the period covered by it (2017–2020) looks optimistic. However, the environment portfolio is currently projected to expand from a portfolio value of $26 million in 2015 to one potentially worth over $100 million by 2020.

Progress on each of the four outputs in the environment portfolio is assessed below.

### **Scaled-up action on climate change mitigation across sectors, funded and implemented**

**Finding 3. UNDP has developed a strong and well-respected program of work in climate change mitigation through grants from GEF and the Green Climate Fund, supporting the government to make progress in reducing its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar PV energy sector.**

Mauritius views the expansion of renewable energy generation—particularly harnessing its abundant solar radiation to supply the grid—as central to its development prospects. The key driver for this is a desire to increase Mauritius energy independence and improve its balance of payments, as well as a to reducing greenhouse gas emissions**.** This reflects the fact that over the last two decades there has been an almost threefold increase in electricity generation, which is translating into an increase in emissions of three per cent per year. Development of renewable energy sources has not kept pace with Mauritius growing needs, with 87% of Mauritius energy requirements being met by imported fossil fuels in 2018. Imported energy sources account for a close to one fifth of the value of imports.[[12]](#footnote-12)

The 2011–2017 “Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Power Generation” project, funded through a USD 2m GEF grant and Government co-financing provided technical assistance to support the development of an energy policy, and legal and regulatory framework that would promote PV grid-connected electricity generation in the country.

The project has been successful in either meeting or exceeding its objectives. For example, the project supported the installation of over 11 MW of installed capacity, compared to the 3 MW target in the design of the project. Private sector investment stimulated by the creation of a market for Solar PV generation was some 40 million USD, over double the target. This is a major change from the situation that prevailed before the project started when negligible investments were taking place in on-grid PV electricity generation. Looking forward, the Electricity Board expects that at least a further 100MW of PV will be installed by 2025.

Of course, strong leadership from the Mauritius Government has been instrumental to achieving this outcome—Government co-financing through in-kind support, feed-in-tariffs (USD 32 million) and tax exemptions for PV equipment (USD 43 million) was also fundamental to the high impact and sustainability of UNDP’s technical contributions.[[13]](#footnote-13) However UNDP also deserves significant credit for its role. Mauritius Government informants from the Central Electricity Board and recently established Mauritius Renewable Energy Authority highlighted that UNDP had been a highly effective source of support for the government towards this objective. They highlighted that the project had supported a fundamental shift in thinking in the energy sector about the role that could be played by Solar PV Power Generation.

One of the outcomes from the “Removal of Barriers” project is that it supported the establishment of a larger project to further develop Mauritius renewable energy market. ‘*Accelerating the Transformational Shift to a Low-Carbon Economy in the Republic of Mauritius,’* will be funded from a USD 28.2 million grant from the Green Climate Fund, combined with a USD 37.9 m French loan, and in-kind contributions amounting to $123.9 m from the Mauritius Government.

Approved in 2016, the project commenced implementation in 2018, which means it is too early to assess the effectiveness of this project. However, it is expected the project will enable Mauritius to fully meet its stated target of 35% renewable electricity production by 2025, which would constitute a significant transformation in Mauritius energy systems Mauritius Government’s Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) statement highlights the importance of external finance to this outcome:

*Mauritius is working towards mitigating its emissions and implementing adaptation actions. However, the proposed adaptation and mitigation activities can only be implemented in the medium and long term with necessary support from international funding agencies, grants from climate funds, transfer of appropriate and affordable adaptation and mitigation technologies, technical assistance and capacity development.* .[[14]](#footnote-14)

### **Effective institutional, legislative and policy frameworks in place to enhance the implementation of disaster and climate risk management measures at national and subnational levels**

**Finding 4. UNDP, with funding through the Adaptation fund has supported a comprehensive consideration of options for protecting coastal communities and assets, to a level that would not have been achievable by the Mauritius Government alone.**

Work on coastal erosion and flood management was conducted primarily through the USD 9.1 million “Climate Change Adaptation Programme in the Coastal Zone of Mauritius” project funded by the Adaptation Fund. The project supports the Adaptation Fund’s goal of assisting developing country parties to the Kyoto Protocol that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effectives of climate change to meet the costs of concrete adaptation projects and resilience building measures. Specifically, the project aims to test different solutions to beach erosion and flood risk from storm surges at three locations, and inform climate-proofing exercises on vulnerable sites elsewhere in the country.

The project was originally expected to run from 2012 to 2017, but after two successive 12-month extensions approved by the Adaptation Fund Board the project is currently expected to close in August 2019. These extensions reflect the complexity of the three sub-projects funded by the project, both from a technical perspective, and a social and political perspective.

The first of these sub-projects aimed to protect the small coastal community of Riviere des Galets from storm surges. The small community of Rivière des Galets is located on the southern coast of the main island of Mauritius. Open to swells from the southern Indian Ocean, the community is highly exposed to storm surges, with a failing seawall, and an inadequate drainage system. With rising sea levels, the overtopping of the seawall and the resulting inundation of the most seaward and lower lying properties will become more frequent. Already this is a serious problem, with many in the community living in fear of the next major storm surge.

Options for responding to this threat have been the subject of ongoing discussion between the Government and the community. With the support of UNDP and the Adaptation fund, the Mauritius Government completed a formal assessment of the costs and benefits of the two main options in 2015: construction of a physical barrier to protect the community, or a managed retreat.

The option pursued by the Government, with project funding was the construction of a coastal protection wall. The cost benefit analysis estimated that the benefits of the wall will be equal to, or exceed its costs if it prevents a storm surge with the capacity to flood the community within 39 years after its construction. This was the preferred option given its financial and technical feasibility compared to the more complicated and expensive measure of relocating the community. Given projected sea level rises, the chosen measure is one that buys time for the Government to develop a plan and strategy for the ultimate necessity of relocating the community.[[15]](#footnote-15)

The second major sub-project focuses on coastal protection measures at Mon Choisy, the location of one of the most popular beaches in Mauritius. Due to a variety of both human and climate related pressures, the beach has been eroding rapidly, placing its significant scenic and recreational values at risk (Box 1). To address this problem the project supported a comprehensive study and consideration of options for protecting and restoring the beach. Studies funded by the project confirmed that large investments and new technologies will need to be mobilized combined with changes in the management of the beach, lagoon and reef to improve its resilience and adaptation to climate change.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Reflecting the high profile of the location, arriving at an acceptable physical solution required extended and time-consuming discussions to agree on a design for the works to be conducted that was both technically and politically feasible, given aesthetic considerations and existing uses of the site.[[17]](#footnote-17) While there were aspects of the process that could have been improved, the evaluation team considers that overall the project made a positive contribution in providing the evidence base required to arrive at an appropriate solution.

Box 1. Supporting development of measures to protect beaches under threat from climate change

It is currently estimated that 23% of the beaches on the island of Mauritius are at risk, and that half of these beaches will be lost in the next 50 years if there is no intervention. The impact on the economy, especially through loss of tourism of this scenario is large. In human terms, it could result in the loss of income for over 13,000 people that either directly or indirectly benefit from beach tourism.

The state of Mon Choisy—one of the most popular beaches in Mauritius—is indicative of the challenges that lie ahead. An estimate of the annual total economic value of Mon Choisy found that it generates more than MUR 3 billion (or some USD 80 million) in economic value per year in tourism, recreation, water sports, fishing livelihoods, and ecosystem services. These values are under serious threat. Currently the beach is losing its shoreline of about 1-2 meters of beach width per year and recent studies indicate that the beach is at risk of disappearing from beach erosion within the next 10-15 years if no sustainable solution to the beach erosion is implemented.

This situation has arisen from a combination of anthropomorphic and natural factors. There has been a significant loss in coral cover on the forereef and back reef at Mon Choisy over the past 15 years which has reduced the reefs capacity to act as a baffle to dampen oncoming waves, and reduce water movement inside the lagoon which would help retain sediments. Loss of seagrass beds in the lagoon has affected the mobility of sediments and reduced the capacity of the lagoon to retain sand. As sea level rises due to climate change, there is the potential for enhanced erosion of the beach due to increased wave penetration.

Source: Project Proposal, Climate Change Adaptation Program in the Coastal Zone of Mauritius.

The final components were the construction of a flood proof public refuge centre and procurement of a USD$350,000 early warning system for storm surges .

**Finding 5. While the core focus of adaptation work was sensible, it has been challenging to implement with many different components, a substantial physical works component and significant interface with affected communities.**

This has affected timelines, with the project requiring two no cost extensions, and leaving a very constrained time frame for completion of works on Mon Choisy that are a central focus for the project. There is a significant risk that this will likely leave insufficient time for proper evaluation and documentation of the effectiveness of the different components of the project.

UNDP has also supported the Mauritius National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre (NDRRMC) with a number of small activities funded through the Adaptation Fund Board.[[18]](#footnote-18)

### **Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystem services**

**Finding 6.Despite some early challenges,[[19]](#footnote-19) with the dedicated teams at the Forestry Service and the National Parks and Conservation Service UNDP has achieved some good results in the area of biodiversity protection.**

Working with environment funds, the Mauritius country program has a strong focus on supporting the government to protect and enhance its ecological diversity, and in particular its protected area network. With UNDP assistance and funding from GEF, the Mauritius Government implemented the “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Protected Area Network (PAN)” project with the goal of expanding the Protected Area Network to cover an adequate portion of Mauritius ecological areas, and to strengthening its management. This addresses the fact that the protected area network in Mauritius is small and fragmented with several ecologically important private lands currently excluded from the PA system, including large habitat blocks and corridor areas. Less than 2% of the native forest now remains and only 4% of the country is covered by protected areas, well-short of the Convention on Biological Diversity target that each nation should expand its protected land area to 17% of the country’s land area by 2020. Species and native habitat are under threat from invasive species and development pressures.[[20]](#footnote-20)

The project cleared 600+ ha of invasive alien species (IAS), and prompted the Government to agree to employ 100 additional contracted laborers to continue IAS clearance. It developed Management Plans for two National Parks. It supported a review of 13 laws affecting protected area management, recommendations of which informed the development of the Native Terrestrial Biodiversity and National Parks Act (2015). This Act replaced the old National Parks Act of 1993 and provides the legal framework for the implementation of the Government’s Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy which was approved by the Cabinet in 2017 PANES, complemented by other Acts such as the Forest and Reserve Act.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**Finding 7. Unfortunately, the project has thus far fallen short of its objective of expanding Mauritius protected area network, which remains at near baseline levels because of the difficulty of establishing a framework for incorporation of private lands in the system.** Notwithstanding this shortfall, the Government’s Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy reflects a commitment to increase coverage to 16 per cent of land area by incorporating land that enjoys varying degrees of protection but falls short of the level of protection deemed effective to the extent required by the IUCN definition of Protected Areas. Ultimately, achieving effective coverage of Mauritius most important biodiversity will require incorporation private lands, which was an important target for the project that was not met. While the project helped establish a delicate relationship between the public and the private sector, it failed to broaden the involvement of the owners of private reserves. Progress on this will depend on whether the provisions of the new Act can be exploited to enable the establishment of private reserves that contribute to conservation goals while providing benefits to land owners.

Building on this work, there are currently two strands to UNDP’s focus on sustainable land management covering marine and land ecosystems. These are supported by two GEF grants, including USD 4.7 m for the “Mainstreaming Biodiversity into the management of CZM”[[22]](#footnote-22) project, and USD 3.9 m for the “Prevention, Management and Control of IAS in Mauritius,” project. These grants complement much larger co-financing contributions from the Mauritius Government, which are managed separately from the GEF resources. While it is too early to evaluate outcomes from the new projects in this area[[23]](#footnote-23), they form part of a program of work focused on biodiversity, which reflects a good continuity of focus by the program.

Using the two current biodiversity projects as a base, the UNDP country office should continue to maintain a dialogue with the government on biodiversity protection measures, advocating for the objectives of the protected area network project.

### **Solutions developed at national and subnational levels for sustainable management of chemicals, and hazardous waste**

**Finding 8. UNDP was the primary provider of support for Mauritius September 2017 ratification of the Minamata Convention**.[[24]](#footnote-24) A final small but important part of the UNDP’s environment portfolio is the work it has done to support implementation of a $200,000 GEF grant provided to enable the Government of Mauritius to determine the national requirements and needs for the ratification of the Minamata Convention[[25]](#footnote-25) and establish a national foundation to undertake future work towards the implementation of the Convention. .[[26]](#footnote-26)

This funded a technical team which included an international mercury expert, four local consultants to support data collection, and a project manager to produce a national policy assessment, a Mercury Inventory by sector, environmental health impact analysis, and a Minamata Initial Assessment report. The project also supported training laboratory representatives to measure mercury use, advising industry on substituting alternative substances instead of mercury, and awareness-raising activities. Mauritius had already banned mercury-added batteries and used mercury-free pesticides and thermometers in healthcare, however transition to light-emitting diode lamps has been slow due to availability and price. The Minamata Convention articles stipulate phase-out of (in Mauritius primarily imported) mercury-added products[[27]](#footnote-27) by 2020 and promoting best environmental practices.

## Gender

**Finding 9. The evaluation team’s assessment of the CO portfolio, and its heavy reliance on resources from environment funds, suggests the scope for using programme resources to achieve significant gender equality outcomes, compared to the status quo, is currently limited. Unfortunately, the classification of program activities using the gender marker system substantially overstates the extent to which the program provides scope to promote gender equality.**

As a tool for tracking UNDP’s financial allocations and expenditures contributing to gender equality and women’s empowerment, UNDP uses different gender markers to classify the extent to which its activities have a focus on promoting gender equality. This tool indicates that during the programme cycle (2017-2018)[[28]](#footnote-28) , the largest proportion of the programme expenditure (93%) was coded as promoting gender equality in a *significant and consistent* way (i.e. GEN2). Outputs reported as making a *limited* contribution to gender equality[[29]](#footnote-29) (i.e. GEN1) represented six percent of the portfolio and those reported as “not expected to contribute noticeably to gender equality” (i.e. GEN0) represented less than one percent. The country programme has not reported implementing any projects with gender equality as a main objective (i.e. GEN3) in this period.

Under the governance portfolio the CO has engaged in a number of small scale activities to promote gender equality. For example, it has supported the establishment of a Parliamentary Gender Caucus to promote gender quality and the political empowerment of women.[[30]](#footnote-30) UNDP’s National Gender Expert supports the Caucus, including on activities such as conducting a civil service gender audit on behalf of the caucus in 2018[[31]](#footnote-31) as well as the Ministry of Gender Equality. Effort was made to develop a project focussed on gender equality as a main objective (GEN3) submitting a proposal “Setting up a Gender Based Violence Observatory”, to one of the UNDP Bureau for Program and Policy Support funding windows with support from the UNDP regional support centre, but this was not successful.

Overall, there is a reasonable emphasis on promoting gender equality within the governance portfolio, with 70 percent of expenditure being attributed to activities that promote gender equality in a *significant* and consistent way (i.e. GEN2). Overwhelmingly gender results reflected in results oriented annual reports reflect the work in the governance portfolio. Notwithstanding the importance of the governance program to gender results, it is important to note that the small scale of the activities implemented mean it is not possible to discern any measurable improvement in gender equality resulting from this work.[[32]](#footnote-32)

UNDP has sought to improve gender sensitivity in its environment portfolio by conducting gender analyses, collecting gender-disaggregated data, and targeting women’s participation in livelihoods and awareness-building activities. Overall, 98 per cent of expenditure in the environment portfolio has been marked as promoting gender equality in a *significant and consistent way* (i.e. GEN2). This reported focus on gender equality within the portfolio has not translated into significant gender results, with only one gender outcome reported in the 2018 ROAR, from across the portfolio.[[33]](#footnote-33)

The UNDP/GEF Mainstreaming Biodiversity project aims to address gendered labor divisions in coastal communities, and maintain gender balance in livelihoods trainings (e.g. ecotourism) and leadership at all levels, building on past initiatives which engaged women in mangrove reforestation, seaweed farming, chicken rearing and organic farming. It is hard to see how these activities conform to expectations for GEN2 coding that they promote gender equality in a *significant and consistent way*. Therefore it may be more accurately labeled as GEN1 rather than GEN2.

The final evaluation of the UNDP/GEF Protecting Area Network project found that while the project hired 19 women (of 121 workers) for forest removal (who were found to be more efficient in herbicide application) and recommended their inclusion in all teams, the practice was not necessarily maintained. These outputs, while valuable, do not meet the level of a “significant and consistent” contribution to gender equality due to their small-scale. Therefore it may be more accurately labeled as GEN1 rather than GEN2.

The UNDP/Adaptation Fund “Climate Change Adaptation in Coastal Zone” project aimed to “increase adaptive capacity… in a gender-sensitive way,” namely, by targeting men and women in training and community leadership. While the program design does consider women’s participation in activities and community committees to guide project site decisions, there is little gender analysis and targeted women’s entrepreneurship activities are limited in scope.[[34]](#footnote-34) The project is thus likely to produce benefit for men and women equally, with little impact on prevailing gender relations. The country office advised that it is early to make assumptions on impact and that a Gender Impact Analysis will inform whether there has been change in gender relations. Notwithsatnding this advice, the evaluation team considers targeted outputs do not meet the level of a “significant and consistent” contribution to gender equality due to their small-scale, and the project more accurately fits within the GEN1 criteria.

The UNDP/GEF Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Generation project achieved its targets for lowered carbon dioxide emissions and solar energy uptake, which benefits Mauritian households’ access to energy and long-term environmental sustainability. Similarly, the Green Climate Fund renewable energy project proposal states that the intervention does not have anticipated direct gender benefits beyond improved electricity access of poor female-headed households in Agalega, who are actively targeted. The project will disaggregate beneficiaries and target women to participate in training and job opportunities, as well as including the perspectives of women’s organizations and the Ministry of Gender Equality in its Programme Board. The Ministry of Energy and Public Utilities (MEPU) agreed to targeting 30% women representation in MARENA staff and Board, at least 33% participation in commercial PV-related activities, and training 100 female entrepreneurs in PV systems. As such, the aspects of the design conform to the GEN2 criteria, but the bulk of the funding is directed toward actions that more accurately fit within the GEN1 criteria.

UNDP’s Mauritius office comprises 16 female and nine male staff, evenly distributed at different levels of the hierarchy.

## UNDP’s positioning and capacity in Mauritius

**Finding 10.The Mauritius CPD has some positive features[[35]](#footnote-35) but still reads as highly aspirational, and unrealistic given the existing human resource base, and prospects for resource mobilisation.** The country office is small, with just 25 staff, and also provides support to the Seychelles sub-office. The programme’s access to high end-analytical expertise is constrained, with support provided by a senior economist shared with another country office in the region, and not available at the time of the evaluation.[[36]](#footnote-36) Existing human resources are too thinly spread across too many partners and activities, meaning the focus of the staff is consumed with the task of program delivery and resource mobilisation. There are insufficient space resources to develop the offices capabilities in the provision of high-end knowledge and analytical services, and strengthening partnerships and networks with UN and other actors to this end.

Mauritius staff survey results for 2018 are much improved from 2016, but reflect a level of staff satisfaction that is still markedly below UNDP averages in the domains addressed by the survey. In particular, the Mauritius results reflect a high degree of uncertainty about the direction of the office, and how it the work of individuals and the country office aligns with the direction of UNDP.

## Results based management

**Finding 11.UNDP’s programming policy states that the country programme document is intended to outline UNDP’s contributions to national results and serves as the primary unit of accountability to the Executive Board for results alignment and resources assigned to the programme at country level. Reflecting the broad scope and level of ambition of the CPD, the CPD’s results and resources framework does not provide a basis for clear and transparent reporting of UNDP’s contribution to national results.** This point has been made repeatedly by IEO evaluations and is one that requires a corporate response given the CO operates within the constraints of corporate policies and systems.[[37]](#footnote-37)

Rather than focusing performance discussions on core areas of focus and influence, performance frameworks promote an overly optimistic representation of UNDP’s capacity to influence change, given the level of resources that it has.[[38]](#footnote-38) This is evident in the fact that of the 17 indicators in the CPD, there are eight where UNDP has made either no or a negligible contribution and five where UNDP makes a significant contribution but where the indicators themselves have low significance in terms of the scale and substance of the change they indicate. There is little value in reporting against these indicators from either an accountability or learning perspective.

There should be more attention to identifying realistic goals and supporting indicators that provide a basis for meaningful consideration of progress and results. Of the 17 indicators in the CPD there are four that reflect a moderate or higher level of significance in terms of the scale or the substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has made a substantive contribution to results achieved against them. It is these areas that should form the core of the CO’s representation of the program, including what it is trying to achieve, and how it is performing.

## Support for national implementation

**Finding 12.More rigorous monitoring of contract and performance management, which should be a shared responsibility between the IP and UNDP, is required by UNDP to detect, from an early stage, problem areas so that timely corrective measures can be taken.**

Under support to National Implementation (NIM), UNDP’s CO supports implementing partners by providing services such as procurement of goods, and hiring of consultants, experts and project staff. Program staff conduct quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation activities.

While implementing partners expressed appreciation for the good work being done by UNDP in these areas, they also expressed some concerns about delays and poor quality of consultants/project managers hired in some instances. In some cases, these concerns were amplified by the fact IPs felt they had insufficient say in the selection/contract award process (their role being limited to observer status), given their accountability for project activities. To address this concern, CO management should routinely include representative(s) from the concerned in official capacity on evaluation committee, as is allowed by UNDP’s procurement policies with UNDP retaining the majority vote.[[39]](#footnote-39)

Moving forward, given the anticipated environment portfolio size of US$100 million with about 33 project staff to manage and procurement support to complex environment projects, UNDP should strengthen its small environment team with at least one additional Programme Officer and one Administrative Associate to support monitoring and procurement activities. Requirements for the office’s procurement function will depend on the type of office UNDP decides is appropriate for Mauritius, whether it is to be a stand-alone multi-country office as it is now, or with operations activities clustered with other countries or centralized at the regional office in Addis or globally in Kuala Lumpur.

Based on current trend within UNDP (based on RBAP model), the evaluation considers it would be most cost-effective for this function to be clustered and be handled by a team of procurement experts. Under such an arrangement, the CO can handle low value procurement of supplies and goods, review of TORs, monitoring and performance management of project staff and consultants.

At an operational level, the evaluation notes some gaps in UNDP’s oversight of projects. This was evident for example, in UNDP’s failure in the case of the procurement of a consulting firm for the development of the Expansion of Protected Area Network Strategy to be undertaken by the IP under the PAN project, to ensure that the TOR submitted by the IP was sufficiently clear about the tasks to be undertaken, and timeframes, and payment schedules for deliverables. This led to incomplete deliverables with important products missing (legal framework and business plan). A general lack of oversight on the part of UNDP during the first few years of the PAN project led to a qualified audit over payments (over US$500,000) to government personnel which is against UNDP rules.

# Chapter 3. Conclusions, Recommendations & Management Response

This chapter presents the evaluation’s conclusions on UNDP’s performance and contributions to development results in the Mauritius, recommendations, and the management response.

## Conclusion

**Conclusion 1. Reflecting Mauritius upper-middle-income status, UNDP’s core funding allocation to Mauritius** **is small (just $150,000 annually). This, combined with a steep decline in official development assistance to Mauritius over the past five years, means UNDP is almost entirely dependent on vertical funds for programming.** If Mauritius current rate of economic growth continues, there is a good prospect that it will graduate to a high-income country in the next five years. Irrespective of this outcome, it is likely that substantial funding will only be available climate and environment-related work, and that resources for other parts of UNDP’s mandate will become even more constrained.

**Conclusion 2. Government partners overall were complimentary about the quality and influence of UNDP’s work and continue to see the relevance and value of assistance from UNDP.** Mauritius Government informants identified several specific problems where technical support of the kind that UNDP is capable of sourcing, would continue to be valuable. They emphasized that graduation to higher income levels had not fundamentally altered the value they placed on external assistance and that as a small island state, this played an important role in helping to provide access to specialised skills which are in short supply locally.

**Conclusion 3. UNDP’s strongest results are in the contributions it has made to improved environmental management and climate change adaptation. In particular, it has provided momentum to the Government’s efforts to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels and jump-start the solar PV energy sector. It has also enabled Mauritius Government to more comprehensively consider options for protecting coastal communities and assets than would it could have achieved on its own, supporting it to incrementally adapt to the long-term impacts of climate change.**Overall, UNDP was recognized as playing an important role in smoothing and facilitating access to funding available through environmental conventions. Without UNDP’s local presence, it would have been much harder for the government to have accessed the quantum of support that it has.

**Conclusion 4. While the environment program is performing well, a key risk and constraint relates to its reliance on external funding sources, and lack of resources to offset limitations that come from working within the parameters and requirements of the external funders.** There is a risk that the program will become fragmented, and that Government partners will be overwhelmed with the task of managing multiple environment projects. Given the UNDP country office has projected the environment portfolio will expand from a portfolio value of $26 million in 2015 to one potentially worth over $100 million by 2020, there are also some significant emerging risks related to procurement, which was one of the few areas of complaint from government about the program currently.

**Conclusion 5. The program has done some useful work in the past in the governance area, but the scale of the current program is very small, and UNDP’s influence has declined with declining resources.** The stand-out contribution in this area has been the technical input and guidance UNDP has provided on Mauritius’ developing welfare system, including in the formulation of the Marshall Plan. Other areas include engagement in program-based budgeting, development of citizen feedback mechanisms and support for the women’s caucus have also been well-received, although the scale of the influence UNDP exerts through this work is very limited. Currently, none of the governance activities managed by the country program are operating at a large enough scale to be able to produce development results that can be readily attributed to them.

**Conclusion 6. Unless limited TRAC resources can be used to leverage external resources for long-term program of work in governance, then the transaction and opportunity costs of the current TRAC funded governance engagement will be increasingly harder to justify.** Unless UNDP can leverage additional resources for existing governance work, this evaluation has concluded the country office would be more effective if it were to focus its limited TRAC resources on complementing its programmes in the environment and energy area. This work is the strength of the program and is growing rapidly, which creates both opportunities and risks.

**Conclusion 7. UNDP’s country program document for Mauritius lacks realism about UNDP’s capacity and influence and is insufficiently prioritised. Existing human resources are too thinly spread across too many partners and activities, and performance frameworks and reporting promote an overly optimistic representation of UNDP’s capacity to influence change in the areas it works in. This constrains UNDP’s capacity to increase its role as a knowledge provider and broker, which is where UNDP can be of greatest value, given Mauritius’ stage of development.** Currently, this aspect of the work of the country program is under-developed, with little evidence of the programme producing high-end research or analytical work in the recent programming period outside of what is produced by individual projects.

**Conclusion 8. Overall, resource constraints have limited the country programme’s scope to have a significant impact on gender equality and there are no realistic mechanisms for the office to pursue UNDP’s corporate target of 15 per cent of all country programme and project budgets allocated to advancing gender equality and/or empowering women as their principal objective (GEN3).[[40]](#footnote-40) The use of the gender marker substantially overstates the program’s contribution to gender equality.** Current coding practices present a risk that the UNDP management and the board will be misled about the extent to which UNDP programs are effectively promoting gender equality.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1. The next Mauritius CPD should be far more focussed and realistic that the current one, reflecting more accurately the country office’s capacity and resources. CPD objectives, targets and indicators should only be included if there is a realistic prospect for UNDP to have a measurable influence over them. Results reporting should focus on indicators that have a moderate or higher level of significance in terms of the scale or the substance of the social change they measure, and where UNDP has sufficient resources to make a substantive contribution to results achieved against them.**

The current CPD significant misrepresents the scope and scale of UNDP’s work in several areas, and promotes fragmentation of limited resources, instead of a selective focus in areas where UNDP can make a significant difference.

**Recommendation 2. In developing its next country program document UNDP should position the program and align staffing structures and resources to support and enhance the performance its growing environment and climate change portfolio, and mitigate the risks associated with this growth.**

This should include consideration of ways to offset limitations in the project-based constraints associated with environment funds by providing additional capacity development support, building larger and more integrated environment projects, and increasing focus on knowledge and advisory services, improving sectoral coordination and supporting policy development. The country office should work with the Regional Bureau to improve the level of support the country office has been able to access from UNDP’s cadre of regional technical advisers. While this reflects corporate priorities and limitations on existing resources, engagement with UNDP experts in the recent period has been uneven and is an area where performance can be improved. This is especially critical for a small country office such as Mauritius, which is lightly staffed. The country office should also use what flexibility it has to strengthen its small environment team to support monitoring and procurement activities.

**Recommendation 3. Core funding allocations for governance in the CPD should be contingent on resource mobilization at minimum levels, or the ability of these funds to leverage contributions for UNDP’s global and regional network, or from the UN system. If additional resources cannot be mobilised for existing democratic governance work, the country office should allocate its core resources to strengthen engagement in policy development relevant to the work being undertaken in the environment portfolio.**

Activities in UNDP’s democratic governance portfolio are almost completely reliant on UNDP’s very small core resource allocation to Mauritius and are very lightly spread across different stakeholders and issues. The activities being implemented are not on a sufficient scale to leverage significant development results, and do not strongly connect with or leverage contributions from UNDP’s global and regional network, or from the UN system. Focusing available resources and the next CPD on the environment portfolio is aligned with UNDP’s strategic plan and provides a substantive example of two of the six signature solutions (close the energy gap and promote nature-based solutions for a sustainable planet). These solutions address foundational and existential issues for Mauritius. The environment is core to Mauritius long-term economic interests. Its natural assets are especially important to its attraction as a global tourist destination. Tourism is an important source of foreign currency and represents a large component of GNI. Developing an affordable and sustainable energy sector is also vital.

**Recommendation 4. The country office should develop a strategy for addressing gender equality that is founded on a clear-headed assessment of the scope provided by different activities to do so. This strategy should outline how gender equality will be addressed by different activities and the extent to which these can reasonably be expected to produce significant and consistent gender equality outcomes. Gender marker coding should be annually reviewed, and coding updated where necessary to ensure the data provides an accurate picture of the level of focus on gender equality of UNDP’s programmes.**

Inaccuracies in coding of programme activities using the gender marker mean it is not possible to accurately establish how well the programme is performing in promoting gender equality, but it is clear that the actual focus on gender is far less than what is reported. Tangible gender equality results produced by the program are limited, especially for the environment component, which accounts for 95 per cent of programme expenditure.

## Management Response

1. World Economic Forum 2018, Global Gender Gap Report, Available Online at <http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GGGR_2018.pdf>, pg. 11, Last accessed April 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Sixty percent of men and women adults ages 25-54 had attained second education, however there is a gap among the total adult population: 47.6% of men and 39.8% of women. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Women’s representation increased from 12.7% in 2005 to 36.7% and 34.2% in 2012 and 2015 respectively in Municipal Councils and from 5.7% in 2005 to 25.4% in 2012 in Village Councils. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Mauritius, 20 June 2018, 19. <https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CEDAW/Shared%20Documents/MUS/CEDAW_C_MUS_8_5976_E.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. World Bank, 2018, “Addressing Inequality Through More Equitable Labour Markets”, Available Online at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mauritius/publication/mauritius-addressing-inequality-through-more-equitable-labor-markets>, Last Accessed April 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. International Labour Organisation, ILOSTAT, Accessed 1 Oct 2018. [www.ilo.org/ilostat/](http://www.ilo.org/ilostat/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Statistics Mauritius: Gender Statistics (Year 2017) [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. CEDAW, 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Source: Statistics Mauritius- National Accounts estimates - December 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. www.uneval.org [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. RS 127,715 million at exchange rates as at 5 October 2018. [http://budget.mof.govmu.org/budget2018-19/V\_B2018\_19AppendixB.pdf] [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. See: “Mauritius Marshall Plan aims to eradicate poverty and exclusion,” Jul 12, 2017 <http://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/07/12/mauritius_marshall_plan_aims_to_eradicate_poverty_and_exclusion.html>

Also see Statement by the Right Honorable Sir Anerood Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius at the General Debate of the United Nations General Assembly, New York, 23 September 2016<https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/71/71_MU_en.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Mauritius Renewable Energy Agency (2018), Renewable Energy Strategic Plan 2018-2023, <https://www.marena.org/resp-2018-23#h.p_ASNXuTsWAIJd> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Terminal Evaluation Report of the UNDP-GEF Project: “Removal of Barriers to Solar PV Power Generation in Mauritius, Rodrigues and the Outer Islands,” August 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. INTENDED NATIONALLY DETERMINED CONTRIBUTION FOR THE REPUBLIC OF MAURITIUS, 28 September 2015. https://www4.unfccc.int/sites/ndcstaging/PublishedDocuments/Mauritius%20First/Final%20INDC%20for%20Mauritius%2028%20Sept%202015.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Source: Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development, Disaster and Beach Management (2015), Cost Benefit Analysis for Adapting to Sea Level Rise: Protection or Managed Retreat in Rivière des Galets [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Indufor (2015), Coastal Adaptation Measures for Mon Choisy Beach, Republic of Mauritius: Options for Adaptation. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. There was significant debate about two options that were proposed as an outcome of the international consultancy firm that conducted the technical assessments. These were that a submerged rock breakwater be installed to protect the beach from wave penetration and the removal and replacement of 400 non-native Casuarina trees with native endemic vegetation to improve sand retention and reduce sand loss during storm events. Ultimately, this approach was varied in order to protect the amenity provided by existing trees and access by recreational and commercial boat users which would be affected by the breakwater. Instead of removal of all the exotic trees on the site the decision was made to undertake a phased removal and replacement of the trees. Instead of an submerged breakwater, the more expensive option of a submerged reef was chosen, so as to avoid impact of the proposed breakwater on existing recreational uses. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. These include: Training Workshop on Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) was conducted from 24th to 28th September 2018; Scoping mission for Establishment of Disaster Information Management System in Mauritius; Study on the Vulnerability of Republic of Mauritius to Seismic Hazards and Tsunami and Capacity for Disaster Reduction Initiative (CADRI). [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. The Protected Area Network project encountered a series of set-backs during the first few years of its implementation. These included: lengthy delays in recruitment of staff and consultants; poor performance of the Project Manager and the Chief Technical Advisor which required other rounds of recruitment; poor performance by the contractor for preparation of PANES (Protected Area Network Expansion Strategy) which was supposed to provide the basis guiding the PAN project implementation. These problems were compounded by the low engagement of Project Steering Committee and inadequate oversight by UNDP, and a general lack of ownership and commitment by some key stakeholders (especially the Ministry of Agro-Industry and Food Security (MoAIFS)). [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Project Terminal Evaluation: “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Terrestrial Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius” [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Project Terminal Evaluation: “Expanding Coverage and Strengthening Management Effectiveness of the Terrestrial Protected Area Network on the Island of Mauritius” [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. The biodiversity protection in coastal zone management project tries to address the fact that ‘key habitats along the coast and in nearshore waters of the RM (Republic of Mauritius) face high anthropogenic pressures, are largely unprotected and are being unsustainably managed.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Approved in 2016 the first of these projects is still in its establishment phase. The invasive species management project is still in its formulation stage and is expected to be approved for commencement in June 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. <http://www.zeromercury.org/phocadownload/Developments_at_UNEP_level/FAO_project_2014-17/Mauritius-MAP_transition_Study_Dec_2017-FINAL.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. The Minamata Convention is a global treaty which came into force in 2017 to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. The convention is named after the city of Minamata in Japan, where local communities were poisoned by mercury-tainted industrial wastewater in the late 1950s and suffered crippling, untreatable and stigmatizing effects. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. In past programming periods UNDP also supported Mauritius with a project dealing with the disposal of hazardous chemicals. This was not assessed by the evaluation. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. E.g. Batteries, thermometers, dental amalgam, general use compact fluorescent lamps of 30 watts or less with a mercury content exceeding 5 mg, pesticides, and other measurement devices [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. All gender marker data is through reported Atlas/PowerBI programme expenditures for 2017-2018 as of February 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. UNDP, Guidance Note, UNDP Gender Marker: Tracking Gender-Related Investments and Expenditures in ATLAS, Revised Edition, Bureau of Policy and Programme Support, Gender Team, 2014 [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. UNDP assisted in the drafting of a Strategic Framework. The 2017-2020 “Inclusive Development and Public Sector Efficiency” project (Atlas ID 00102319) 2017 budget includes $51,774 for gender equality activities (to the National Assembly; for contractual services, and local and international consultants. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. The audit found that while there was a “gender sensitive institutional culture,” there was weak technical capacity in terms of mainstreaming gender (e.g. limited use of gender sensitive indicators), recommending Training of Trainers for government, creating sector gender action plans, and instituting gender budget statements. The Caucus also commissioned a study on the sociological profile of domestic violence perpetrators in 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. Gender results identified in the 2018 ROAR were as follows: Support for review of the Government’s policy on gender mainstreaming, gender equity and equality; contributed to the formulation of a Gender Equality Bill; support for introduction of Gender Responsive Budgeting; review of the National Gender Policy Framework (2008); civil service gender audit exercise followed by training for 60 civil servants on gender mainstreaming; provision of technical support to write up the 8th periodic CEDAW report ; follow up of study on domestic violence perpetrators. These are all in the governance sector. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. This was the employment 20% women laborer’s for weed removal under the protected area network project, a result which is hard to assess given there is no clear baseline established for it. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. UNDP partnered with the Grand Sable Women Planters Farmers Entrepreneur Association to provide two sewing machines, 800 promotional bags with a mangrove logo, and seed funding which they used to produce veliger, a storm-buffering sea grass,. The total grant is $15,000. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. UNDP’s Mauritius country programme document (CPD) correctly identifies many of the key features of an effective strategy of assistance given the context and constraints of the program. This includes for example:

- A commitment to narrow its focus on fewer outcomes and activities, prioritising work to address Mauritius’ environment and climate change challenges, reflecting its middle-income context, and status as a small island developing state. The CPD commits to a more focussed programme of work on social protection and public sector management;

- An emphasis on high level policy support, research and analytical work to inform and broaden debate on the national development agenda and the sustainable development goals, in collaboration with other key stakeholders;

- An emphasis on a broader, more creative approach to partnerships in support of increased emphasis on its role as a knowledge organisation. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. The country office first shared a senior economist shared with Madagascar, and then with Zimbabwe. This support is currently not available as the position is vacant. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. UNDP corporate evaluations have found that despite increased emphasis on results-based management (RBM), there is limited evidence in its use beyond programme design. Strengthening M&E is the most common ICPE recommendation. Overall, a consistent finding, affirmed by this evaluation is that CO staff see RBM as time-intensive and lack sufficient resources and training to build their capacity. While there are some successful examples of COs developing theories of change and identifying lessons for improved effectiveness, overall RBM functions more as a compliance and reporting requirement. For more detailed discussion see: UNDP IEO, Independent County Programme Evaluation Synthesis, August 2018; UNDP IEO and Office of Audit and Investigations (OAI), Joint Assessment of the Institutional Effectiveness of UNDP, January 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. This is evidenced by statements such as the following from Mauritius’ 2017 Results Oriented Annual Report, which is the key internal reporting tool within UNDP which fundamentally misrepresent the scope of UNDPs influence:

*“The overarching theory of change of the CPD supports the underlying notion of strengthening development pathways to tackle the connected issues of poverty, inequality, exclusion and the environment while transforming productive capacities, avoiding the irreversible depletion of social and natural capital, and reducing risks arising from shocks. A fundamental conviction is that strengthening national capacities across the priority areas will lead to economic growth and sustainable development.”* [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. UNDP’s policy states that: "Representatives from the funding source of the project, the client organization, or national project implementing partners may participate in the evaluation process, provided they are only present as observers. Nevertheless, if any such institutions requests participation as a full evaluation team member (i.e., with voting rights), the request shall be cleared directly by the Operations Manager or the Head of the Procurement Unit, and UNDP shall maintain the majority vote in the team at all times. If the Operations Manager/Head of the Unit authorizes participation of non-UNDP personnel as a full member, considerations shall be taken to ensure that UNDP staff members selected for the evaluation team are equal in seniority and constituting the majority of the evaluation team. When determining the number of members constituting the majority of the evaluation team, external experts selected and engaged by UNDP to supplement its technical capacity shall be counted as part of UNDP." [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. A target in both the previous (2014–17) and current (2018–2021) Gender Equality Strategies. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)