

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been a partner of the Government of Viet Nam since 1978, working closely with the Government and other partners to expand the choices for people and ensure that everyone has equal access to opportunities and to realize their full potential. Over the years, the UNDP programme has been shaped by the country’s development priorities and challenges. During the programme cycle under review (2017-2021), the UNDP country programme focused on supporting the Government to implement its five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) 2016-2020, to pursue an inclusive and sustainable development model which balances economic, social and environmental goals for an equitable share of development gains for all citizens. This Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) covers all areas of UNDP support to Viet Nam during the current programming cycle.

inclusive growth principles into national development and planning systems. UNDP has been able to navigate the complexities of addressing inequalities and challenges related to effective governance and climate change, and is valued as a longstanding and valuable partner, providing policy advisory support and development services. The country office was able to respond to the Coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic in a comprehensive and timely manner, and collect timely evidence for the design of the response and recovery.

UNDP has been building strategic and operational partnerships with multiple stakeholders to achieve the country programme objectives, and some of these have evolved into partnership models that promote intra-governmental coordination and synergy. UNDP could take a more active role in designing and monitoring on-the-ground implementation of policies and innovations, including associated capacity building, institutional coordination and community participation. These will be fundamental to the overriding UNDP goals to address poverty and inequalities, enhance citizen participation and protect rights, as well as to promote sustainable low carbon development while strengthening the resilience of targeted groups.

## Key findings and conclusions

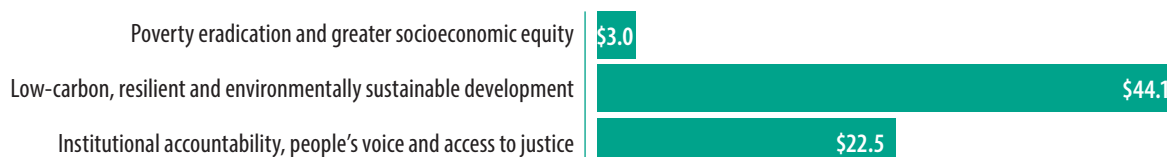
UNDP has made important contributions to national programmes for poverty reduction, in the design and implementation of an improved comprehensive social protection system, and in promoting and integrating

### Total Programme expenditure (2017-2019)

US\$ 69,590,665



### Programme expenditure by practice area, 2017-2020 (US\$ million)



The country office has a well-established monitoring and evaluation system, although the outcomes in the Country Programme Document lack consideration of intermediate changes, assumptions and risk attributes for reaching and measuring key results and intended outcomes. UNDP has made significant progress in establishing a gender-responsive organizational environment and mainstreaming gender into its projects and programmes. However, there is uneven allocation of gender expenditure, integration and collaboration across the portfolios. Performance reporting on outcome-level results remains a challenge.

In climate change and resilience, the extensive international network and experience of UNDP, and its strategic positioning, have helped the Government to secure substantial funding for climate change and sustainable development. UNDP has brought strong technical and policy advisory capacity to address international conventions and national directives, helping to bridge the gap between international obligations that the country has assumed and the challenge of implementing actions on the ground. While UNDP support to address climate change has been highly relevant, the next challenge will be to clarify management roles, build linkages and synergy across the different ministries and extend ministerial actions to local level.

The UNDP focus on governance in this programme cycle has targeted several themes, such as access to justice, the participation of civil society and women, accountability, human rights and combating corruption. However, UNDP has significantly reduced its efforts to strengthen the accountability of institutions, critical for improving performance in governance.

UNDP has been consistently well-financed during this country programme period. The country office had planned for US\$ 133 million across three outcomes, including \$23.3 million of regular resources and \$110 million from other resources such as vertical funds and donor agencies. UNDP has been roughly on track with non-core resources, mobilizing an estimated \$70 million against a \$110 million target. While UNDP core funding has reduced sharply during the country programme period, there has been a steady increase in non-core resources mobilized, partly due to the country office ability to secure non-core resources from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Green Climate Fund (GCF) and new donors. However, government cost-sharing still remains a key challenge.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** UNDP should develop a detailed theory of change (ToC), that identifies a clear intervention logic with intermediate results and a pathway to change, including a detailed assessment of risks and assumptions. This ToC should guide the integration of upstream and downstream interventions as well as promote synergy across programmes.

**Recommendation 2.** The monitoring and evaluation system needs to focus on outcome-level results, with more frequent project monitoring and evaluation throughout the programme cycle,

to capture system-level and real change on the ground, including transformative changes in gender equality and women's empowerment and leaving no one behind.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP needs to systematically reflect on how to properly design and measure the impact of the capacity building and awareness raising that it supports.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP should support the Government of Viet Nam to undertake an evidence-based full life cycle analysis of some of its procurement

programmes and key state industries, that will help to monetize the benefits of 'green' actions, to inform the Government, private sector and civil society and promote their scale-up and sustainability.

**Recommendation 5.** UNDP needs to develop a balanced portfolio to ensure its leading role in governance. Support to accountability institutions and mechanisms with an aim to buttress government integrity and performance should be considered as key components of UNDP efforts.