



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION GHANA



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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability
responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT
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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Ghana, the second assessment carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of UNDP for the country. In 2011, when IEO's first evaluation was conducted, Ghana had just achieved lower-middle income status. Since then, the country has become one of the fastest growing economies in West Africa.

This evaluation covers the 2018-2022 programming period. The evaluation finds that UNDP has offered relevant support to Ghana's challenges with environmental degradation and economic inequality, which have worsened in the country over the past decade. UNDP has adapted its programme and operational capacities in line with the country's vision of "Ghana Beyond Aid", and to respond quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Important results have been achieved in several areas, such as environmental management, climate action, and peacebuilding, while resource constraints challenged UNDP's delivery of more traditional governance programmes. UNDP has made significant efforts to address the needs of vulnerable and marginalized groups. However, a gender strategy and dedicated resources would have allowed UNDP to achieve more favourable results in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.

As UNDP Ghana prepares for its new country programme cycle, the country office will need to reinforce its emphasis on climate change and the protection of natural resources, as well as its response to domestic and regional peace and security issues. In doing so, UNDP should deepen its engagement and partnership with key development actors in the country, including with the private sector to facilitate resources mobilization and synergies.

I would like to thank the Government of Ghana, the national stakeholders, colleagues from UNDP country office in Ghana as well as the Regional Bureau for Africa for their support throughout the evaluation. I hope that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations will strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy with the aim to achieve a more inclusive and sustainable development pathway for the people of Ghana.



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

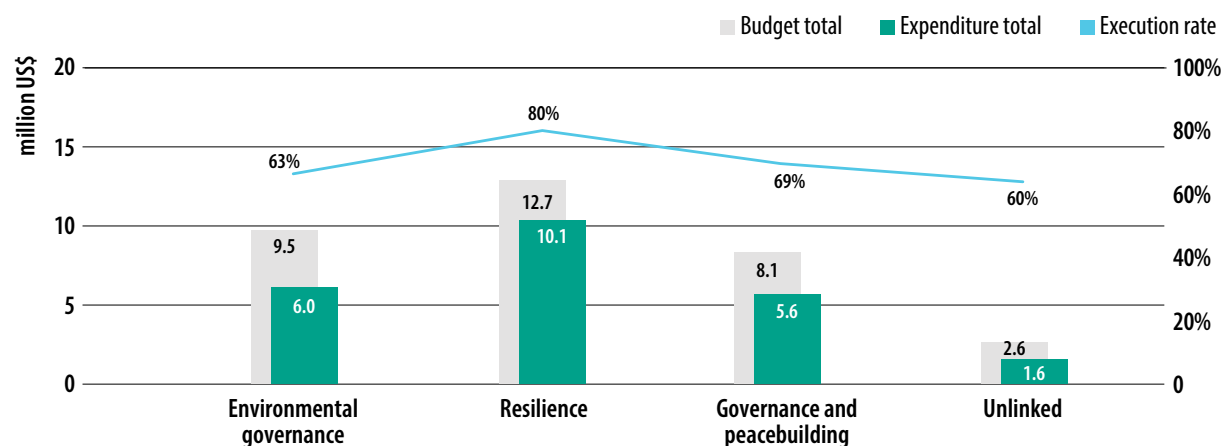
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
CREMA	Community Resource Management Areas
CPD	Country programme document
CO	Country office
CSO	Civil society organization
DIM	Direct Implementation Modality
EC	Electoral Commission
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
HCFC	Hydrochlorofluorocarbon
IAFF	Integrated Assembly Financing Framework
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
INFF	Integrated National Financing Framework
K-CEP	Kigali Cooling Efficiency Programme
LMIC	Lower-middle income country
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MESTI	Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation
MSME	Micro, small and medium enterprise
MMD	Municipalities, Metropolitans and Districts
MMDA	Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies
MRV	Monitoring, Reporting and Verification
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NDPC	National Development Planning Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
ROAR	Results-oriented annual report
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of change
UN	United Nations
UNSDP	United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UPR	Universal Periodic Review

Evaluation Brief: Ghana

Ghana's economic growth saw the country achieve lower-middle income (LMIC) status in 2010 and a halving of poverty levels in line with the Millennium Development Goals. However, wealth disparities have grown between rural and urban populations and significant gender inequalities remain in educational attainment, employment opportunities and political representation. With economic growth linked to gold, oil, and cocoa exports, the degradation of the country's land, forest and water resources is a critical issue, and is exacerbating vulnerability to the effects of climate change. The country faces domestic challenges marked by a fall in public confidence in citizen rights and employment prospects. Common to Ghana and the broader Sahel-subregion is the growing problem of violent extremism. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the first recession in the last 38 years, to which the Government responded in 2020 with a programme to stabilize the economy and create jobs.

The UNDP country programme in Ghana (2018-2022) focuses on three outcomes areas: (i) Environmental governance at national and local levels is effective, efficient and coherent; (ii) Urban and rural communities have access to affordable services, knowledge and tools to increase their resilience; and (iii) Transparent, accountable institutions at all levels protect the rights of all people.

Programme budget and expenditure by thematic area, 2018–2021



Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation finds that UNDP's country programme is aligned with national priorities and the organization is recognized for its technical acumen and responsiveness. UNDP has made significant efforts to adapt and respond to the evolving context including the graduation of Ghana to LMIC status, the Government's vision of Ghana Beyond Aid and its implications on UNDP resource bases, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic. The country programme document (CPD) sets ambitious targets, which have proven challenging to achieve amid a fall in its traditional resource options and with the onset of COVID-19.

UNDP has helped Ghana build important technical capacities for environmental management, contributing to the country's implementation of the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances, the Minamata Convention on Mercury, and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. It also helped develop the financing strategy for Ghana's nationally determined contributions to the Paris agreement, and leveraged climate financing mechanisms for several natural resource management initiatives. Through the 'Adaptation Fund' project in particular, UNDP has helped ensure climate actions directly contribute to the livelihoods of communities; however, the wider replication of these localized initiatives has not been achieved.

UNDP was key in supporting the Electoral Commission to build internal capacity of stakeholders in the 2020 electoral process (including political parties), and supported youth engagement through training to prevent vigilantism during campaigning. Resource constraints negatively affected UNDP's ambitions to support anti-corruption and civil society oversight activities. Greater focus was applied to peacebuilding and security, and UNDP's support for early detection and prevention enabled the National Peace Council to build the mediation capacities of women and youth in Northern Ghana. These community stakeholders applied conflict resolution skills in roles that were linked to a reduction in fractional violence.

UNDP has supported the Ghana AIDS Commission since the early 2000s, and in the current programme trained media reporters and traditional leaders to address HIV stigma. At the onset of COVID-19, UNDP rapidly responded to help the Ghana Health Services promote prevention measures in hard-to-reach areas and for people with disabilities and those living with HIV, and launched a separate flagship initiative to protect informal waste collectors, who were at risk of exposure to infectious materials through their work. Recognizing that investment for pandemic recovery and SDG achievement is key, UNDP has helped the Government develop financing frameworks which are now being used as reference documents for identifying and engaging with potential private sector donors.

The country office has adapted to resourcing challenges over the current CPD, managing staff time efficiently and pivoting its support to the Government's pandemic response. The measures spread staff over multiple roles and saw extended periods when positions were left vacant. In a key area, the office does not have dedicated resources for gender, and its efforts to improve women's equality and empowerment varied across thematic areas. The monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system did not provide a framework for learning and quality improvement, and hampered the ability of the country office to promote synergies between interventions, replicate and scale up good practices, and to strengthen partnerships for resources mobilization.

Recommendation 1. UNDP should build on and strengthen its strategic positioning on climate action and environmental management. The country office should deepen engagement with key development actors in this area on strategic and programmatic issues for strengthened collaboration and synergy and possible scaling up of results. It should also continue to explore other opportunities for partnership with the private sector.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should consider continuing to work in the area of peacebuilding and conflict management given its strategic positioning and comparative advantage in this area, including the potential for realistic resource mobilization opportunities. Regarding the broader domain of democratic governance, including good governance accountability and transparency programming, the lessons learned from the current programme indicate the need for better planning and design in its efforts going forward. UNDP should consider integrating governance activities into other areas to strengthen its results, including promoting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups through its sectoral programmes.

Recommendation 3. Supporting decentralized government structures is important in order to effect change at grassroots level and UNDP should build on the work already done on climate change tools and action plans and the integrated assembly financing framework. However, it should also undertake a detailed analysis of the situation regarding decentralization in Ghana to determine the extent of its future engagement with local government.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should further strengthen the gender aspects of its programme and make gender equality a critical component of its interventions. It should also anchor its programme on promoting women's empowerment, including supporting women's civil society organizations (CSOs) and related networks, and their organizational capacity to become agents for peace and security as well as creators of development solutions.

Recommendation 5. The ability of an organization to effectively address each element of the programme cycle including the design, planning, managing and reporting on results is critical to its ability to produce those results. In this regard, UNDP should strengthen several elements of its system for results-based monitoring, reporting, evaluating and learning.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation as well as the methodology applied. It also lays out the development context as well as the UNDP programme in Ghana.

1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Programme Evaluations (ICPEs) to capture and demonstrate the evaluative evidence of UNDP contributions to national development priorities, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results.

ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP evaluation policy.¹ The objectives of the ICPE are to:

- Support the development of the next UNDP Country Programme;
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders;
- Strengthen the accountability of UNDP to the Executive Board;
- Contribute to organizational learning and decision-making in UNDP.

This ICPE was carried out in 2021 and covered the period from 2018 to mid-2021, i.e. the first three and a half years of the current country programme cycle (2018-2022). This is the second country programme evaluation conducted by the IEO in Ghana. The ICPE covered all UNDP activities in the country and interventions funded by all funding sources, including UNDP's own resources, donor and government funds. The ICPE also covered non-project activities, such as coordination and advocacy, which are important in supporting the political and social agenda of the country.

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation based its analysis on the outcomes presented by the country programme for the period 2018-2022. It looked at each of the planned outcomes and their respective links to the strategic objectives of the programme.

The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was evaluated through the analysis of the progress made towards the achievement of the expected outputs and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the expected outcomes of the UNDP country programme. To better understand UNDP's performance and the sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE examined the specific factors that have influenced

BOX 1. Evaluation questions

1. What did the UNDP country programme intend to achieve during the period under review?
2. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
3. To what extent has UNDP been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support the country's preparedness, response, and recovery process?
4. What factors contributed to or hindered UNDP performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?

Source: Evaluation terms of reference

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

the country programme either positively or negatively. The capacity of UNDP to adapt to changing circumstances and respond to national development needs and priorities was also examined. The evaluation sought to answer four evaluation questions (Box 1).

The evaluation methodology adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group Norms and Standards.² In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming and gender equality in the formulation of the country programme and its operations, as well as the results achieved. Gender marker data were used to analyse the level of expected contribution to gender equality at programme design. Gender-related results were assessed using the IEO's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale.³

Given the situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the assessment was carried out using two qualitative data collection approaches, namely an in-depth desk review and a large number of virtual interviews (Zoom online interviews at the national level and telephone interviews at the local or district level). Data collection was carried out from June to August 2021. To answer the evaluation questions, the evaluation team collected and triangulated data through the following methods:

- **An analysis of the full portfolio of projects and programmes as well as a review of programme documents, documents and reports on projects/programmes carried out by UNDP and the Government of Ghana, and other relevant documents.** The evaluation team reviewed UNDP monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data, including project reports, decentralized evaluation reports,⁴ UNDP institutional documents (strategic plan, results-oriented annual reports (ROAR), etc.), data related to programme performance indicators (data disaggregated by sex when available), action research, as well as other publications available on the country. The main documents consulted are listed in annex 4. The team reviewed the theory of change (ToC) used by the country office (CO) (annex 7) and, based on the portfolio analysis, matched the projects implemented against the objectives set in the country programme.
- **The response by the CO to a preliminary questionnaire.** Following the development of the terms of reference (annex 1) and the desk review, a preliminary questionnaire was sent to the CO in April 2021. The questionnaire captured the CO's reflections on the performance and results of the programme, as well as major crosscutting themes, such as gender, partnership, and the design and implementation-related issues of the country programme.
- **Virtual interviews were carried out with 101 key informants** who were staff of UNDP (headquarters, Ghana office and project staff) (24), representatives and officials of the various government institutions at the national and local level (36), officials and staff from other UN agencies (6), donors and development partners (7), civil society, academia and private sector (20) and community-level beneficiaries of the country programme (8). The institutions that were interviewed were identified on the basis of the desk review (documents on the UNDP programme and the country context in general), supplemented by suggestions from the CO, and included not only the main partners of the UNDP country programme, but also the main development actors in the country. These interviews

² See the United Nations Evaluation Group website: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>.

³ The IEO's Gender Results Effectiveness Scale classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative (results have a negative outcome that aggravated or reinforced gender inequalities and limiting norms), gender blind (results gave no attention to gender, and failed to acknowledge the different needs of men, women, girls and boys and other marginalized populations), gender targeted (results focused on the number of women, men, or marginalized populations that were targeted), gender responsive (results addressed the differential needs of men, women, marginalized populations and focused on the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, rights, etc. but did not address root causes of inequalities), and gender transformative (results contributed to changes in norms, cultural values, power structures and the roots of gender inequalities and discriminations).

⁴ Five decentralized evaluations have been carried out since 2018: two mid-term project evaluations and three terminal project evaluations.

were used to collect data and obtain a comprehensive view of the perceptions of development partners and actors on the scope, contributions, performance and impacts of UNDP interventions, and on the constraints in programme implementation, as well as on the strengths and weaknesses of UNDP in Ghana. A complete list of interviewees is available in annex 3.

The ICPE used the IEO's rating system to assess the performance of the country programme against the criteria of Relevance, Coherence, Efficiency, Effectiveness and Sustainability. Evidence was triangulated against a set of parameters for each of the criteria, and a four-point rating scale was used for the assessment (see section 2.5).

The ICPE has undergone a rigorous quality assurance process, first with an internal peer review at the IEO and two external reviewers. Thereafter, the report was submitted to the CO and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa and, finally, to the Government and other partners in the country for review. This process was concluded by the organization of a workshop carried out through videoconference which brought together the main stakeholders of the programme and offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results and recommendations contained in this report.

1.3 Challenges and limitations

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ICPE team was unable to travel to Ghana. This prevented observation of project sites and direct interaction with certain vulnerable beneficiary groups. The evaluation was therefore carried out in its entirety in a virtual manner, sometimes with significant connectivity problems implying recurrent rescheduling of interviews.

Another factor that affected the ability of the evaluation team to fully assess the achievement of programme objectives was insufficient M&E data. The number of available decentralized evaluations was limited, all were project level evaluations, and there was no evaluation for the governance thematic area. Some monitoring reports were not available and the quality of some documents was not sufficient.

To mitigate these limitations, the evaluation team was reinforced by one national consultant, in charge of facilitating the data collection exercise, including conducting phone interviews with community level beneficiaries. The ICPE also followed up with national partners by email to obtain more information and access a number of contextual studies and project reports allowing it to draw on additional secondary data.

1.4 Country context

Ghana is a lower-middle income (LMIC) and West Africa's second largest economy after Nigeria.⁵ Ghana is considered one of the fastest-growing economies in Africa, with real GDP growth of 6.5 percent in 2019, driven by the mining and oil sectors.⁶ The COVID-19 pandemic, however, resulted in a steep fall in economic growth, with contraction of the economy by 3.2 percent and 1 percent in the second and third quarters of 2020 respectively, pushing the country into a recession for the first time in the last 38 years.⁷ The medium-term negative impact of the pandemic on growth will continue to be felt through low external demand, lower foreign direct investment and tourism receipts. The World Bank projections indicate that

⁵ <https://perspectives-cblacp.eu/the-rising-west-african-economic-power>.

⁶ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/395721560318628665/pdf/Fourth-Ghana-Economic-Update-Enhancing-Financial-Inclusion-Africa-Region.pdf>.

⁷ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview>.

the economy may grow by an average of 2.2 percent during the three-year period 2021-2023,⁸ which is far lower than the average growth rate over the past two decades. According to the International Monetary Fund, Ghana's external and domestic financing conditions, though tightened considerably at the start of the pandemic, have improved since, and Ghana was able to issue a US\$3 billion Eurobond in March 2021.⁹

Although being a medium human development country and achieving the Millennium Development Goals target of halving the national poverty rate by 2015, Ghana continues to face a number of development challenges. With a Human Development Index value of 0.611, the country ranked 138 out of 189 countries in 2019. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.440, a loss of 28.0 percent.¹⁰ The country's Gini coefficient rose from 37 percent in 1991 to 43.5 percent in 2016, indicating widening inequality.¹¹ Ghana's economic performance is highly dependent on raw commodity exports, making the country susceptible to global commodity price volatilities – three commodities (gold, oil and cocoa) constitute 80 percent of Ghana's exports.¹² Farming remains the primary source of employment for people in rural areas, including the poorest people.¹³ Crop production is mostly rainfed, leading to low productivity and vulnerability to climatic shocks, especially for smallholder farmers. Even before the pandemic, there was widespread inequality and suffering, especially in the five northern regions of the country (Northern, Savannah, North East, Upper West and Upper East), which account for about 44 percent of national poverty and 67 percent of extreme poverty.¹⁴ The prolonged COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating poverty, disparities, and social conditions in Ghana, disproportionately impacting the poor and vulnerable.¹⁵ Although there is currently limited data available on the impact of the pandemic on the provision of other health services, the few surveys conducted suggest that Ghana has experienced significant supply and accessibility challenges,¹⁶ which have impacted HIV testing, tuberculosis referrals and antenatal care visits.¹⁷

The overall pattern of poverty in Ghana has not changed significantly since the 2012 census and poverty remains a largely rural phenomenon. The incidence of poverty was estimated at 23.4 percent in 2016/17 using the upper poverty line, which was 0.8 percentage points lower than in 2012/13. However, the number of poor people has increased by approximately 400,000.¹⁸ Regarding extreme poverty (people unable to meet their basic food needs), the ratio declined from 8.4 percent in 2012-13 to 8.2 percent in 2016-17, in absolute terms, more Ghanaians were living in extreme poverty in 2017 (the number of people living in extreme poverty increased from 2.2 million in 2013 to 2.4 million in 2017). Besides growing income inequality, population growth has also contributed to this situation¹⁹ as Ghana's population has increased by 6.1 million from the 24.7 million recorded in 2010.²⁰ In terms of multidimensional poverty, Ghana Statistical Services estimates, based on the Living Standards Survey data collected between 2016/2017, that the incidence of multidimensional poverty is at 45.6 percent, showing that two out of every five Ghanaians are identified as multidimensionally poor. Rural areas are more exposed to multidimensional poverty (64.6 percent) than urban areas (27.0 percent).²¹

⁸ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview>.

⁹ <https://www.imf.org/en/News/Articles/2021/07/20/pr21221-ghana-imf-executive-board-concludes-2021-article-iv-consultation>

¹⁰ http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/GHA.pdf.

¹¹ International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Republic of Ghana Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019-2024, December 2019.

¹² African Development Bank, 'Republic of Ghana, Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2019-2023', June 2019.

¹³ IFAD, Republic of Ghana Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019-2024, December 2019.

¹⁴ Government of Ghana, 'Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 7 – Poverty trends in Ghana 2005-2017', Ghana Statistical Services, August 2018.

¹⁵ <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/ghana/overview>.

¹⁶ https://preventepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/PERC-Brief-Essential-Services_Report_1120.pdf.

¹⁷ https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10776/covid-19_2020-disruption-impact_report_en.pdf.

¹⁸ https://www2.statsghana.gov.gh/docfiles/publications/GLSS7/Poverty%20Profile%20Report_2005%20-%202017.pdf.

¹⁹ Government of Ghana, 'Ghana Living Standards Survey Round 7 – Poverty trends in Ghana 2005-2017', Ghana Statistical Services, August 2018.

²⁰ <https://statsghana.gov.gh/gssmain/storage/img/infobank/2021%20PHC%20Provisional%20Results%20Press%20Release.pdf>.

²¹ GSS (2019). Multi-Dimensional Poverty-Ghana.

The country faces various challenges related to gender inequality. Ghana's gender inequality index was estimated at 0.538 in 2019 and the country was ranked 135 of 189 countries evaluated. Women are underrepresented in parliament, holding only 13.1 percent of parliamentary seats. Women under 25 years old are less likely (55.7 percent) to attend secondary education compared to men (71.6 percent). Female participation in the labour market is 63.6 percent compared to 71.9 percent for men.²² Women are highly present in low-skilled work, constitute about 90 percent of the labour force in the informal economy²³ and are much less likely than men to be engaged in professional, technical, and managerial fields. About 52 percent of the total adult female population (70 percent in rural areas) is engaged in agriculture, with the majority in food crop production, as well as in processing and marketing agricultural produce.²⁴ In fact, in some communities in the northern regions, women are only permitted to be involved in vegetable farming or selected crops and not cash crops. In Ghana, major gender gaps exist with respect to financial access and ownership and control of economic resources. Social norms opposing women's ownership limit their entitlement to agricultural land, despite women accounting for about 70 percent of the total agricultural value chain in Ghana.²⁵ These challenges are well acknowledged and various policies have been articulated to address them. The National Gender Policy was released in 2015, with the main objective of mainstreaming gender concerns into the national development process. The policy framework emphasizes the cross-cutting nature of gender equity issues and aims at integrating these in all development efforts on national, sectoral, district and local levels, particularly in the rural areas.²⁶

Ghana is a stable democracy that is facing a growing number of domestic and subregional challenges.

It has a good record in ratifying and domesticating global and regional commitments, including the Paris Climate Agreement.²⁷ The presidential and parliamentary elections held in December 2020 solidified Ghana's positive record of eight peaceful elections with three transfers of power since 1992. However, while there is continued confidence in Ghana's democratic institutions, the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index reveals that public perception of Ghana's overall performance fell by 4 points from 2017 to 2019, due to deteriorating public perception of security and safety, rule of law, accountability, and anti-corruption.²⁸ A significant deterioration (-2.9) was found in the overall category of "Participation, Rights and Inclusion" from 2010 to 2019. Of all sub-Saharan countries, Ghana saw the biggest decline in the security, safety and the rule of law sub-category over this same ten-year period (-9.9).²⁹ The 2020 AfroBarometer Survey shows a continued and equally poor level of citizen confidence in the Government's performance, with significant majorities showing negative views about job creation, reducing crime and inequality, improving public delivery, keeping inflation in check and fighting corruption.³⁰ Although Ghana has made some efforts to maintain unchanged the level of corruption perceptions index at 41 (ranked at 80 out of 177 countries in 2019), 33 percent of the population thought that the level of corruption had increased in the country and the same proportion of users of public services had paid a bribe during the last 12 months.³¹

Maintaining social peace domestically and peacebuilding within the region is a major strength of the country and both have become increasingly important as social conflict has become a dominant and consistent feature of the Africa region, particularly the Sahel sub-region. Common to Ghana and

²² <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>.

²³ Ghana Statistical Service. (2013). 2010 population & housing census. Regional analytical report. Greater Accra Region. Accra.

²⁴ <https://banyanglobal.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/USAID-Ghana-Gender-Analysis-Report.pdf>.

²⁵ West Africa Development and Business Delivery Office (RDGW), African Development Bank/African Development Fund. Republic of Ghana Country Strategy Paper (CSP) 2019–2023, June 2019.

²⁶ <https://www.mogcsp.gov.gh/mdocs-posts/national-gender-policy>. Recently in mid-September 2021, the Department of Gender (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection) in collaboration with UNFPA held a one-day national consultative meeting to review and update the National Gender Policy and its strategic implementation plan.

²⁷ Country Programme Document for Ghana (2018–2021).

²⁸ Ibrahim Index of African Governance – Ghana.

²⁹ Ibid, Mo Ibrahim.

³⁰ Center for Democratic Development, 2020. Afrobarometer Round eight Summary of results Survey in Ghana, 2019, CDD, Accra.

³¹ <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/ghana>.

this broader sub-region is the growing problem of violent extremism³² as insurgent groups from North Africa have begun to penetrate south generally moving towards coastal West Africa. Despite the country's well-regarded peace architecture, it has been under strain as a result of several challenges, including "tensions over limited resources, political and electoral violence, terrorism, vigilantism, spread of illicit small arms, growing unemployment and chieftaincy-related communal conflicts amongst others."³³ A wide range of inequalities³⁴ has been growing over the years in Ghana, as evidenced by disparities in education, income and access to public services. There are differences between regions — particularly between the north and the rest of the country – between urban and rural areas, between ethnic and religious groups, in gender and generational relations, and in the marginalization of vulnerable groups (people living with disabilities and HIV/AIDS). Furthermore, there are disparities in regard to natural resource access and ownership. These societal cleavages³⁵ were some of the principal drivers of political violence and polarization in the country and became more pronounced over the course of the country programme.

Ghana has one of the oldest systems of decentralized governance on the African continent. Though it still faces many challenges, it is often considered by other countries as a model for developing their own sub-national governance systems. Local government, composed of municipalities, metropolitans, and districts (MMD) has been in effect in one form or another since the earliest days of the Republic and was most recently codified in the Local Government Act, 2016 (Act 936). District level governance remains key to the achievement of the country's national development objectives, including the SDGs, but its operation is challenged by the limited devolution of administrative, political and financial control. Equally important, there remains a lack of clarity over the exact mandate of responsibilities between national and local governments over the supply of public goods and services. The principal decentralization issue is the appointment of MMD executives by the President rather than through local elections.

Environmental degradation is a critical issue, costing the country an estimated 5 to 10 percent of GDP and is driven by unsustainable exploitation and detrimental practices in agriculture, mining and waste management. Unsustainable exploitation of natural resources has resulted in deforestation, land degradation, air and water pollution, soil erosion, overgrazing, and destruction of biodiversity, among others.³⁶ Recent years have also seen a marked increase in the deforestation rate. This trend of forest loss poses a significant threat to the livelihoods of forest fringe communities as well as ecosystem services and functionality that support Ghana's predominantly agrarian economy. In response to the biodiversity losses, the Government of Ghana has updated and reformulated its National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan with the view to mainstreaming biodiversity in national development planning programmes and protecting and conserving valuable biological resources in all ecological zones.³⁷

The effects of climate change in terms of rising temperatures, erratic rainfall and more extreme weather events are expected to further exacerbate environmental problems and increase vulnerability to natural hazards, in particular floods and droughts. Climate change is expected to have a disproportionate impact on women and already vulnerable communities, especially in rural areas and the north of the country.³⁸ According to Ghana's official reports to the UNFCCC, rural communities in Northern Ghana are

³² Ibid, Dumenu, Mawusi Yaw and Mildred Edinam Adzraku, 2020. Electoral Violence and Political Vigilantism in Ghana Evidence from Selected Hotspots, Research Paper 27.

³³ Ibid, Dr. Anna Matveeva, et. Al August 2020. Conducting A Conflict-Related Development Analysis.

³⁴ See for instance, UNDP, 2018. Northern Ghana Human Development Report, 2018; Ghana Statistical Service, 2018. Multi-Dimensional Poverty, Ghana; or UNDP, 2020. Human Development Report 2020 - GHANA The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene Briefing note for countries on the 2020 Human Development Rep.

³⁵ Dr. Anna Matveeva, Prof. Kwesi Aning and Dr. Patrick Osei-Kufuor, August 2020. Conducting A Conflict-Related Development Analysis.

³⁶ National Environmental Policy.

³⁷ National Biodiversity Strategy and Action plan.

³⁸ UNDP, 2018, 'Country programme document for Ghana (2018-2022)'.

expected to be impacted severely by climate change, due to their high dependence on climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture.³⁹ The National Climate Change Master Plan 2015-2020 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy aim to develop effective mechanisms for managing climate change, including climate-resilient agriculture and food systems, and disaster preparedness and response. The objective of the country's nationally determined contributions is to unconditionally lower greenhouse gas emissions by 15 percent as compared to base scenario, by 2030.⁴⁰ The total cost of implementing Ghana's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the 2020-2030 period is estimated at between \$9.3 and \$15.5 billion.⁴¹

The country is increasingly reliant on fossil fuel consumption to meet rising energy demand and to mitigate variability in its large-scale hydroelectric power. Ghana has achieved impressive levels of energy access – almost 83.5 percent of the population had access to electricity in 2019,⁴² and the country is considered on track to reach universal access by 2030. At the same time, emissions of greenhouse gases from the energy sector are rising as oil and gas production increase,⁴³ running counter to the unconditional 2030 targets for emission reductions set in the country's latest NDC. The country loses a significant amount of energy through aging distribution infrastructure and inefficient usage; as well as leading to unnecessary emissions, these factors increase energy prices for consumers and affect the reliability of supply.⁴⁴ Traditional energy (wood, charcoal or animal and bio residues) is reported to account for 85.8 percent of primary energy usage in Ghanaian homes and provides income-generating activity (charcoal producers, transporters, wholesalers and retailers) to a substantial part of the rural community,⁴⁵ especially in the northern parts of the country. In 2015, in pursuance of the Economic Community of West African States commitments on renewable energy, the country developed National Renewable Energy Action Plans which identified challenges and strategies for expanding its production of wind and solar energy.

Ghana@100 provides a long-term vision for Ghana to become a democratic, inclusive and self-reliant nation by 2057, and will be implemented through a series of 4-year medium-term national development frameworks. It has four programmatic pillars through which this vision will be achieved: (i) governance, peace and security – aimed at building efficient and accountable institutions in a society imbued with high integrity and resolved to make concerted efforts to maintain peace and security; (ii) economic – aimed at building an industrialized, inclusive and resilient economy; (iii) social – aimed at equitably creating well-developed human capital; and (iv) environment – aimed at building well-planned and safe communities while protecting the natural environment. Ghana's medium-term national development policy framework for 2018-2021 is the most recent framework towards Ghana@100 and sets out a vision for agricultural modernization, industrial diversification and youth employment, and embeds national strategies to localize and achieve the SDGs.

³⁹ UNDP, 'Result-Oriented Annual Report 2020'.

⁴⁰ IFAD, 'Republic of Ghana Country Strategic Opportunities Programme 2019-2024', December 2019.

⁴¹ MESTI, 2021. Ghana: Updated Nationally Determined Contribution Under the Paris Agreement (2020-2030), Environmental Protection Agency, Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Accra. https://mesti.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Ghanas-Updated-Nationally-Determined-Contribution-to-the-UNFCCC_2021.pdf.

⁴² World Bank Global Electrification Database from 'Tracking SDG 7: The Energy Progress Report'.

⁴³ International Energy Agency, 2021.

⁴⁴ Ibid. Acheampong, Theophilus & Agbevivi, Doris & Menyeh, Bridget. (2021).

⁴⁵ Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology, and Innovation, 'National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan', November 2016.

One of the most important reforms impacting the overall policy context has been the government’s articulation of a new development paradigm, Ghana Beyond Aid.⁴⁶ This new paradigm sets the long-term national agenda, acknowledging that self-reliance is at the core of a country’s development. The impact of Ghana Beyond Aid is two-fold.⁴⁷ First it sends a clear message that Ghana wants to immediately begin the transition away from traditional development assistance programmes to trade and investment. The second impact has combined with Ghana’s status as a LMIC leading to a significant decrease in the availability of development assistance resources,⁴⁸ as donor countries have shifted funds to countries with more urgent development needs and through international and local civil society organizations or bilaterals.

As of November 2021, Ghana has had over 130,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19. It has registered just under 1200 deaths since the start of the pandemic, with only around 8 percent of the population receiving at least one dose of vaccine.⁴⁹ Large parts of the country were put in full or partial lock-down during 2020, and borders with neighbouring countries were closed, limiting economic activity and affecting businesses and household income (see annex 8). In 2020 the government launched the COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support (CARES) programme, a GH¢100 billion (over \$160 million – 0.2 percent of GDP) initiative to mitigate the impact of the pandemic, and stabilize, revitalize and transform the country’s economy to create jobs and prosperity for Ghanaians over a three-and-a-half-year period.⁵⁰ It is sequenced in two phases: a Stabilization Phase running from July to end 2020; and a medium-term Revitalization Phase from 2021-2023. The Government of Ghana aims to ensure that job creation and other benefits of Ghana CARES are inclusive, in particular, by supporting women-owned businesses and ensuring that there is gender equality in access to employment.

1.5 UNDP in Ghana

UNDP’s strategy and programming in Ghana has evolved significantly over time. During the late 1990s, UNDP positioned itself as a key player in coordinating aid to Ghana. UNDP piloted initiatives for decentralized development, focusing most of its efforts at the district level, with limited linkage to upstream policy. Recognizing the limitations of this approach, in the 2002-2005 programming cycle, UNDP aimed to link district level catalytic projects with upstream work at national level, such as strengthening the capacity of the government for policy analysis and policy formulation. The emphasis on upstream activities grew in the 2006-2011 cycle, when UNDP increasingly envisaged itself as a knowledge-based organization providing a wide range of advisory services to its partners. Pilot projects continued to be part of the strategy, serving as vehicles for evidence-based policy development.⁵¹ The programme focused on consolidation of democracy, wealth creation and empowerment of the poor, and vulnerability reduction and environmental sustainability. UNDP maintained this approach in the 2012-2017 programme period, and also promoted national action on global priorities – the environment, climate change, and gender issues. Against the backdrop of Ghana’s rise to LMIC status, UNDP work focused on making effective use of an expanded resource base to advance equitable development and consolidation of political transformation. Main areas of work included sustainable human development, inclusive growth and democratic governance and consolidation of peace.⁵²

⁴⁶ NDPC, April 2019. Ghana Beyond Aid Charter and Strategy Document.

⁴⁷ Numerous interviews with GOG, multi- and bilateral development partners and UN staff.

⁴⁸ Ibid. Moss, Todd and Stephanie Majerowicz.

⁴⁹ John Hopkins University Coronavirus Resource Centre. Last accessed November 2021: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/region/ghana>.

⁵⁰ <https://www.mofep.gov.gh/sites/default/files/news/care-program.pdf>.

⁵¹ Assessment of Development Results, Ghana, 2011.

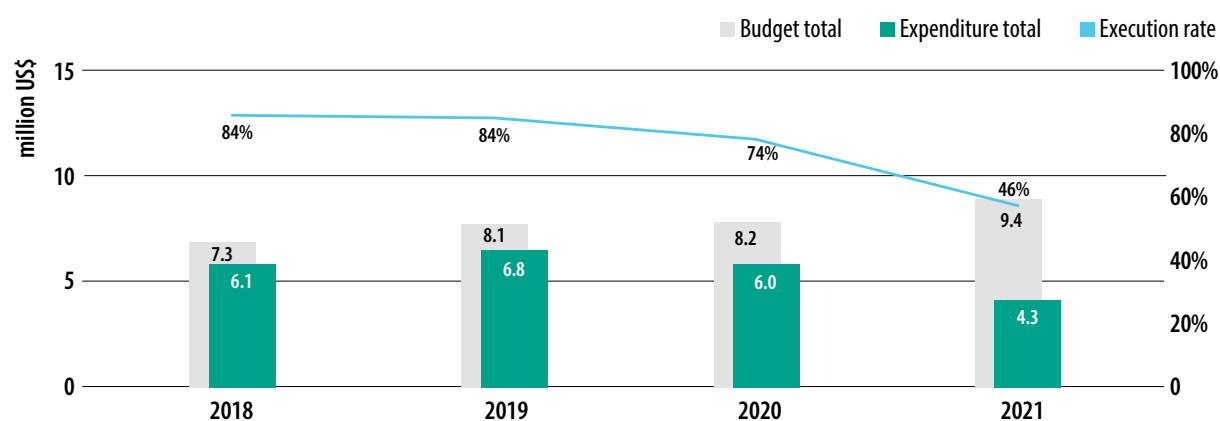
⁵² Country programme document (CPD) Ghana 2012-2016, Country Programme Evaluation of UNDP supported programme 2012-2017 Final Report.

The UNDP country programme in Ghana (2018-2022) is part of the UN assistance for Ghana, defined in the United Nations Sustainable Development Partnership (UNSDP) 2018-2022. UNDP's work focuses on two interlinked priority areas, namely (i) inclusive, equitable and accountable governance; and (ii) green, equitable and resilient development. These two priority areas translate into three outcomes of the country programme: (i) Outcome 1 – Environmental governance at national and local levels is effective, efficient and coherent; (ii) Outcome 2 – Urban and rural communities have access to affordable services, knowledge and tools to increase their resilience; and (iii) Outcome 3 – Transparent, accountable institutions at all levels protect the rights of all people.

For the current programming period 2018-2022, Atlas records a total of 62 projects of varying sizes and at various stages of implementation (some having been initiated during the previous cycle). Some 24 projects correspond to the area of environmental governance (Outcome 1), 17 projects are in the area of resilience (Outcome 2) and 21 projects in the area of governance and peacebuilding (Outcome 3). Some 57 percent of the projects are ongoing at the time of the evaluation, while 43 percent are closed. Some 17 percent of the projects started in 2021 and had been implemented for only a few months at the time of the evaluation. Some 70 percent of the projects, accounting for 47 percent of the total expenditure, are executed directly by UNDP (DIM modality), while 30 percent of the projects, accounting for 53 percent of the total expenditure, are executed by national partners (National Implementation Modality).

The total budget of the country programme has slightly increased from \$7.3 million in 2018 to \$8.2 million in 2020, and \$9.4 million for 2021. In 2020, with challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic on project implementation, the execution rate reduced from 84 percent in previous years to 74 percent, with a total expenditure of around \$6 million. Data for 2021 were downloaded in early October 2021, and therefore cover the first three quarters of the year. In addition to UNDP core resources (\$7.5 million), programme expenditure over the period 2018-2021 came from the following main donors: Adaptation Fund (\$6.2 million), Mondelez (private sector) (\$1.5 million), Japan (\$1.1 million), Germany (\$0.7 million), Montreal Protocol (\$0.7 million), and Global Environment Facility (GEF) (\$0.5 million), among others.

FIGURE 1. Evolution of country programme budget and expenditure by year (2018-2021)



Note: Data for 2021 are only available up to early October. In addition to the expenditure of \$4.3 million, an additional \$1 million has been committed to be spent in the year.

Source: UNDP Atlas Project Data (Power BI, October 8, 2021)

Green, equitable and resilient development (outcomes 1 and 2) is the area that mobilizes the largest share of the financial resources of the programme with a total expenditure of more than \$16 million or 70 percent of the total expenditure over the period 2018 to early October 2021 (outcome 2 on resilience registered almost twice the expenditure of outcome 1 on environmental governance). Governance is the smallest outcome of the programme in terms of expenditure, with around \$5.6 million spent over the period. The following table presents the budget, expenditure and execution rate by outcome.

TABLE 1. Budget, expenditure and execution rate by outcome (2018-2021)

Outcome	Budget (\$ million)	Expenditure (\$ million)	Execution rate (%)
Outcome 1. Environmental governance at national and local levels is effective, efficient and coherent	9.5	6.0	63%
Outcome 2. Urban and rural communities have access to affordable services, knowledge and tools to increase their resilience	12.7	10.1	80%
Outcome 3. Transparent, accountable institutions at all levels protect the rights of all people	8.1	5.6	69%
Projects not linked to a specific outcome	2.6	1.6	60%

Source: UNDP Atlas Project Data (Power BI, October 8, 2021)

At the time of this evaluation, the CO had 38 staff, 2 United Nations Volunteers and 19 National Personnel Services Agreement holders. Women represent 39 percent of the staff but they are represented at all position levels.⁵³ The programme team is structured into three units: (i) Environment and Climate Cluster, whose work contributes to outcome 1 and outcome 2; (ii) Democratic Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster, whose work contributes to outcome 3; and (iii) Economic and Strategic Policy Unit, whose work is crosscutting, focusing on strengthening capacities for inclusive development.

⁵³ HR data provided by UNDP Ghana.

CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS



This chapter presents the results of the outcome analysis and an assessment of cross-cutting issues of the UNDP country programme in Ghana. The main factors that have influenced UNDP's performance and contribution to results are also described in this chapter. The assessment was based on an analysis of the correlation between the results of the projects, their contribution to the expected outputs under each outcome and, consequently, to the overall objectives of the programme.

2.1 Green, equitable and resilient development

Outcome 1. Environmental governance at national and local levels is effective, efficient and coherent.

Outcome 2. Urban and rural communities have access to affordable services, knowledge and tools to increase their resilience.

Corresponding outputs:

OUTPUT 1.1. Evidence-based and gender-responsive climate action scaled up across sectors with increased funding at both national and local levels.

OUTPUT 1.2. National institutions enabled to implement coherent policy and regulatory frameworks for conservation, sustainable use, access to and benefit sharing of environmental resources in line with international conventions.

OUTPUT 1.3. Measures in place and implemented across sectors to improve policy coherence and a sustainable, equitable and gender-sensitive business environment.

OUTPUT 1.4. Technical and operational capacities of the Government enhanced to develop inclusive value chains in extractives, especially for neglected minerals.

OUTPUT 2.1. Communities enabled to adopt systems for integrating climate change and environmental considerations into management of natural resources (e.g. forest and water) and livelihood activities.

OUTPUT 2.2. Key state and non-state actors (private sector, academia and civil society organizations [CSOs]) have improved capacities to form innovative and effective partnerships on climate action and environmental management.

The priority area of “green, equitable and resilient development” broke down into two inter-related outcomes and six corresponding outputs as included in the above table. In order to move forward on the multifaceted issues related to environment and resilience, UNDP planned to work at two levels: strengthening public institutional capacities to reduce environmental degradation and implement climate action; and facilitating access to information, knowledge and tools to promote green jobs, citizen participation in environmental conservation and community resilience.

At upstream level, UNDP prioritized support to enable the Government to develop appropriate policies, compliance mechanisms and institutional capacity to deliver on the various international agreements and protocols on environment and green growth. In this regard, UNDP work focused on supporting the Government in the review processes related to the NDCs, including analysis of key sectoral contribution to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, and exploring various financing mechanisms to implement the country’s climate commitments. UNDP also worked on strengthening the institutional capacity to implement other key international agreements such as the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances, the Kigali amendment to the Montreal Protocol and the Minamata Convention.

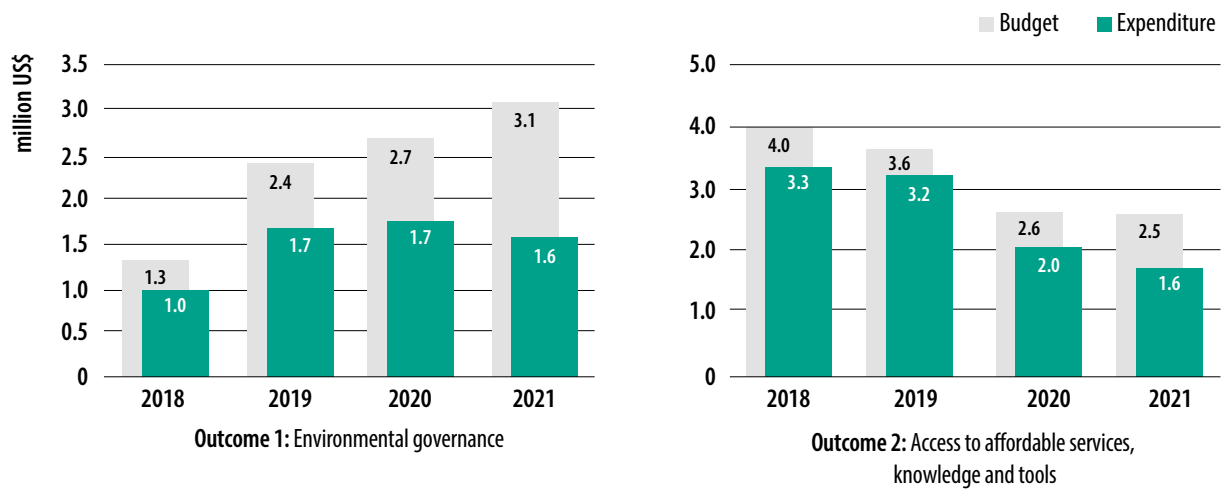
At downstream level, UNDP aimed to directly address the environmental issues faced by the communities and the threats posed by climate change to their livelihoods. In this regard, UNDP worked with local and municipal authorities in several rural and urban communities on climate sensitive adaptation and mitigation measures in areas such as sustainable cocoa farming, shea landscape management, community forest management, waste management and recycling and direct measures for reduction in emissions at household level. Most of this work focused on vulnerable communities in the Northern and Upper West Region, which is the poorest in the country, besides other vulnerable regions.

In 2020, with the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has made efforts to combine meeting international environmental obligations with COVID-19 response through its work in healthcare waste management. Moreover, recognizing the need to strengthen the resilience of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) for green and inclusive recovery, UNDP has undertaken a number of interventions to support, in particular, youth and women-led enterprises including leveraging the opportunities brought about by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.

Outcome 1 on environmental governance is comprised of 24 projects of varying sizes, focusing on themes such as NDC support, institutional strengthening, Hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) phase-out, Minamata Convention Initial Assessment and implementation in the health sector, etc. Total expenditure for this outcome over the evaluation period was around \$6 million, funded by UNDP core resources, vertical funds (Montreal Protocol, GEF, and Green Climate Fund [GCF]), bilateral donors and multilateral funds (including Germany and Multi-partner Trust Fund) and others.

Outcome 2 includes 17 projects of varying sizes for a global envelope of more than \$10 million of expenditure mobilized mainly through vertical funds (the largest amount came from the Adaptation Fund – more than 6 million USD, and GEF), the private sector (Mondelez – more than \$1.5 million), bilateral donors (Denmark, Germany, Italy, etc.), UNDP core resources and other sources. These projects touched on different areas including resilience to climate change, renewable energy, environmentally sustainable practices in cocoa production, and waste recovery, etc.

FIGURE 2. Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of green, equitable and resilient development (2018-2021)



Note: Data for 2021 are only up to early October. In addition to the expenditure reported above, an additional \$0.9 million has been committed to be spent in the year.

Source: UNDP Atlas Project data, Power Bi, October 2021

Finding 1. General NDC support: UNDP has contributed to putting in place various frameworks and tools to enable Ghana to deliver on climate change goals agreed at the UNFCCC. A gender action plan has also been developed for mainstreaming gender into these frameworks. Implementation of the climate finance tracking tool has been slow.

The Government of Ghana initiated the revision of its NDCs with technical and financial support from UNDP. The NDCs form the foundation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and embody each country's efforts to reduce national emission levels. UNDP support built on and was a continuation of a long-term collaboration with the Government to gradually develop an enabling environment for climate action. A comprehensive review of the NDCs was conducted in close collaboration with line ministries and key agencies with the focus on seven NDC priority sectors (energy, waste, transport, agriculture, water, health and disaster risk, and climate service) to take stock of achievements and bring to light priorities for the coming years. Facilitated by UNDP, the NDC revision process also engaged the CSOs, the private sector and development partners.

UNDP facilitated the establishment of an Emission Reduction Registry to enhance transparency in the tracking of GHG emission levels. The Emission Reduction Registry was used for monitoring NDC commitments and updating the NDC report in 2020. The development of the registry was a complex process involving all key ministries and departments which required several rounds of dialogue at all levels and UNDP provided valuable support for this. UNDP also supported the development of NDC accounting tools to allow monitoring and reporting on GHG emissions and inventory. With support from UNDP Headquarters, the CO provided training on the Monitoring, Reporting and Verification (MRV) system to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) which is now able to support other countries in the region in rolling out MRV through the UNDP/UNEP MRV networks established. EPA has been able to train various GHG inventory sector experts⁵⁴ and is now training the districts and various ministries and agencies to collect and report

⁵⁴ Energy, IPPU – Industrial Processes and Product Use, AFOLU – Agriculture, Forestry, and Other Land Use; Waste.

on activity data annually for the national GHG inventory, according to key stakeholders. One challenge of mainstreaming GHG accounting in the annual reporting system of the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies (MMDAs) is the UNDP West Africa MRV networks' different approaches relative to UNEP MRV networks with sub-regional MRVs based on clusters of countries with similar national circumstances such as small island developing states, least developed countries and languages.

The Climate Change Finance Tracking Tool developed in 2015 with UNDP support was not used after its first piloting. The Ministry of Finance trained 10 agencies in 2018 to use the tool but no progress has been made in increasing the number of public agencies reporting climate expenditure. Another round of training of 20 sub-national officers was conducted in the northern regions of Ghana, but the latest report⁵⁵ showed no progress on collation and dissemination of data on climate finance. One of the reasons for lack of progress is that climate finance reporting is led by one department in the Ministry of Finance that has not created enough awareness for and buy-in from other relevant units in the Ministry.⁵⁶ According to key informants, the tracking tool didn't have precisely defined parameters about which climate expenditure was to be included and how these were to be reported. At the Ministries, Departments and Agencies levels, there was very little capacity to generate and report data. Involvement of the MMDAs in climate finance projects is prerequisite to generating the required data at the MMDAs level. Most projects are implemented without the direct involvement of the relevant Municipalities, Metropolitans and Assemblies and MMDAs as project data collectors and data providers. They are not integrated in the M&E departments that can ensure parallel reporting with the project implementing agencies. There are generally no budgets for the collaborating institutions whose contributions are generally considered country in-kind contributions.

UNDP undertook an analysis of the national climate policy landscape and advocated for gender to be mainstreamed in the climate actions. The energy sector has been traditionally gender-blind. The gender analysis of five NDC priority sectors (health, water, waste, transport and disaster risk, and climate services) revealed that key barriers impeding the integration of gender issues in sector policies include inadequate knowledge and skills on how to mainstream gender into climate action, and inadequate inter-sectoral engagements among the NDC sectors. The analysis also revealed that a lack of sex-disaggregated data on NDC in Ghana was impeding effective analysis and gender sensitive planning, implementation and monitoring across the various ministries, departments and agencies.⁵⁷ To address some of the barriers and gaps identified, a national gender action plan and gender mainstreaming toolkit have been developed taking into consideration climate action for use by the sectors. Key informant interviews confirmed that the toolkit is now being edited before it is disseminated and that planning, budgeting and gender focal persons from across the seven NDC sectors at the national and sub-national levels have been trained in the use of the tool to mainstream gender into climate action.

Efforts to mainstream climate change were also undertaken. Through the project 'Partnership for Action on Green Economy' (PAGE), training was provided to the MMDAs on mainstreaming climate change- and green economy- related SDGs in the medium-term plan. In 2018, 149 MMDAs representatives from the then three regions of the North of Ghana (18 females and 131 males) were trained on the effective use of the manual for mainstreaming climate change and green economy-related issues into their medium-term developments, and on relevant indicators to include in their M&E plans and how to report on the same (manual developed in 2017).⁵⁸ Media training was also held to inform journalists on climate change and the green economy.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ UNDP, '2018-2020 Reporting against corporate indicators', 2021.

⁵⁶ ROAR 2018.

⁵⁷ NDC support programme, Annual Report 2020.

⁵⁸ UNDP, Summary of project level results, 2018 – Partnership for Action on Green Economy.

⁵⁹ <https://www.un-page.org/ghana-green-economy-and-sdg-media-training>.

Climate change and green economy concepts were integrated into school curricula. There was also an assessment and review of the training provided to mainstream climate change and inclusive green economy in development planning processes and data reporting requirements. The integration of SDGs in the national medium-term development policy framework (MTDPF) did not consider SDG13 as cross-sectoral. Most of the SDG13 relevant economic sectors such as energy, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste, were therefore not identified under climate action. This affects climate adaptation and mitigation actions identification and reporting based on the MTDPF.

Finding 2. Climate financing: UNDP has enabled the country to leverage various climate financing mechanisms and access low carbon technologies through partnership as per the Paris Agreement.

Ghana estimates a requirement of \$9.3-15.5 billion between 2020-2030 to deliver on the NDC commitments. Financing the implementation of the NDC commitments is therefore the biggest challenge. UNDP has been assisting the country in developing the NDC financing strategy (resource mobilization framework for NDCs) and in its implementation through leveraging various climate financing mechanisms as well as accessing low carbon technologies through partnerships.

An important partnership developed with the support of UNDP was the Government of Ghana and Switzerland bilateral agreement to enable the adoption of green and low carbon technology solutions across the country in line with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. This cooperative approach (known as Internationally Transferrable Mitigation Outcomes – ITMO) is the first ever to have been facilitated by an international intermediary – UNDP – and the second of its kind globally. The partnership will facilitate Ghana’s National Clean Energy Access Programme,⁶⁰ enabling the country to receive international financial support to implement projects to fulfil its climate commitments. The cooperation is expected to open doors to a number of projects that will receive financial support from Switzerland and catalyze private investment into emission reduction activities. The actions being discussed under the agreement include the installation of solar PV systems for commercial consumers, solar home systems, and the provision of improved cooking systems. The partnership is expected to benefit up to 5 million households and result in abating up to 2 million tonnes of GHGs.⁶¹ Key informant interviews noted that, through a close partnership with the Government of Ghana and institutional expertise on carbon market mechanisms, UNDP was able to support and facilitate this dialogue between Switzerland and Ghana, allowing the two countries to pioneer the application of cooperative approaches. UNDP is expected to continue this support as the cooperation progresses. The bilateral agreement was signed in November 2020. As part of operationalization, funding has been provided by a private sector entity (The Foundation for Climate Protection and Carbon Offset – KLIK Foundation) to develop the Mitigation Activity Design Document to start full implementation of the cooperation.

UNDP also supported the Government of Ghana to leverage vertical funds for climate action. Under the Green Climate Fund (GCF) Readiness Programme, UNDP provided assistance to the Ministry of Finance, which is the National Designated Authority for the GCF. UNDP supported the launching of the development process of the GCF Country Programme for Ghana as well as the completion of the project prioritization guidelines for the GCF Country Programme. These are crucial in determining the sectors, programmes and projects Ghana wants to prioritize with the GCF to enable it to attract needed funding to help deal with the effects of climate change.

⁶⁰ The overall goal of Ghana’s National Clean Energy Access Programme is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by expanding energy access through distributed energy systems to residential houses and small and medium sized businesses. The National Clean Energy Access Programme is the core approach to achieving the NDC targets but is conditional upon international support and requires blended financing for implementation.

⁶¹ UNDP, Summary of project level results, 2020.

UNDP, in partnership with the Forestry Commission, developed a project proposal for the 'Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project' to access the GCF. This is a \$54.5 million project (\$30.1 million grant from the GCF, around \$15 million from the Government of Ghana and around \$9.4 million from the private sector)⁶² that seeks to address the most compelling deforestation and forest degradation challenges in Northern Ghana, while promoting investments in the shea value chain and women's empowerment. The project's interventions are expected to result in the restoration of 200,000 hectares of off-reserve savanna forests and 100,000 hectares of degraded shea parklands including the establishment of 25,500 hectares of forest plantations in severely degraded forest reserves. It is expected that the activities will result in an estimate of over 6 million tCO₂e in emission reductions and removals over the first seven years of the project's lifetime and 25.24 million tCO₂e over the period of 20 years.⁶³ The project proposal was approved by the Board of the GCF in August 2020 and is expected to be implemented over a period of 7 years.

Private sector partnerships are also being actively explored for the implementation of climate actions and NDC commitments. UNDP has facilitated several key private sector partnerships, starting with work with Mondelez International on cocoa, and bringing in the Global Shea Alliance to work on the 'Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project', as well as the Coca Cola Foundation on waste management. A recent engagement facilitated by UNDP is the potential partnership with ENI which is intended to lead to carbon stock/sequestration in Ghana's mangrove forests. At the time of the evaluation, a feasibility study with an MRV component had been conducted. UNDP has also been working with the Private Enterprise Federation on sensitizing the local private sector on climate change investment opportunities.

In an effort to also explore the bonds and debt instruments, in 2020 UNDP introduced the concept of green bonds for SDGs, providing training to 30 senior government officials in partnership with the Climate Bonds Initiative. However, this work stalled due to COVID-19.

Finding 3. Renewable energy: UNDP's support to develop Ghana's renewable energy masterplan is a notable policy success. UNDP has also enabled a demonstration of viable renewable technologies. However, the barriers identified in the masterplan have not yet been systematically addressed, and the approach to private sector engagement suggests a limited understanding of the main pathway to increasing the share of renewables in the national energy mix.

Ghana's NDC detailed several conditional targets in the energy sector, including the scaling up of renewable energy penetration by 10 percent by 2030, the promotion of clean rural household lighting and the expansion of the adoption of market-based cleaner cooking solutions. The bilateral agreement with Switzerland, as discussed in the previous finding, is an important initiative to support the energy sector. In addition, for several years UNDP has been assisting the Energy Commission which is a policy and regulatory body. The Commission has been rolling out the Renewable Energy Act in the country, providing solar panels for domestic energy and identifying opportunities for micro-hydro projects. Currently Ghana generates less than 50MW through renewable energy while some 1600MW is produced through large hydro-electric plants. The aim is to progressively increase the renewable energy share in the national energy mix.

⁶² <https://www.climateandforests-undp.org/projects/ghana-shea-landscape-emission-reductions-project-gcf>.

⁶³ Funding proposal, Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project.

The 'China-Ghana South-South Cooperation on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer' project⁶⁴ was designed to effect off-grid community-based electrification, increase the share of renewable energy and promote the productive uses of it. The project operated both at the upstream level (supporting the creation of an enabling environment for technology transfer) and downstream level (actual transfer and demonstration of technologies aiming for potential upscaling by the private sector). The project supported strengthening the capacity of the Energy Commission to develop a comprehensive renewable energy plan. This Renewable Energy Master Plan constitutes an investment-focused framework for the development and promotion of Ghana's renewable energy resources to propel economic growth, improve social life and reduce climate change effects.

In the framework of this project, UNDP facilitated the establishment of a partnership between the Bui Power Authority, the Energy Commission in Ghana, and the International Network on Small Hydro-Power (INSHP) in China. The partnership included exchange visits (e.g. for the Ghanaian counterparts to study similar projects in China) and technical assistance for the design of the plant and for its operations. Through the project, the first micro-hydro plant in Ghana was completed on the Tsatsadu river.⁶⁵ The plant has a capacity of 45kW with the possibility of adding another 45kW capacity turbine in the future.⁶⁶ UNDP support through the project is attributed by the Energy Commission as the key to realizing the initiative, which had remained as a blueprint idea for many years, and the project evaluation identified UNDP's facilitation and adaptive management as key to implementation. As well as providing a source of local power, the project is expected to help fill critical human resources and knowledge gaps on renewable energy. The construction of the micro-hydropower plant was linked to practical tutorials for engineering students across the country and training facilities have been set up in Ghana. Some selected youth from the community, including young women, have been trained and have gained employment with the Tsatsadu micro-hydropower plant.

The private sector is described as central to delivery of the Renewable Energy Master Plan, which includes incentives for the private sector to encourage its participation. The private sector is identified as the engine to develop renewable energy in the country and promote technology transfer. UNDP is exploring the promotion of south-south cooperation in the private sector through the project. Exchange missions by private sector companies in China and Ghana were facilitated and business-to-business matchmaking events were organized. It was in the context of these activities that two Chinese companies (Shanghai Evergreen and Yingkou Jinchen) and two Ghanaian companies (Reroy Group Limited and Tobinco Group) expressed interest in partnering with UNDP on a new initiative to promote the solar photovoltaic industry in Ghana.⁶⁷ The scope of the partnership included the production of various components of the photovoltaic modules, which was seen as an opportunity to better develop the value chain and create more jobs. However, despite several engagements, the partnership was not successful with the Chinese partners deciding to withdraw as the Ghanaian partners were not able to complete the company registration process by the deadline provided by the Chinese partners.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ The project is funded by the Government of Denmark and is a part of the Government of Denmark's commitment to enabling cooperation between China and countries in Africa, in the promotion of the UN's Sustainable Energy for All initiative. ROAR 2019.

⁶⁵ <https://buipower.com/bpa-completes-first-micro-hydropower-plant>.

⁶⁷ Initiation Plan for the South-South cooperation between China and Ghana on technology transfer for the development of solar photovoltaic industry in Ghana <https://info.undp.org/docs/pdc/Documents/GHA/Signed%20Initiation%20Plan%20for%20China-Ghana%20solar%20PV%20project.pdf>.

⁶⁸ UNDP, Summary of project level results, 2019.

The terminal evaluation of the 'China-Ghana South-South Cooperation on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer' project noted that the inclusion of the private sector in the south-south cooperation model helped to share technical knowledge but was insufficient for replication because the Ghanaian stakeholders faced greater challenges accessing appropriate financial mechanisms. Several businesses have expressed concerns regarding the profitability of pilot projects and this, coupled with the high cost of financing in Ghana, has prevented the large participation of the private sector in pilot projects. UNDP has facilitated initial contacts between Chinese and Ghanaian companies, but operational relationships have not materialized because: (i) the Chinese side was looking for a bigger market than that offered by Ghana; and (ii) the cost of financing for the private sector in Ghana is high (loan interest rates can reach 30 percent).⁶⁹ Overall, while the project has had limited success in responding to the motivations and risks faced by the market actors who may support wider adoption of renewable technologies, it has also demonstrated some level of innovation and the lessons learned present greater potential for south-south technology transfer.

Finding 4. International environmental conventions: UNDP has supported capacity development of several government institutions, contributing to Ghana's good progress on the implementation of various environmental conventions including the Montreal Protocol on Ozone Depleting Substances, the Minamata Convention on Mercury and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants.

UNDP has been supporting the EPA in the implementation of the Montreal Protocol since the late 1990s. Based on estimates from the EPA and the hydrochlorofluorocarbon (HCFC) importation quota system agreed with importers in early 2020, Ghana has more than achieved its Ozone Depleting Substances (ODS) 35 percent reduction target in 2020.⁷⁰ Staying on track requires continuous monitoring and engagement of businesses in the refrigeration sector. Key informants mentioned that prior to 2011, all refrigeration appliances used old technology with chlorofluorocarbons but a UNDP project helped to replace these with appliances with new standards. The EPA had a partnership with a private company which helped in dismantling and recycling old appliances. Though the ODS project ended in 2015, the regulatory framework it helped develop clearly strengthened the enforcement and compliance regime. Customers are sensitized and recognize the 'yellow label' which is Ghana's gold standard for energy efficiency. Ghana is on track to comply with Montreal Protocol and is known to be relatively advanced in West Africa on this. With UNDP's support, the National Ozone Unit of the EPA has built the capacity of a total of 196 customs officials to regulate the imports of all refrigeration equipment (enforcement of regulation banning importation of second-hand refrigeration and AC units). EPA and the Energy Commission will soon be introducing a certification programme for refrigeration technicians, and UNDP has supported training for 246 refrigeration technicians to equip them with information on hydrocarbon technology to allow them to be better placed to pass upcoming certification.⁷¹ Preparation work has been undertaken for stage 2 of the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan, including the collection of nationwide data on the remaining HCFC consumption and all alternative refrigerants used in the refrigeration and air conditioning sector. A proposal for the implementation of Stage 2 of the HCFC Phase-out Management Plan was finalized and submitted to the Multilateral Fund for the implementation of the Montreal Protocol in March 2021.

Ghana has also ratified, with UNEP support, the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol which aims to phase out at least 80 percent of all hydrofluorocarbons⁷² by 2045. This has been rolled out in Ghana since 2019-20. UNDP provides implementation support through the projects funded by the Kigali Cooling

⁶⁹ Cecilia Requena Pallares, July 2019, 'Project Evaluation of The China-Ghana and China-Zambia South-South Cooperation on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer Projects', July 2019.

⁷⁰ UNDP, Annual Progress Report 2020, Hydrochlorofluorocarbon Phase-out Management Plan (HPMP).

⁷¹ UNDP, 2020 summary of project level results – Project 'Hydro chlorofluorocarbon Phase-out Management Plan for Ghana'.

⁷² Hydrofluorocarbons are commonly used in cooling appliances and other equipment as an alternative to ozone depleting substances. However, they have significantly higher global warming potential.

Efficiency Programme (K-CEP) and helped Ghana to integrate its HCFC Phase-out Management Plan with the energy efficiency components of its NDC plans, and by incorporating energy efficiency considerations into Montreal Protocol activity.⁷³ The EPA conducted a survey of various cooling gases used in refrigeration in the country. One cooling plan has been developed for Ghana, providing strategic direction on mainstreaming energy efficiency in the refrigeration sector. The next phase of the Kigali programme is under planning and Ghana expects to receive further funding.

Ghana has been implementing activities in compliance with the Minamata Convention on Mercury. Working jointly with WHO which provided support on the development of policies and guidelines, UNDP supported the EPA in the collation of nationwide data on mercury use and releases (the National Mercury Profile) for the development of the Ghana Minamata Initial Assessment Report in 2018. Key informant interviews highlighted the importance of this document, which provided a roadmap for the effective mainstreaming of the Minamata Convention in Ghana. At the upstream level, the report provided data for policy-making and institutional strengthening, and at the downstream level, it informed constituents on the best choices to make in the manufacture/sale/use of products to eliminate their risks to mercury exposure in order to protect their health and the environment. Following the development and launching of the report, several information dissemination and awareness-raising activities were organized to raise public awareness on the mercury risks in Ghana. A national committee known as the Minamata Convention Implementation Committee was established to oversee all mercury-related activities in the short to long term.

Through the medical waste project,⁷⁴ a national strategy for mercury reduction in the health sector has been developed to provide strategic guidance in the long term. Mercury-free technologies have been introduced to some health facilities to reduce mercury use in the health sector. According to key informant interviews, guidelines have been introduced and all health facilities have been mandated to have an action plan which ensures that all mercury equipment is phased out by 2025, as committed to under the Minamata Convention.

The role of UNDP in the Minamata Initial Assessment Report and the 'Medical Waste Project' is well recognized by partners, and UNDP is providing technical support to the EPA and the Minamata Convention Technical Working Group to develop the National Action Plan on Artisanal and Small-scale Gold Mining, aiming at accelerating the adoption of sustainable mercury-free technologies and enhancing access to traceable gold supply chains. Now a joint initiative with UNIDO is being planned. A project preparation grant was received from GEF in 2020 for the development of a proposal for a project that will enhance the mainstreaming of sustainability in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector to reduce mercury use. The full proposal is due to be submitted to GEF for approval.

UNDP has played a vital role in enabling the Government to roll out comprehensive health care waste management guidelines in government health facilities. Through the GEF-funded 'Medical Waste' project, the Ministry of Health, in partnership with UNDP and WHO, completed the review and revision of the national policy and guideline on health care waste management, which is expected to result in the nationwide adoption of a sound system for management of this type of waste in line with the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. UNDP helped develop a modular training on healthcare waste management through the Ghana Hygiene School in Accra. The project also trained health personnel on the best techniques in healthcare waste management.

⁷³ <https://www.k-cep.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Global-regional-and-country-profiles-of-K-CEP-projects.pdf>.

⁷⁴ Project 'Reducing Unintended Persistent Organic Pollutants (UPOPs) and Mercury Releases from the Health Sector in Africa' is funded by GEF and implemented by UNDP in partnership with WHO and the NGO Health Care without Harm across four sub-Saharan African countries (Ghana, Madagascar, Tanzania and Zambia). The project aimed to implement best environmental practices and introduce non-incineration healthcare waste treatment technologies and mercury-free medical devices to reduce harmful releases from the health sector.

Because of ongoing involvement in healthcare waste management, UNDP was able to offer its support to the Government when COVID-19 erupted in early 2020. Built on experience from the 'Medical Waste' project implemented from 2016 to 2020, UNDP offered technical and financial support to the Government of Ghana resulting in the mainstreaming of health care waste management in the national COVID-19 response strategy.⁷⁵ With WHO's technical support, UNDP assisted the Health Facility Regulatory Authority to develop a COVID-19 protocol to ensure that healthcare waste was being managed properly in the post-COVID-19 scenario. UNDP also partnered with a local hospital to produce hand sanitizers which were distributed by the Ministry of Health to 21 health facilities.

Finding 5. Climate change adaptation: As part of the implementation of the National Adaptation Plan, UNDP has supported the Government in the provision of water resources, diversified livelihood assets, and agricultural and income generation skills to rural and peri-urban communities. Several positive results were achieved, but the initiatives have not yet been incorporated into the district planning process or enabled communities to sustain them.

Through the project 'Increased resilience to climate change in Northern Ghana through the management of water resources and diversification of livelihood' financed by the Adaptation Fund, UNDP and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) have partnered with 46 local NGOs/CSOs to enhance the diversification of livelihoods in at least 50 communities in 10 districts in Northern Ghana. Through the provision of livelihood assets, agricultural and income-generation skills, the project introduced a total of 11,743 people (60 percent women) to activities such as agro-processing, cage and fishpond farming, dry season gardening, shea-butter processing, bee-keeping and honey production.⁷⁶ The terminal evaluation of this 'Adaptation Fund' project, which ended in December 2020, noted some key achievements including (i) the establishment of 39 livelihood fish farm projects in rehabilitated dams/dugouts in 23 communities benefiting over 790 direct beneficiaries; (ii) the establishment of 50 bee-keeping livelihood schemes in all 50 project communities for honey production with both women and men as direct beneficiaries; (iii) the establishment of 50 dry season gardening livelihood schemes in 50 communities to undertake the smallholder farming of vegetables during dry season; and (iv) the construction of 24 agro-processing livelihood centres, which were then equipped with appropriate technology for processing shea, groundnut, soya beans and rice to bring agribusiness value addition in 24 communities.⁷⁷

The engagement of community-based NGOs for the delivery of the livelihood interventions has proved quite successful as it ensured strong buy-in from the community.⁷⁸ Interviews with eight NGOs working in the Savannah, Upper West, Upper East and Northern regions during the course of this evaluation confirmed that the emphasis of the activities was on creating alternative livelihoods and providing supplementary income in order to reduce people's dependence on environmentally-damaging occupations such as charcoal-making and selling firewood, alongside sensitizing communities about protecting their grazing land and forest resources.

⁷⁵ Two policy briefs were developed and shared with the National COVID-19 Management Team which outline the importance of ensuring effective health care waste management in the response to the pandemic and explain the processes that need to be followed to effectively manage infectious waste for infection prevention.

⁷⁶ UNDP Annual Report 2019, Increased resilience to climate change in northern Ghana through the management of water resources and diversification of livelihood.

⁷⁷ Antonio Arenas Romero et al, 'TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT - Increased Resilience to Climate Change in Northern Ghana through the Management of Water Resources and Diversification of Livelihoods' (UNDP-MESTI-AF PROJECT), January 2021.

⁷⁸ ROAR 2020, Ibid.

The 'Adaptation Fund' project contributed significantly to the Government's flagship programmes designed to create employment particularly for youth in rural and peri-urban communities. These flagship programmes are 'one village one dam', 'planting for food and jobs' and 'one district-one-factory'.⁷⁹ The small-scale shea nut processing and shea butter production plants and cereals and grains milling plants established by the project are creating sustainable livelihoods. Likewise, the maintenance of the 15 small dams and dugouts constructed or rehabilitated by the project ensure sustainability of water supply for dry season gardening and also enhance small scale aquaculture.⁸⁰

The implementation of some of the activities under the 'Adaptation Fund' project were however delayed. Only 10 of the initial 50 dams/dugouts projected were achieved by December 2020 when the project ended. The rehabilitation of an additional 5 dams has started with committed budgets and the work continued in 2021. There were several reasons for the delays in implementation of some activities. Community entry agreements for release of parcels of land for the livelihood project implementation were not honoured by some communities. Land tenure constraints made replacement difficult and delayed siting of the livelihood activities, particularly agro-processing centres, and therefore land had to be purchased for the implementation of such interventions to avoid further delays. The relocations were far from electricity sources and/or water sources and the additional cost of extending electricity and water were not factored into the project cost estimate by the NGO partners. These installations are still without electricity and have not started operations at the time of the project terminal evaluation.⁸¹ With the exception of a few instances of dry season farming promoted by NGOs in the communities, most of the project implementors of the intervention were located far from the community and did not have good communication channels for active interactions with the beneficiaries.

The lack of integration of the project interventions into district planning schemes, in order for them to be considered ongoing and eventually supported by the districts when project funding ended, is an issue. The community beneficiaries in several cases were unable to sustain interventions that involve capital investment as they could not save enough for the replacement of equipment at the end of its service life. This affects the impact and sustainability of the project results.

Finding 6. Environmentally Sustainable Production: UNDP has contributed to improved access of rural communities to knowledge and tools to increase their resilience through adoption of good environmental practices farms, resulting in the regeneration of the forest cover in a highly deforested area and increased income for farmers. However, the effects of reforestation and forest regeneration efforts through community actions have been stymied by the lack of an appropriate land and tree tenure system in the country.

The 'Environmentally Sustainable Production Practices in Cocoa Landscapes' project, supported by UNDP with funding from the Mondelez International Cocoa Life Programme (Private Sector) and implemented by the Ghana Cocoa Board in close cooperation with the Forestry Commission, is an important project for Ghana's cocoa economy. Cocoa continues to play a central role in the economy of Ghana, which is now the second largest producer of cocoa beans in the world.⁸² It is an important source of rural employment, supporting more than 800,000 smallholder farmers and contributing to 70-100 percent of their income. Some of Ghana's cocoa forests are very old and need replacing, so new plantations are required. Cocoa agroforestry is described as "a complex shade-grown cocoa system in which forest tree species and food

⁷⁹ Antonio Arenas Romero et al, 'TERMINAL EVALUATION REPORT - Increased Resilience to Climate Change in Northern Ghana through the Management of Water Resources and Diversification of Livelihoods' (UNDP-MESTI-AF PROJECT), January 2021.

⁸⁰ Antonio Arenas Romero et al, January 2021, Ibid.

⁸¹ Antonio Arenas Romero et al, January 2021, Ibid.

⁸² Bockel, L., Gopal, P. and Ouédraogo, S.A. 'Preliminary impact appraisal of cocoa value chain rehabilitation in Ghana: 2018–2028'. Accra. FAO and COCOBOD, 2021.

crops are integrated with cocoa for their economic, social and environmental benefits". Studies have shown that multi-strata cocoa plantations contain higher carbon stocks than other agricultural land uses and have considerable potential in mitigating climate change and storing carbon under the forest canopy.⁸³ Historically, cocoa used to be grown under the shade of forest trees in West Africa, however with hybrid, higher yielding cocoa varieties gaining popularity over the years, the shaded cocoa agroforestry practice was replaced over time.⁸⁴ Currently, reduced yield in cocoa plantations is primarily attributed to the problem of virus-affected or old cocoa plantations, which is why the Ghana Cocoa Board (COCOBOD)⁸⁵ has instituted a renovation and rehabilitation programme for 2018–2028 to replant low yielding cocoa plantations through improved agroforestry measures.⁸⁶

The cocoa project is implemented in 12 districts (across Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, and Western, Central and Eastern regions) where new agricultural practices like weeding, pruning, protection of waterbodies near cocoa farms, appropriate agrochemical applications and disposals, and harvesting on time have been introduced through extension agents who educate communities about sustainable cocoa farming. The application of agrochemicals has also been reduced with new trees and new methods. Cocoa needs good shade, so economic trees are being planted in between cocoa trees. According to key informants, some 198,000 farmers were assisted in economic tree planting and planted over 1 million trees on cocoa farms, with a success rate over 85 percent. Almost 30-35 percent of the farmers were women. With these new methods, farmers are getting more yield from cocoa.⁸⁷ The 2020 ROAR reports, based on field observations, that farmers are adopting most of the improved practices they received training on. As a result, these landscapes are gradually re-gaining their vegetative and tree cover providing the farms with better shade that is resulting in higher cocoa yields (and hence higher incomes). One important success factor was to build the capacities of Community Extension Agents and Lead Farmers and rely on their presence on the ground to transfer the knowledge and practices to farmers.⁸⁸ Interviews undertaken in the course of this evaluation confirm that, through the activities of the project, farmers are gradually adopting new methods including tree plantation, soil management, water conservation, protection of water bodies and reduced use of herbicides.

UNDP has been promoting the creation of Community Resource Management Areas (CREMAs) for environmental conservation. The CREMA model is where communities, through their local chiefs and within a defined landscape, establish structures and receive certificates of devolution from the Government to sustainably manage natural resources in their territories and derive economic benefits from them. With support from Mondelez International for enhancing sustainable cocoa production, the establishment of the first CREMAs began in 2018. The CREMA model is implemented in off-forest reserve⁸⁹ areas only. UNDP's support included: (i) establishing CREMAs in the off-forest reserves, bringing 4,163ha under sustainable land management; (ii) tree-planting activities which restored 8,805ha of degraded off-reserve forest; and (iii) 170ha of degraded forest restored through a pilot Modified *Taungya* System, whereby forest compartments are given to fringe communities to farm and plant trees for a period of 4-5 years in a benefit

⁸³ Bockel, L., Gopal, P. and Ouédraogo, S.A. 2021, Ibid.

⁸⁴ Bockel, L., Gopal, P. and Ouédraogo, S.A. 2021, Ibid.

⁸⁵ COCOBOD, a state-run board that serves as the marketing intermediary between primary producers and processors of cocoa beans in Ghana.

⁸⁶ Bockel, L., Gopal, P. and Ouédraogo, S.A. 2021, Ibid.

⁸⁷ Community level farmer interviews revealed that since the introduction of the cocoa intervention, yield has increased from 2 to 3 bags per acre to 5 to 8 bags per acre of farm land.

⁸⁸ ROAR 2020.

⁸⁹ Ghana has two type of reserve forest: off-forest reserve and on-forest reserve; in the latter, no one is allowed to farm and these areas are strictly regulated for their use. Off-forest reserves are far larger than on-forest reserve; farmers are allowed to grow crops on these as there is no regulatory control in the off-forest reserve areas, except for trees which are 'naturally occurring'.

sharing arrangement with the Forestry Commission and traditional authorities. This intervention is directly contributing to a bigger government initiative, the Ghana Cocoa-Forest REDD+ Programme, which aims at reducing carbon emissions in the cocoa industry.⁹⁰

However, the implementation of CREMAs has not been a smooth endeavour, due to challenges related to limited devolution of authority, poor CREMA administration, weak financial sustainability of the community structures⁹¹ and inability of registering the trees planted by the farmers in their names. The Forestry Commission is not yet fully supportive of their operations, and CREMAs' activities remain heavily dependent on donor funding.⁹² As all naturally growing trees are considered government property, including those growing on farmers' lands, there is ambiguity about the authority of local government and community organizations with regard to sharing of usufructs, according to key informants. This was also noted in a terminal evaluation of the ESP project which observed that a lack of clear land and tree tenure acts as a major disincentive for farmers to adopt conservation and regenerative practices,⁹³ and the evaluation noted the need to build a stronger coalition of support and advocacy for the necessary reforms in this area. So far only one CREMA has been established during Phase 1 and an additional two during phase 2, and their overall contribution to land and forest conservation is still evolving.

Finding 7. Waste recovery: UNDP has facilitated a multistakeholder platform on waste recovery, enabling creative solutions for one of the country's most pressing problems. The CO has ensured that the vulnerable communities of waste-collectors have been prioritized and directly engaged in the solutions.

Challenges in the waste management sector related to limited access to a comprehensive set of data and the low level of collaboration among key stakeholders in the waste value chain are being addressed by the Waste Recovery Platform. UNDP has been facilitating this multistakeholder platform which provides space for connecting ideas, people and resources for waste recovery. The platform has the objective to connect key stakeholders in the waste management value chain to promote waste recovery in a large circular economy context. It has four key dimensions: (i) a physical convening mechanism to bring together stakeholders on a periodic basis to connect, discuss issues of common interest and forge partnership for effective waste management; (ii) a digital platform that includes a number of tools (e.g. waste resource map, compendium of technologies, etc.) to provide real time information and data on waste management and facilitate material exchange; (iii) a promoter of innovation with catalytic support for innovative research and development and businesses that demonstrate, contribute knowledge and raise awareness on opportunities for waste recovery or minimalization (e.g. through the Waste Recovery Innovation Challenge); and (iv) a communication dimension to create awareness and build knowledge about the general behaviour change needed to make waste recovery systems effective.

Overall, the waste recovery platform is a flagship initiative of UNDP in Ghana⁹⁴ and its role has been well recognized by all partners interviewed for this evaluation. Besides being a physical platform bringing different stakeholders together for dialogues and consultations,⁹⁵ it has created a digital platform for collating all relevant data on plastic waste in the country, including a dedicated website,⁹⁶ a waste resource

⁹⁰ ROAR 2020.

⁹¹ ROAR 2019.

⁹² James Acworth, Ruth Malleison, and Theophilus Adomako, 'Environmentally Sustainable Production Practices In Cocoa Landscapes Phases I & II (ESP I & II) Ghana [PIMS UNDP.GHA.2020.144.I.C], FINAL REPORT', (undated).

⁹³ James Acworth, Ruth Malleison, and Theophilus Adomako, 'Environmentally Sustainable Production Practices In Cocoa Landscapes Phases I & II (ESP I & II) Ghana [PIMS UNDP.GHA.2020.144.I.C], FINAL REPORT', (undated).

⁹⁴ The Waste Recovery Platform was established with seed funding from UNDP's Country Investment Facility (\$500,000). The first edition of the Waste Recovery Innovation Challenge was co-funded by the Embassy of the Netherlands (\$100,000) and the second edition was supported by a partnership with the Coca Cola Foundation.

⁹⁵ Including important discussion on plastic issues contributing to the development of the National Plastic Management Policy

⁹⁶ <https://ghanawasteplatform.org>.

map, as well as a mobile app for waste materials trading (Uber for Waste). The platform was instrumental in convening stakeholders to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the waste ecosystem and identify solutions to address challenges. These engagements also highlighted that waste pickers/collectors and environmental service providers (especially those in the informal sector) were the stakeholder category in the sector more exposed to the virus and affected by the socio-economic impact of the pandemic. Through an awareness campaign⁹⁷ designed by the platform members, there is an increased general recognition of the vital role that waste collectors/pickers (a stakeholder group that is rarely considered and often left behind) play in society especially during a pandemic, and of the importance for the general public to properly dispose of PPEs to reduce exposure to infection risks and environmental pollution.⁹⁸

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, the platform worked with waste collectors in Accra on waste handling and recycling. UNDP supported provision of PPE to waste collectors (through crowdfunding initiatives set up together with platform members), working with the Waste Pickers' Association and NGOs to train waste collectors in safe handling. The training was provided to 100 "leaders" of waste collectors who in turn trained other waste collectors. This work benefited from some of the research work done by the UNDP Accelerator Lab team in Ghana who brought in behavioural perspectives in studying waste recycling practices.

According to the key informants, building on the work of the platform, the MESTI developed a National Plastic Management Action Plan which provides a roadmap for plastic reduction, aiming to tackle plastic sustainably and generating not only environmental/climate benefits, but also employment and technological innovation. UNDP has also been promoting innovations in plastic waste management through the National Plastic Action Partnership. Innovation challenges and fairs involving MSMEs and large private companies in the plastic value chain are organized from time to time. A GEF proposal is currently under preparation to promote innovative enterprises in this regard, in partnership with the MESTI.

Finding 8. Economic inclusion: A number of initiatives were undertaken to strengthen economic inclusion, entrepreneurship development and the resilience of the small and medium-sized enterprises. They are mostly recent, and it is too early to assess their effectiveness at the time of this evaluation.

UNDP's economic inclusion initiatives aim to enable citizens to overcome intergenerational poverty. The 'future of work' is one initiative for that purpose. In January 2020, prior to the first COVID-19 case in Ghana, UNDP in Ghana had sought views of a cross section of Ghanaians on what they thought was the greatest challenge that they needed to see resolved in this decade of action for the SDGs. Close to two-thirds (61.8 percent) suggested it was finding jobs or acquiring skills to get jobs.⁹⁹ UNDP, in collaboration with the Chôra Foundation, undertook an extensive consultation process with stakeholders to explore the issue of jobs. Deep demonstrations on the future of work were conducted for women and youth to look into the problem of the lack of jobs and these generated insights about the value of work in traditional African perspectives, the need to have inclusive workspaces, empower local economies and transition out of informality for businesses.

Another initiative specifically for youth, 'YouthConnekt Ghana',¹⁰⁰ was launched in June 2019 by the National Youth Authority in partnership with UNDP, and is part of YouthConnekt Africa, which aims to connect youth to their peers, role models, resource skills and economic opportunities. The platform has 6

⁹⁷ The campaign was aired on radio/TV stations reaching an estimated audience of 2.2 million people.

⁹⁸ UNDP, 2020 summary of project level results – Waste Recovery Platform, confirmed by interviews with stakeholders.

⁹⁹ UNDP Ghana Deep Demonstration team (2021) 'Reframing the future of work in Ghana'; UNDP Innovation, <https://medium.com/@undp.innovation/reframing-the-future-of-work-in-ghana-205c514868ea>.

¹⁰⁰ <https://www.nya.gov.gh/YouthConnektGh>.

components,¹⁰¹ but so far it is mainly the ‘Youth innovate’ component that has been active, with the Youth Innovation for Sustainable Development Challenge organized in December 2019. Young innovators, upon winning the challenge, benefited from a prize of \$5,000 each as well as business mentorship, coaching and other business development support services to pilot and scale up their innovations. So far there has not been a follow-up study to assess the effectiveness of this support to young innovators. UNDP also supported Ghana to host the 2021 YouthConnekt Conference, aimed at connecting all African youth to bring about socio-economic transformation.

UNDP also supports the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), aiming to enhance the export readiness of the MSMEs, thus enabling them to leverage the free trade area. This is very recent, following the strategic partnership between the AfCFTA Secretariat and UNDP Headquarters signed in March 2021 to promote trade as a driver of sustainable development particularly for women and youth in Africa and as a stimulus for Africa’s socioeconomic recovery from the pandemic. Key interventions include identifying and supporting champions to fasten the uptake and leveraging of the agreement;¹⁰² enabling MSMEs with intelligence, digital gateways, strategic communication, networks and investment opportunities,¹⁰³ and integrating intra-Africa trade into the planning process at national and sub-national levels.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP has made significant efforts in terms of collecting data on the impacts on businesses and building capacities for strengthened resilience and recovery. These will be discussed in more details in section 2.3.

¹⁰¹ YouthConnekt Ghana has 6 components: (i) SkillsConnekt – connecting youth to job opportunities and assisting them to take advantage of available hiring opportunities; (ii) Youth Integrate – incorporating youth into the socio economic, governance and environmental fibre of the country; (iii) Convention (National Youth Week) – event to celebrate, appreciate, recognize, plan and forecast for the youth of Ghana; (iv) Youth innovate – a platform for youth to unlock their creative potential, develop innovative ideas and test ground-breaking solutions with the potential for scaling up towards acceleration of the SDGs; (v) GO-LEAD – annual programme to build the capacity of young female leaders in Governance and Leadership; and (vi) YouthConnekt Hang Out – a platform for the voice of young people to be heard and for their concerns to be addressed.

¹⁰² A call for the Champions of Trade for the SDGs was launched in April 2021 by the SDG’s Advisory Unit of the Office of the President in partnership with UNDP, supported by the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

¹⁰³ Current efforts target the MSMEs in the MMDAs which also benefit from the Integrated Assembly Financing Framework (IAFF) and SDG investor map process.

2.2 Inclusive, equitable and accountable governance

Outcome 3. Transparent, accountable institutions at all levels protect rights of all people.

Corresponding outputs:

OUTPUT 3.1. Governance institutions and processes enabled to be effective, accountable, gender sensitive, equitable and guarantee the rights of all.

OUTPUT 3.2. Peace actors and institutions have strengthened capacities for peacebuilding including to reduce small arms violence.

OUTPUT 3.3. Civil society, including youth and women's groups, empowered to demand transparency, accountability, and responsiveness from public institutions.

OUTPUT 3.4. Justice and human rights institutions have strengthened technical and operational capacity to provide equitable access to quality services.

OUTPUT 3.5. Policies and strategies for equitable health services (especially for HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases, and infectious diseases) for the marginalized/vulnerable developed and implemented.

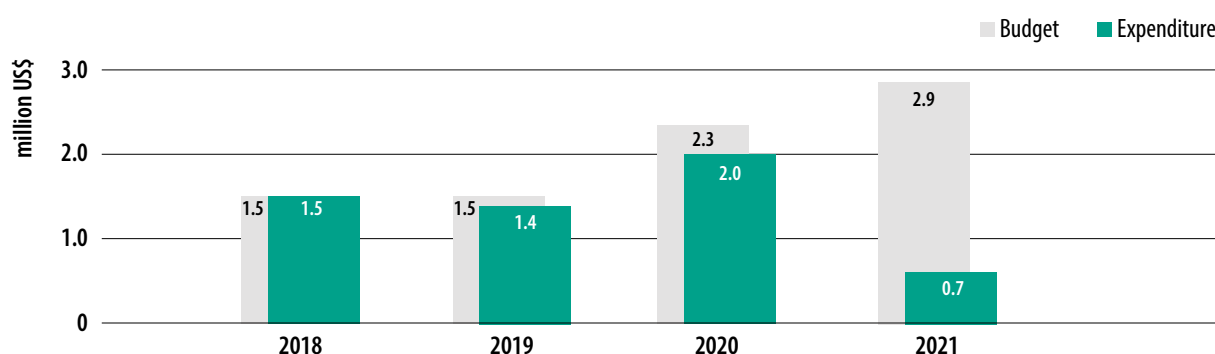
OUTPUT 3.6. National planning institutions, development authorities and statistical agencies effectively produce SDG-informed policies, plans and reports.

UNDP's democratic governance thematic area has been at the centre of its overall country programme since the late 1990s. Throughout the 2000s and up to the previous country programme (2012-2017), the focus was on decentralized or subnational governance, working to create a positive environment, increased public sector capacity for improved service delivery, and enhanced citizen participation in development planning and implementation. The evolution of this programme has moved from largely downstream activities to largely upstream activities, while using pilot projects to link policy initiatives to facts on the ground. The design of the current governance programme was built on the previous programme and includes continuing support to deepen Ghana's peace architecture, preparing for and ensuring peaceful 2020 elections, and building both the public sector and civil society's roles to supply and demand accountable, transparent and responsive governance.

The governance programme aimed to respond to the assessed root causes of Ghana’s identified governance and peacebuilding gaps and deficits.¹⁰⁴ These included: (i) ineffective processes and institutions; (ii) increased signs of corruption; (iii) inequitable access to basic services for the marginalized; (iv) inadequate inclusion of vulnerable groups; and (v) increased political polarization and contestation over resources. The government programme has four priority areas: (i) Institutional strengthening; (ii) Peace and social cohesion; (iii) Social mobilization; and (iv) Rights protection.

The governance component comprises 21 projects of varying sizes (some are very small) for a total envelope of around \$5.6 million of expenditure mobilized mainly through UNDP core resources with some contributions from other partners including Japan, Sweden, the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and others. The above four priority areas were translated into the following areas of intervention: (i) cost-effectiveness, and efficiency in institutions related to access to justice, conflict prevention and resolution, electoral processes and national development planning and accountability; (ii) support for democratic governance reforms and parliamentary oversight; (iii) legal assistance and protection of rights; (iv) effective planning and implementation of the SDGs and the African Union’s Agenda 2063; (v) inclusive participation in decision-making; (vi) citizen demand for responsive service delivery; (vii) civil society, women and youth platforms for more coordinated and innovative action on the SDGs; (viii) prevention of small arms and light weapons proliferation; (ix) prevention and mediation of existing and emerging conflicts; and (x) inclusion of women and youth in peacebuilding.

FIGURE 3. Evolution of expenditure and budget in the area of governance (2018-2021)



Note: Data for 2021 are only up to early October. In addition to the expenditure of \$0.7 million, an additional \$0.3 million has been committed to be spent in the year.
Source: Atlas Project data, Power Bi, October 2021

Finding 9. Governance: UNDP works with a range of institutions to support good governance aimed at improving government accountability and transparency as well as inducing desired policy reforms. This is a time-consuming and sensitive process, and while many planned activities were delivered, the larger political and governance reforms were not yet realized.

¹⁰⁴ UNDP Ghana, 2018. Governance Concept Note. Governance and Peacebuilding Cluster.

UNDP funded, and with the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC), jointly implemented the Ghana Multi-Stakeholder Consultative Platform for Peace and Governance (MCPGG), an umbrella-like mechanism jointly coordinated by UNDP and the Ghana Center for Democratic Development and composed of major stakeholders in governance, including those involved in peacebuilding and conflict management. The platform aimed to bring members together to share ideas and expertise on governance and democracy, and coordinate implementation of workable interventions, with a view to improving and shaping national policy responses to systemic governance challenges. The platform undertook research on political vigilantism and electoral violence in selected hotspots, the outcome of which informed other interventions in the area of preventing electoral violence. Additionally, the platform developed two innovative tools to engage stakeholders ahead of the 2020 elections: the electoral mines game and the online web-based game.

In the electoral sphere, UNDP's support was especially critical in the 2020 general elections as other donor funding was not as robust as in the 2016 general elections. UNDP, through the Electoral Commission (EC), provided 160 newly appointed election officers at national and regional levels with capacity-building including training and technical assistance to enhance their ability to ensure free and fair elections. The training included knowledge on election administration and the role of election officials in the conduct of free and fair elections. In partnership with the Ghana National Commission for Small Arms and Light Weapons, UNDP ran a campaign called 'Ballots without Bullets'. This sensitization campaign aimed at preventing election violence and contributing to peace. According to the UNDP annual report 2020, the campaign reached over 1,000 youth. Various trainings were also organized for women and youth on the prevention of post-election violence at Ghana's borders. In the area of sensitization on corruption and peaceful elections, the knowledge of over 4,000 youth was enhanced, raising their awareness about corruption and empowering their contribution in the fight against corruption and in upholding peace engagements between conflicting parties. Similar work was done in schools raising student awareness about corruption and its causes.

UNDP was key in supporting the EC's new orientation in building internal capacity of key electoral institutions including political parties; the rationale being that with more capable political parties, many of the educational (civic and voter) and training functions provided by the EC could be taken on by the party apparatus, with the EC providing oversight and giving political parties a platform to air their views, something no other donor did. Youth engagement in the 2020 electoral process took place with training and sensitization to prevent vigilantism and promote peace in communities. UNDP supported EC's business continuity when travel to the regions and districts was limited by COVID-19 restrictions, enabling real-time teleconferencing communication with Regional Directors. This was deemed by a number of respondents to have been a critical element in the eventual success of the 2020 elections.

UNDP provided technical support to the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development to prepare a bill to amend some articles of the 1992 constitution, to allow political parties to participate in local level elections by sponsoring candidates to stand to be elected as MMD Chief Executives. However, in 2019, the constitution amendment was withdrawn following a 'Vote No' campaign by the main opposition party and key stakeholders.

Women's participation in decision-making in Ghana is low across all levels of government. In this regard, since 2013, UNDP has been providing technical and financial support for the development of an Affirmative Action Bill, aimed at improving women's participation in decision-making. This has been a long process with several rounds of revision. In the current programming cycle, UNDP provided support for stakeholder consultations to enhance the draft Affirmative Action Bill, as well as a communication and advocacy

strategy to facilitate the adoption of the bill by the Parliament. However, in 2020, plans to implement the communication strategy were impeded by the COVID-19 pandemic. The timeline for the passage of the bill was shifted. At the time of the evaluation, the bill has not yet been passed by the Parliament of Ghana.

Other UNDP support to increasing women's inclusion in political and governance institutions and processes included some limited capacity-building for women wanting to stand in parliamentary elections, and some assistance with the drafting and validation of Ghana's Second National Action Plan (GHANAP II) 2020-2025. This latter support was a fulfilment of Ghana's obligation to prepare a country specific national plan of action for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women's inclusion in peace and security matters. UNDP provided support to the National Peace Council to improve its capacity to promote gender equality within the organization.

One of the main causes of corruption in Ghana has been identified in the National Anti-Corruption Action Plan as the lack of adequate knowledge of the negative impact of corruption on the enjoyment of human rights. As such, the Action Plan outlined awareness-raising and sensitization of the public on the linkage between corruption and human rights as key activities to be undertaken in addressing corruption more effectively in Ghana. UNDP partnered with the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice to sensitize key stakeholders and the general public on the linkage between human rights and corruption to re-energize all in the fight against corruption.

Recognizing that civil society is a legitimate partner in promoting democratic governance alongside government, UNDP supports its role in demanding accountable, transparent and responsive governance; and in supplying important public functions for communities and society more broadly. To mobilize youth in the fight against corruption, UNDP provided support to Ghana's Anti-Corruption Coalition and the Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice in order to increase their knowledge and to brainstorm innovative anti-corruption actions they could implement targeting their communities and their peers. Recognizing the potential significant contribution of women in carrying out advocacy against corruption in their local communities and demanding accountability from public officials, in 2019 UNDP provided support to the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition to engage with key stakeholders to highlight the impact of corruption on women and ways in which women could engage as changemakers in the fight against it. UNDP Annual Report 2020 noted that over 300 youth and women were trained to advocate against corruption. Although there were a number of initiatives aiming at empowering a cross-section of individuals, including women and youth, to strengthen their knowledge on their role in fighting corruption and upholding peace at national, sub-national and community levels as mentioned above, there were no dedicated projects per se for civil society empowerment to demand transparency, accountability and responsiveness from public institutions as stated in output 3.3, aside from the activities to support the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition.

Numerous interviews with concerned respondents noted the proactivity of the UNDP Governance and Peacebuilding team during the pandemic, citing inter-alia, the formation of sub-clusters on peacebuilding and elections, periodic engagements with key stakeholders, including development partners, political parties, police and other stakeholders. Such meetings provided a platform for information sharing and allowed stakeholders to give critical feedback to UNDP, the MCPGG and each other, all of which during a very intense and sometimes challenging election campaign period.

Because of the sensitive political and time-consuming legislative nature of work undertaken in this outcome area, particularly in promoting major reforms (e.g. local elections for MMD executives and the Affirmative Action Bill), achievements were limited in their scope. In addition, from the interviews undertaken, it was clear that the Government's prioritization of trade and investment made good governance less of a focus for in-country donors as the context changed and the country programme period progressed. Combined with an unexpected shortfall in resources and the onset of the COVID pandemic, delivery towards the ambitious agenda set for good governance was understandably lower than had been planned.

Finding 10. Peace and social cohesion: Recognizing that peace and social cohesion is critical, particularly given the emerging context, UNDP has focused on peacebuilding and security, which is the largest output of the governance programme. Several sensitization campaigns and trainings were held to promote positive behavioural change towards peaceful co-existence in Ghana. While progress was made in strengthening the national peace architecture, a lack of resources together with COVID-19 impacts constrained the ability of UNDP to fully implement its peacebuilding and security programme.

Ghana's reputation as an island of peace in a sub-region of often volatile conflict is well documented, as well as its history of settling social conflicts peacefully and relying on the rule of law to arbitrate between contesting parties. However, as noted earlier in this evaluation report, external factors, including violent extremism emanating from North Africa and beginning to penetrate to Coastal West Africa, has increasingly become a cause for concern, along with an escalation in all forms of internal social conflict, particularly around elections but also over resources and traditional patterns of rule. Historically, UNDP has been among the principal international partners contributing to the development and maintenance of Ghana's peacekeeping architecture. Peacebuilding and security were therefore a key focus of UNDP's governance programme during this programming cycle given the above factors. Peace and security are also a precondition to the achievement of the other outputs as they establish the enabling context required for other individual initiatives to take place.

UNDP continued its technical and financial support to the National Peace Council (NPC), the acknowledged leader among Ghanaian organizations in the peacebuilding sector. Its support to the NPC was designed to gather intelligence for early detection, prevention and intervention in conflicts across the country, including training of women and youth in peacebuilding and conflict resolution activities in their relevant communities. An element of UNDP's support, in collaboration with the European Union and Danish International Development Agency, was to strengthen NPC's Regional Councils so that they could better conduct training of community members and monitor and intervene in conflict situations; this included training of women and youth community leaders in mediation services. Most of these activities were undertaken with and through communities to reach individual women and youth who were the principal focus of the training activities. Interviews and annual reports noted that women and youth in some communities in Northern Ghana used their newly acquired knowledge in peacebuilding, insider mediation and conflict resolution to contribute towards improving communication among the factions in chieftaincy disputes, which led to a reduction in violence. A good example of this was the case of the Bimbilla community, where youth refrained from clashing with each other following a Supreme Court verdict in May 2018 even though it adversely affected one of the factions in the conflict.¹⁰⁵ It should also be noted that UNDP supported work on preventing violent extremism in some border communities through awareness-raising, training and establishing and strengthening community and security relations.

¹⁰⁵ ROAR 2018, confirmed with stakeholder interviews.

Following violent clashes between Ghana's main opposition party and purported national security operatives, UNDP provided technical assistance to the mediation process led by the National Peace Council. This process resulted in the development of a roadmap for disbanding political vigilantism and a draft political party code of conduct. The MCPGP supported in terms of awareness creation against political vigilantism in five selected districts, targeting members of women and youth groups including faith-based associations and others.

UNDP, with funding from Japan and, to a lesser extent, Canada, partnered with The Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, in several national and subregional training programmes, designed to strengthen national and regional peacekeeping and security structures in the areas of women, peace and security, cross border security and conflict prevention. Activities in the project included training, political dialogue, research and capacity-building in West African countries. Of particular note was the targeted training of female soldiers so that they were better able to participate in international peacekeeping efforts as part of the Ghanaian military contingent.

UNDP provided technical support for the review of the Act establishing the Small Arms and Light Weapons Commission to enable it to bring its work in line with national priorities and international best practice, as well as to capture issues related to the Arms Trade Treaty. In this regard, UNDP worked with the Ghana Police Service and the Ghana Small Arms and Light Weapons Commission to enhance weapons inventory management. It was reported that by November 2020, 17,000 weapons of the Ghana Police Service in 14 (out of 16) regions of Ghana had been marked in accordance with international and sub regional instruments, such as the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, the International Tracing Instrument and the Firearms Protocol to allow for identification and tracking for accountability and the prevention of unauthorized use. All marked weapons have also been entered into a centralized computerized database system, which can be accessed remotely by authorized persons. Thus the police will be able to trace the whereabouts of their weapons and strengthen their efforts to prevent their weapons being used without authorization and for criminal acts.

In addition to the lack of resources and COVID-19's impact on the overall country programme, there were two factors that indicated a less than optimal outcome in this area. First, the several subregional projects, mainly implemented through the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre, did not have an appreciable impact on Ghanaian actors and institutions, except for a relatively small number of trained staff, women peacekeepers and community members. This raises the second issue, related to UNDP's intention to strengthen women and youth networks rather than individuals (community members) which would have increased sustainability by institutionalizing training and technical assistance with strengthened capacity for conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Despite the significant training provided to individual members of women and youth groups, the results recorded only focused on the number of women and youth reached while there was no reporting on structured institutional support to women and youth networks to strengthen capacity for conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Finding 11. Rights protection and legal assistance: UNDP has undertaken a number of interventions to strengthen legal assistance and the protection of rights, including expanding access to justice for poor and vulnerable groups. Expected results in terms of supporting the implementation of the Universal Periodic Review recommendations were only partially achieved.

Regarding legal assistance, at national level, UNDP provided support to the Legal Aid Commission with a new Act to redefine their mandate, transitioning them from a Scheme to a Commission,¹⁰⁶ allowing for an improved and commensurate level of autonomy, funding and conditions of service. The passage of this new Act (Act 977) was made possible through UNDP supporting engagements with the Parliamentary Select Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs. The new Act aimed at enhancing the independence of the Ghana Legal Aid scheme. UNDP also supported the drafting of regulations to guide the implementation of the new Act.

In addition, to support the Ghana Legal Aid Commission in expanding access to justice to the poor and the vulnerable, UNDP provided assistance for the development of a framework to facilitate the use of paralegals by the Commission, which has only 35 lawyers nationwide. This was expected to contribute to the establishment, for the first time, of a formal public paralegal system for Ghana. UNDP support was considered by stakeholders to be a critical element for the Legal Aid Commission's institutionalization and effectiveness in implementing the expanded legal framework, including providing access to legal aid services at national and sub-national levels.

Regarding the protection of rights, an online training platform was established for Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice staff and efforts were also made to increase awareness on violations of basic fundamental human rights of prison inmates. Victims of COVID-19 stigma got access to support services, with the establishment of a hotline at the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice as well as the creation of 10 safe spaces across 5 targeted vulnerable communities.

UNDP supported the implementation of the recommendations of Ghana's 2017 Universal Periodic Review (UPR) through provision of training to representatives from CSOs, ministries, departments and agencies as well as members of the Inter-ministerial Committee set up by the Government as part of the UPR reporting and monitoring process. The UNDP 2020 Annual Report mentioned that close to 60 CSO representatives were trained to monitor, track and report Ghana's performance under the UPR mechanism on human rights situations. The training aimed to facilitate the drafting and timely submission of the Ghana mid-term report to track progress in the implementation of the recommendations. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the report was not submitted by the state actors. Trained CSOs are currently preparing the shadow reports on the UPR for submission.

Finding 12. Health services: UNDP has provided support to several Ghanaian organizations including the Ghana AIDS Commission and the Ghana Health Services, aimed at combining quality health services with targeting of the most marginalized and vulnerable. Overall, significant capacity-building and sensitization activities have taken place. UNDP also contributed to the creation of an enabling environment to address barriers related to HIV and tuberculosis services. However, it is still too early to determine whether effective implementation and collaboration by all stakeholders has been sufficient to ensure that the vulnerable have not been left behind.

¹⁰⁶ In 2018, the Parliament of Ghana passed the Legal Aid Commission Act 2018 (Act 977), converting the Legal Aid Scheme into the Legal Aid Commission (LAC).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP focused on reducing HIV/AIDS-related stigma and discrimination. UNDP has been a long-term supporter of the Ghana AIDS Commission since the early 2000s. Institutionally, UNDP support in the past was considered instrumental in the Commission becoming an independent entity with representation in all ten of Ghana's original regions and 34 districts. In the previous programming cycle, from 2014-2017, UNDP was part of the joint UN team to support the development of the people living with HIV stigma index and the development of the anti-stigma strategy to reduce HIV-related stigma and ensure no one is left behind.

In the current cycle, to consolidate these efforts, UNDP, with funding from UNAIDS, supported the dissemination of the anti-stigma strategy and key anti-stigma provisions of the Ghana AIDS Commission Act to strengthen public understanding of the key policy provisions for reducing HIV-related stigma and discrimination in Ghana. UNDP provided training to a number of health media reporters as well as local traditional leaders to enhance their ability to recognize the impact of HIV-related stigma and discrimination within communities. UNDP, together with the Ghana AIDS Commission, organized a one-day capacity-building training workshop for traditional local leaders (known as 'queen mothers') in the Greater Accra Region to equip them with basic knowledge and information on the current HIV/AIDS situation in Ghana and to urge them to use their various public platforms to speak about HIV and encourage their community members to uptake HIV testing and treatment services.¹⁰⁷ UNDP's deliberate engagement with these key community players has been critical to ensure that they became change agents and support the development and implementation of key policies such as the Ghana AIDS Commission Act and the anti-stigma strategy.

UNDP supported strengthening the capacity of the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice to address HIV-related stigma and discrimination through converting the existing training manual of the commission into an online interactive tool to improve access and cost-effectiveness. UNDP also supported the establishment and provided capacity strengthening to the Regional Advocacy and Dissemination Teams, which are multidisciplinary advocacy teams made up of health workers, CSOs, people living with HIV and Ghana AIDS Commission representatives to better leverage technical resources at the regional and district levels to reduce HIV stigma and discrimination.

However, the achievement of the stated output "Policies and strategies for equitable health services, (especially for HIV/AIDS, non-communicable diseases and infectious diseases) for the marginalized/vulnerable developed and implemented" required much more than the above activities. Due to lack of funding, planned activities to support the non-communicable diseases policy implementation could not be realized.

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP in partnership with the Ghana Health Services, supported health promotion and COVID-19 risk communication to vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas including people with disabilities, people living with HIV and the prisons. Community information centres in hard-to-reach areas across the country were provided with targeted COVID-19 prevention information including information on hand hygiene and mask wearing.

Overall, UNDP's commitment to reaching the most vulnerable and marginalized was well demonstrated in its interventions in the area of health. Ensuring the vulnerable are not left behind is an ongoing process. UNDP's work with key partners as mentioned above has helped to create an enabling environment, but at this stage, it is too early to determine whether effective implementation and collaboration by all stakeholders has been sufficient to ensure that the vulnerable are not left behind.

¹⁰⁷ The ROAR 2018 reported that after a training, a traditional leader (queen mother) in Big Ada, Nana Balerki Kaki 1, allocated time within her annual durbar, for sensitization on reducing HIV-related stigma, leading to HIV testing for 300 persons within her community.

2.3 COVID-19 response and recovery support

Finding 13. COVID-19 response: With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP proactively reprogrammed and redirected its efforts to support national response and recovery efforts. UNDP efforts have focused on pandemic impact assessment, infection prevention and control, and developing initiatives for those at risk of being “left behind”. The support in COVID-19 response has been well appreciated by partners.

UNDP very proactively adjusted its programme to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional COVID-19 response activities were added to ongoing interventions and new programming areas emerged. As mentioned under finding 4, UNDP provided support in the area of health care waste management, including training to health personnel and quarantine and isolation centres on how to effectively manage waste to prevent infections, developing policy briefs and organizing sensitization campaigns on infection prevention and control protocols. UNDP organized various sensitization campaigns which made deliberate efforts to reach vulnerable groups including people with disabilities (through disability-friendly communication materials), people living with HIV, and incarcerated people (through empowering prison officials/wardens with relevant knowledge, skills and tools on COVID-19 prevention). UNDP reported that around 200,000 people have been sensitized to prevent COVID-19 stigmatization.¹⁰⁸

Recognizing the importance of having reliable data to inform government interventions, UNDP has provided support to the Ghana Statistical Services in conducting a number of surveys, including: (i) the COVID-19 Business Tracker Survey in May-June 2020 which highlighted the considerable impact of the pandemic on businesses and workers,¹⁰⁹ and suggested policies and services to support firms in the short and medium term; (ii) the Agribusiness Tracker Survey¹¹⁰ which built on the COVID-19 Business Tracker to enable the comparison of data over time; and (iii) the COVID-19 Local Economies Tracker¹¹¹, which examined the economic and social effects of COVID-19 on localities to inform their recovery actions. Key informant interviews demonstrated the appreciation of government and development partners for this important support by UNDP, which informed interventions to mitigate negative impacts and assist businesses and communities in surviving the pandemic and building resilience.

In addition to assessing the impact of the pandemic, UNDP also provided support in the preparation of COVID-19 recovery plans. At national level, and as part of UN system efforts, UNDP and other UN agencies developed the socio-economic response and recovery plan.¹¹² At local level, UNDP provided support to five MMDAs to develop their COVID-19 Recovery Plans to enhance resilience against local and external shocks. These plans served as the basis for the preparation of the Integrated Financing Frameworks at the five MMDAs. This work will be discussed in more detail in Finding 14.

¹⁰⁸ UNDP Ghana, Annual report 2020.

¹⁰⁹ The survey found that around 770,000 workers (25.7 percent of the total workforce) had their wages reduced and about 42,000 employees were laid off during the partial lockdown.

¹¹⁰ The survey, funded by the German government, collected data from about 8000 agribusinesses across Ghana and the results were released in June 2021. The findings revealed an increase in the estimated number of job losses for agribusiness workers, from 51,111 during the lockdown to 78,412 in the post-lockdown period. In the same vein, workers with reduced wages increased from 175,255 during the lockdown period to 267,211 between May 2020 and January 2021. The data however also showed some positive trends, with digital technology beginning to play a significant role in the operations of the firms including in the form of internet marketing and mobile money.

¹¹¹ The survey covered 2770 communities in all sixteen regions of Ghana. Different from the Business Tracker, the Local Economies Tracker focused on the impact of the pandemic on communities, highlighting the challenges to inform policy and interventions.

¹¹² The UN System in Ghana – Building back better from COVID-19: Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Socio-economic Response and Recovery Plan (SERRP).

Based on the surveys undertaken and recognizing the significant impact of COVID-19 on businesses, UNDP conducted a series of activities to support entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises to recover better. These included, for example, the launch of the For Better Business Together programme,¹¹³ the launch of the Volunteer Credit Programme to mobilize capacities for businesses, and the work to promote digital and financial inclusion for women (i.e. transitioning from metal boxes to digital wallets). At the time of this evaluation, all these efforts were at the early stages and it was not possible yet to assess their effectiveness.

Finding 14. Support to SDG finance and investment: Recognizing that financing and investment for pandemic recovery and SDG achievement is key, UNDP has helped the Government develop financing frameworks which are now being used as reference documents for identifying and engaging with potential private sector donors.

The UN Addis Ababa Action Agenda adopted by Member States in 2015 calls upon countries to put in place cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies supported by Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs). Ghana, with its SDG financing gap estimated at \$43 billion per year,¹¹⁴ equivalent to 52 percent of its GDP, decided to be one of the INFF pioneer countries. The decision involved bringing together all financing policies and developing strategies to effectively manage existing resources and mobilize additional finance. UNDP supported the process, accessing financing from the Joint SDG Fund¹¹⁵ to pilot a bottom-up INFF approach in five MMDAs. These MMDAs (one metropolitan, three municipals and one district)¹¹⁶ were selected based on their HDI ranking and multi-dimensional poverty index. Later, a border district was also added.¹¹⁷ The National Development Planning Commission led the development of the local COVID-19 Recovery Plans, which in turn guided the scope of the financing strategies and their governance. The Integrated Assembly Financing Framework (IAFF) details financing needs, available resources, risk assessment and binding constraints.

At the time of the evaluation, the six pilot MMDAs have developed resource mobilization plans and private sector engagement strategies are in place. In the evaluation team's interviews with concerned MMDA staff, government funding for the implementation of the recovery plans had not reached these MMDs and resource mobilization strategies had not yet taken off. The original idea of this initiative was for the government to replicate these IAFFs throughout the country's 255 assemblies (district, municipal, metropolitan areas) and mainstream them into an INFF. However, some stakeholders expressed concern that the six pilot MMDAs were not sufficient to generate lessons and experiences for full replication over the country. Some lessons learned so far included the importance of nurturing partnerships, to understand the various needs in different regions and the importance of ownership by the assemblies. Challenges faced both in the pilot MMDs and larger countrywide scaling up focused on data inadequacy which mostly constrained the assessment stage and financing constraints which limited the scope of the process. There was also not a clear connection between the IAFF/INFF process and the support to NDC-related financing discussed earlier, which is an opportunity to be explored.

¹¹³ The programme was launched in October 2020, by the Ministry of Business Development of Ghana in collaboration with the International Chamber of Commerce, UNDP and Business for Peace Foundation, aiming to bring initiatives to support economy recovery and strengthen the sustainability and resilience of businesses in Ghana for a better future.

¹¹⁴ Country Financing Roadmap for the SDGs: Ghana, Insight Report June 2021 – World Economic Forum https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_SDIP_CFR_Ghana_Report_2021.pdf.

¹¹⁵ This is in the framework of the joint project 'Accelerating attainment of SDGs in Ghana' with four participating UN agencies: UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, and UNOPS. The total project budget is \$2.3 million (\$1 million from the Joint SDG Fund, \$900,000 co-funding from UNDP, and \$400,000 co-funding from UNICEF). The joint project has four key components/outputs: (i) SDG financing ecosystem through an INFF with the principle of LNOB is consolidated; (ii) Gender- and child-responsive SDG budgeting, tracking and accountability is further deepened; (iii) Innovative financing strategies for health is nurtured; and (iv) Innovative financing strategies for infrastructure are nurtured.

¹¹⁶ Ketu South Municipal Assembly, Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, Kassena Nankana District Assembly, Sefwi Wiawso Municipal Assembly, Sagnarigu Municipal Assembly.

¹¹⁷ Jomoro District Assembly.

Key informant interviews indicated the instrumental role of UNDP in bringing the analytical content into the development of the financing framework. This framework looks at the full range of financing sources and non-financial resources that could be brought to bear during plan implementation. The IAFFs lay out a financing strategy to raise resources, manage risks, and achieve sustainable development priorities. With UNDP support, SDG investors' maps were developed which enabled the understanding of different district plans – the investors' mapping gives information on feasibility and potential financing. Overall, the SDG investor map is a digital tool that provides market intelligence on investment opportunities in Ghana and related impact data to identify and increase SDG-aligned actionable investments. Ghana's SDG investor maps outlined 12 investment opportunity areas in five key sectors (agriculture, infrastructure, communications, healthcare, and consumer goods). Ghana participated in the UN SDG investment fair held in April 2021, where it showcased a list of bankable SDG-aligned projects with a view to accelerate the mobilization of investment for SDGs.

It is important to note that Ghana, with its President being the Co-Chair of the UN Secretary General's Group of Eminent SDGs Advocates, has embarked on several important initiatives on its own and with the support of different partners, to advance its SDGs. These include, for example, the integration of SDG budgeting and financing into its national budgeting process¹¹⁸ and the undertaking of a Country Financing Roadmap for a joint country and private sector-led SDG initiative to formulate the actions and innovations needed to create and de-risk opportunities financing sustainable development priorities.¹¹⁹ Using this country financing roadmap which estimated the financial requirement and gaps, the President convened a seminar of some 100 global corporate executives to present the roadmap and held regular meetings with the private sector to identify opportunities and obstacles in regard to their engagement on specific areas of the SDGs. The President also convened a CEO Advisory Group to rally the private sector to support the implementation of the SDGs.¹²⁰ UNDP did not make a specific contribution to the above activities but worked closely with the SDGs Advisory Unit at the Office of the President and participated in various consultations and discussions. Overall, UNDP support in terms of the INFF and the SDGs investor mapping forms part of a much bigger national effort to advance the SDGs.

¹¹⁸ Ghana has issued three editions of SDGs budget reports: 2018 SDGs Budget Baseline Report, 2019 SDGs Budget Report and 2020 SDGs Budget Report.

¹¹⁹ This is done in collaboration with the Sustainable Development Investment Partnership, World Economic Forum.

¹²⁰ The Group has identified the following SDGs for prioritization by the private sector: Clean water and sanitation (SDG6), Energy (SDG7), Decent work (SDG8), Industry and infrastructure (SDG9), Sustainable cities and communities (SDG11) and Responsible consumption and production (SDG12).

2.4 Country programme design and implementation and other cross-cutting issues

Finding 15. Programme alignment: The UNDP country programme was well aligned with national priorities and the SDGs and aimed to tackle the limitations in institutional response to the principal social, economic, environmental and political challenges facing Ghana's overall development. The ToC as originally designed was logical but did not clearly identify the underlying assumptions upon which the ToC and the results framework were built. These could have been used to redesign and recalibrate results and the indicators used to measure them when the context changed.

UNDP country programme outcomes emerged directly from the UNSDP results areas which in turn were anchored in the Government of Ghana's Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework (MTNDPF 2018-2021) and Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP 2017-2024). The Common Country Assessment identified four fundamental and interconnected challenges facing the country: (i) addressing persistent vertical and horizontal inequalities (gender, urban-rural, and north-south); (ii) low productivity with continued dependence on commodity exports; and (iii) burgeoning youth population which could spur growth but in the absence of quality education and job creation exacerbates social tension; and (iv) environmental degradation and vulnerability to climate change impacts which negatively affect the resilience of Ghana's economy and society, particularly that of the poorest. In line with UNDP comparative advantages, the CPD aimed to contribute to tackling the first and fourth challenges.¹²¹ The CPD outcomes were designed to support the government to tackle acknowledged limitations in the institutional response to these challenges.

Designed in 2017, the country programme included ambitious objectives and, as the country programme began implementation, it became clear that some of the results, both outcomes and outputs as well as the indicators that measured them, were severely circumscribed by the unfolding context. As such, they would have benefited from a mid-term review or an overall outcome review or evaluation. As mentioned, the number of available decentralized evaluations was limited, and the governance outcome had no evaluation of any kind, let alone an outcome evaluation.

The original ToC of the country programme, though logical in its conception, did not identify the set of assumptions through which the objectives could be met, and this limited the ability to mitigate risks and promote scaling up of successful results achieved. The CO is recognized by the government and donor stakeholders as bringing new ideas to respond to challenges the government faces, both with policy initiatives and by piloting field level approaches that have worked elsewhere. However, UNDP's ToC did not provide a means for updating the country programme as the funding context changed and the outbreak of violence occurred. Community level actions have been relatively small scale and of short duration, with limited opportunity to start building capacity at regional and district level.

Overall, while Ghana remains a relatively stable and prosperous country within the West Africa region, there were several serious challenges facing the country, many of which were political and governance related, and that became more evident during the course of country programme implementation. The design of the current country programme was completed in 2017 before many important political and economic reforms were undertaken and subsequent external factors eventually impacted the programme. The lack

¹²¹ UNDP, 'Country programme document for Ghana (2018-2022)', 2018.

of underlying assumptions in the ToC, as well as an effective M&E system to measure results achievement (see Finding 19) impacted the office's ability to redesign and recalibrate results and indicators used to measure them when the context changed.

Finding 16. Strategic positioning: UNDP is a long-term trusted partner of the Government of Ghana. UNDP is widely acknowledged for its convening power and is well positioned as a development agency with technical expertise in a number of important areas.

UNDP has worked closely with several key government institutions and is described as a reliable, responsive partner, providing catalytic and impact-driven support. UNDP's technical insights, professionalism, accountability and transparency were often listed among its key strengths during discussions with key stakeholders of the country programme. The importance of UNDP's convening power is widely acknowledged, demonstrated by its ability to bring multiple stakeholders together to discuss important issues. A key example is the Waste Recovery Platform.

UNDP is clearly recognized in the country as having a leading position on supporting climate change, the environment and climate financing. Key informant interviews with Government counterparts indicate their appreciation of UNDP's ability to bring high-quality technical perspectives and analytical ability along with experience from different countries into the discourse on complex issues of climate change. On governance and peacebuilding, even though financial support is limited, UNDP is considered by stakeholders to fill a role that no other agency does and its support is well appreciated by partners.

UNDP's continuing presence in the country, with the CO also backstopped by technical staff in the regional office and headquarters, gives stakeholders better access to UNDP for continuing dialogue and engagement. Key informant interviews also suggested that the government agencies find in UNDP a credible facilitator, giving as an example UNDP's facilitation of the collaboration and partnership between Ghana and Switzerland and Ghana and China. UNDP's ability to mobilize or support the government in the mobilization of funding is considered another of its distinctive competencies. These efforts included not just funding from international climate finance instruments but all the SDG financing and investment activities discussed in the previous section.

UNDP has managed to clearly position itself as a development partner of the Government rather than a donor but its reduction of resources for the country programme are still mentioned as a concern by several Government partners, as it has affected the implementation of some planned activities, particularly in the governance area. It was found from interviews that several stakeholders at both national and subnational levels were in favour of more downstream programming, although they did understand UNDP resource constraints and appreciated its upstream work. Having said that, interviews with leaders of key institutions found that given Ghana's policy reforms that place transformation to the fore, the main expected future role for UNDP will be thought leadership, which requires UNDP to have the technical prowess, to be able to strategically position itself and to deliver on the expectation.

Finding 17. Partnership: UNDP, in its interventions and to varying degrees, has partnered with several UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector, including through South-South cooperation. Despite a number of collaborative activities, the UN has not been delivering as one in Ghana. Engagement with other key multilateral players was often limited to the development partner working group level and programmatic engagement has not been pursued proactively.

Within the UN system, there are several collaborative activities involving UNDP and other UN organizations. The Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE), led by UNDP in Ghana, involves UNEP, ILO, UNIDO and UNITAR, working together to develop several key Government policies. UNDP, together with UNIDO, received a project preparation grant from the GEF to develop a full project proposal with the aim of reducing mercury use in the artisanal and small-scale gold mining sector. UNDP also partnered with WHO on a review and revision of national policy and guidelines on medical waste management for the Ministry of Health. Beyond these, however, the agency initiatives did not combine to add value to each other or to provide an improved benefit to government plans. This was recognized by both the Government and the UN and attributed to the challenges in aligning programmes and budgets from head office and at the CO level. Despite UNDP efforts to demonstrate a systems approach through its work on SDG financing (district-level integrated financing frameworks and SDG investor maps) or statistics (COVID-19 business tracker), the UNDP integrator role is not fully understood and accepted among the UN agencies.

There are several other major initiatives on climate change and resilience-related areas being undertaken in the country by development agencies such as the European Union, World Bank, African Development Bank and IFAD which, prima facie, appear close to what UNDP is aiming to achieve.¹²² However, there has been little linkage or synergy with these various initiatives which has limited the scaling up of lessons learned and best practices. Key informant interviews indicated that opportunities for multilateral collaboration are not always explored, often because agencies are looking for joint funding opportunities rather than combining and scaling their approaches within existing projects. Although sharing of information takes place in various partner working groups and is said to have helped avoid duplication of climate and agricultural programming in the same geographic area, engagement on programmatic issues has been rare.

UNDP has actively pursued partnership with the private sector in the current programming cycle which has helped to mobilize additional financial resources as well as enhance developmental change. Examples include the partnership with Mondelez for sustainable cocoa production and with the Coca-Cola Foundation for the promotion of circular economy through waste management. Recently, partnership with ENI to promote sustainable energy was initiated. Within the framework of the waste recovery platform, UNDP actively engaged with the private sector, providing grants to test innovative solutions for waste recovery. Other partnerships with the private sector are in the pipeline.¹²³ Overall, UNDP has made good progress and continues to invest in exploring further partnership with the private sector.

Partnership with the CSOs in the current country programme has taken several forms. In the environment and climate change thematic areas, CSOs were engaged as implementing partners to carry out a number of interventions for the country programme, as in the case of NGOs delivering the livelihood component of the 'Adaptation Fund' project. A number of CSOs¹²⁴ were members of the multi-stakeholder peace and governance platform which promoted dialogue and built consensus in addressing political vigilantism and electoral violence in several electoral hotspot communities across the country. UNDP, through the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition as an implementing partner, engaged youth and women, and in some cases,

¹²² The European Union is a key player in the country on the climate change and environment scene. Through its Resilience Against Climate Change (REACH) programme, it works on grassroots conservation actions at district level in the Northern region. The European Union has also launched a waste recycling project which works in Central and Western Ghana in the sanitation and plastic waste recycling sectors, in partnership with UNCDF and the Ministry of Local Government. The African Development Bank has been making significant investment in value chain development of cocoa. It is supporting the Ghana Cocoa Board in undertaking institutional reforms and building capacity for local processing of cocoa. The World Bank is working with the Forestry Commission in the Ghana Cocoa Forest REDD+ Programme. It also recently launched a social protection programme for \$100 million to expand and enhance social safety nets that improve the incomes and productivity of the poor in Ghana. IFAD works on promoting and mainstreaming climate change resilience approaches in particular in the northern regions.

¹²³ Such as partnership with the Vodafone Foundation.

¹²⁴ Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, Centre for Democratic Development, and Youth Empowerment Synergy.

their organizations, in the fight against corruption. Overall, as discussed in the governance section, UNDP support in terms of strengthening CSOs and networks to engage in holding government to be accountable, transparent and responsive has been negligible.

Finding 18. Resource mobilization: Changes in the funding landscape and the Government's vision on aid have had significant implications for the CO's resource base and impacted the CO's delivery capacity, particularly for the governance area. The office has made significant efforts to transition and reposition itself, but this has not been an easy or fast process.

The resource mobilization context has changed significantly during the CPD period under review. The CPD 2018-2022 envisaged an envelope of approximately \$83 million over the CPD period.¹²⁵ The resources were expected to be drawn from core UNDP funds, Trust Funds, Vertical Funds, South-South Contributions, and cost-sharing resources from various partner agencies.¹²⁶ However, Ghana's LMIC status has engendered a completely changed funding landscape with UNDP's core (TRAC) allocations declining quite significantly. Donors continue their reorientation from traditional aid programme to align with Ghana Beyond Aid and Ghana@100, both of which put a renewed focus on self-reliance and an emphasis on trade and investment. As official development assistance began to decline, the result of Ghana's new directions and its LMIC status, donors began downsizing programmes, particularly in the governance area. Larger donors, both multilateral and bilateral, also began shifting funds from UN agencies to international and local CSOs for programme and project implementation, leading to increased competition for dwindling development resources.

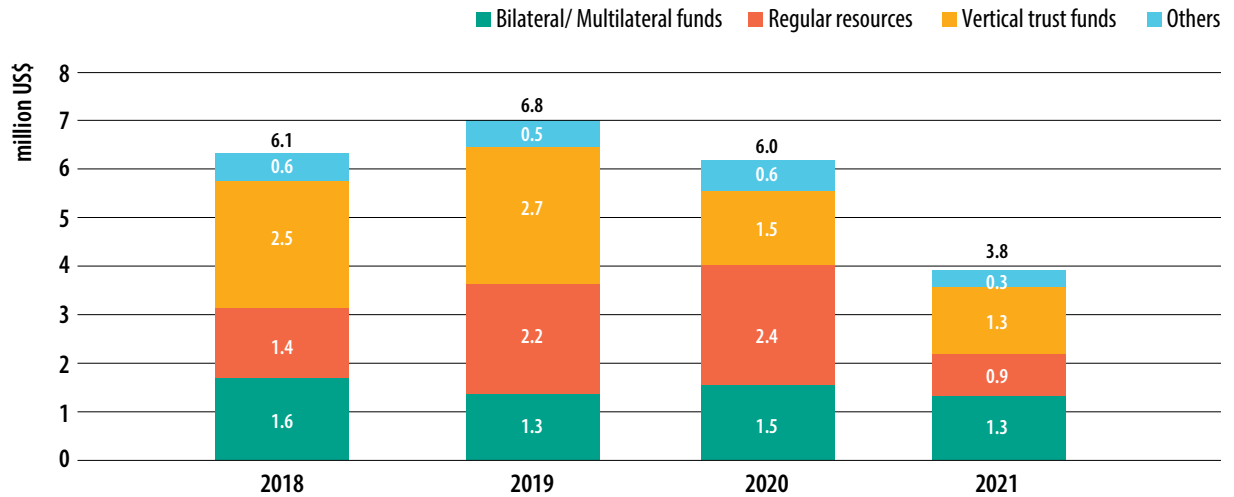
As a result of these changes, so far, three and a half years into the programme cycle, the CO managed to have a total delivery of around \$22.7 million, or just 27 percent of the \$83 million target. At the same time it is important to note the recently approved financing from the Green Climate Fund for the 'Ghana Shea Landscape Emission Reductions Project', which has a total budget of \$54.5 million to be implemented over a period of 7 years. As the project has just started, at the time the financial data was downloaded the amount of expenditure recorded in the system was limited.

Key contributors to the expenditure recorded over 2018-2021 are UNDP regular resources, vertical trust funds (Adaptation Fund, Montreal Protocol, GEF and GCF), some bilateral donors (Japan, Germany, Denmark, Canada, etc.) and the private sector (Mondelez, the Coca-Cola Foundation). Unfortunately, Government cost-sharing, though it has been discussed, has not gained any results to date.

¹²⁵ This was premised on a very successful resource mobilization during the previous CPD (2012-2017) which budgeted \$67.8 million dollars and delivered approximately \$62.6 million dollars with both regular and non-regular resources.

¹²⁶ UNDP Ghana Partnerships and Communications Strategy and Action Plan.

FIGURE 4. Total programme expenses by funding source and year



Source: UNDP Atlas Project data, Power Bi, October 2021

The governance thematic area was the most affected by resource mobilization challenges. Almost three quarters of the expenditure in this outcome area came from UNDP regular resources. Total expenditure so far (around \$5.6 million) was only 17 percent of the resource envelope estimated for this outcome area at the beginning of the programme cycle. Some of UNDP’s traditional donors working in the governance space have reoriented their priorities and UNDP has had to shift its conversation with these partners from governance focused on accountability to other areas such as environment, peacebuilding and prevention of violent extremism.

UNDP invested in its communication and advocacy efforts to enhance visibility and facilitate resource mobilization. Some examples of communication and advocacy efforts reaching potential donors included the advocacy campaign on effective waste management attracting the interest of the Coca-Cola Foundation which committed about \$480,000 funding to increase advocacy on best waste management practices in Ghana; and the communication campaign on the COVID-19 business tracker results which attracted a 240,000 Euro partnership from GIZ, enabling the CO to carry out the agri-business tracker survey.¹²⁷

Finding 19. M&E: An inadequate M&E system limited the potential for learning and quality improvement. While the lack of resources can be attributed to some of the less than adequate evidence-based reporting, it does not explain the entirety of it. Several of the results framework indicators were inadequately articulated, leading to reporting achievements that were not true measures of the articulated outputs and outcomes.

UNDP’s projects have a large number of activities that are dependent on further and continued application and implementation before they can contribute to CPD outcomes, such as capacity-building, policy development, or the support to regenerate natural resources. Across its projects, UNDP did not systematically capture the information that would indicate whether its activities were (i) being adopted and applied and (ii) leading towards outcomes. Project reports and ROAR mostly capture the activity that took place and the number of people involved, with some disaggregation by male and female participants. Reporting at project level was uneven; there were several cases when the project files were incomplete

¹²⁷ UNDP Ghana Communications, Impact report 2018-2021.

with progress reports and core documents missing. If projects were changed, either in terms of outputs, activities, extensions or budgets, there was not always corresponding documentation noting the change. Project reports, where they existed, did not always reflect outcome level results obtained.

There does not exist a system of results-based management with measurable and verifiable data-driven reporting for each project which would have enabled aggregation at the output, outcome and the country programme levels. UNDP's internal M&E system, such as it is, did little more than provide descriptive data which often introduced subjective elements like individual perception and opinions of people authoring/developing these reports. Most importantly, the evaluation found little actual analysis of the data that was collected. This lack of analysis, and the fact that there was no strong end-user feedback mechanism systematically built into these narrative data, meant UNDP managers and senior staff were not provided with the information they needed for decision-making. The indicators included in the results framework are in several cases poorly articulated vis-à-vis the output being measured, which led to reporting achievements that were not true measures of the articulated indicators (for example: number of individuals trained versus number of networks strengthened).

Some project evaluations have been conducted, with several lessons learned being applied in some cases, but they were mainly in the environment and climate change areas, as part of the donor requirements, and they did not provide post-hoc assessments. In one project, the final evaluation was conducted months before core activities ended. There was no evaluation undertaken for the governance portfolio. A mid-term review or an outcome evaluation would have had major relevance given the significantly changed situation that the CO found itself, including major changes in government policy, severe cuts to the overall country programme budget and the COVID-19 pandemic. Annual review meetings were organized, with the participation of key stakeholders, and were appreciated as an opportunity to discuss achievements, implementation challenges and lessons learned, but there was no evidence of more regular formal reporting on projects and portfolio progress to senior management and the use of these reports for adaptive management.

Several project evaluations made similar observations regarding the monitoring of changes induced by the projects. The 'Adaptation Fund' project was advised by its mid-term evaluation to assess and monitor changes to livelihoods and vulnerability levels in communities, but this recommendation was not applied. The final evaluation identified that the sustainability of most activities was dependent on their ability to provide financial incentives to households (which for some activities are expected three years after the project) and for community savings to provide collateral for loans to maintain equipment. Without assessing and monitoring livelihood changes and vulnerability status, UNDP could not be sure it had raised incomes to the point that communities could withstand a drought (or other climate-induced shocks). The final evaluation recognized that, despite improvement to water availability and income, livelihoods in the project area were still vulnerable to climate change. The ESP project evaluation¹²⁸ identifies a similar situation, with key metrics (deforestation, on-farm tree cover and carbon stocks, cocoa yields, farmer incomes, etc.), either non-existent or too weak to support any quantitative analysis.

There is also a missed opportunity to use UNDP's project to support recognized challenges in national capacity to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of government-led environmental policies and interventions. The CO has supported the development of MRV processes for climate interventions; however, low levels of M&E capacity in MESTI and EPA are recognized as a key gap for addressing tangible forestry,

¹²⁸ James Acworth, Ruth Malleon, and Theophilus Adomako, 'Environmentally Sustainable Production Practices in Cocoa Landscapes Phases I & II (ESP I & II) Ghana [PIMS UNDP.GHA.2020.144.I.C], FINAL REPORT', (undated).

waste, plastic and artisanal mining problems.¹²⁹ The Adaptation Fund project was assessed as having insufficient budget to support monitoring of community level initiatives by regional and district levels of the Environmental Protection Agency, which could have supported local adaptive capacity and sustainability. Had UNDP followed up with the participants under the K-CEP project, it could have tested whether its outcome: a 'Ban on [the] import of used AC units [is] fully enforced' was being applied and produced lessons on monitoring compliance that support the ban.

Finding 20. Human Resources: The office did not always operate at full and stable staff capacity during the programming cycle. Efforts were made to use available resources as best as possible, but these measures spread staff time over multiple roles and there were extended periods when positions were left vacant.

Since the beginning of the current programme cycle in 2018, UNDP has had to operate with several interim senior management arrangements. These interim arrangements made use of capacity from operations or programme teams during this period, but the latter were not covered or replaced. The current Resident Representative joined the office in November 2020, allowing the office to have a full complement of Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative positions in place but it remained only until end of June 2021 when the Deputy Resident Representative left, requiring an interim arrangement again.

Several roles have been in flux over the period, including Head of Programme Management Support Unit and M&E, Governance expert, Environment and Climate Change specialist, and support roles for programmes, human resource management, and procurement. The CO has used UN Volunteers to fill some of these roles temporarily, but these have also been subject to changes. The remaining staff have been stretched to cover these roles where possible. For instance, the Governance and Peacebuilding cluster head was also responsible for the M&E as well as being the gender focal point.

Overstretched capacities undermined UNDP's transition to thought leadership and advisory roles, which require experience and seniority. The CO had one P5 role (economics advisor) over the CPD, but this role remained empty since September 2021 and the CO had no other P4s or P5s. There has been no partnership specialist over the CPD period, which limits a core mechanism for achieving the CPD results. The NDC financing component was heavily dependent on external consultants to develop the blended financial mechanisms required to leverage the investment for delivery of the plan. It is clear, however, that the CO has made good use of UNDP regional and HQ staff who were instrumental in supporting the development of environmental initiatives. This was also recognized by government counterparts.

Finding 21. Gender: UNDP has taken steps to promote gender responsive approaches and launched a number of initiatives intended to improve the participation of women in governance processes, environmental programmes and the COVID-19 response. However, certain projects have completely overlooked gender considerations, and country programme results in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment therefore vary across different thematic areas.

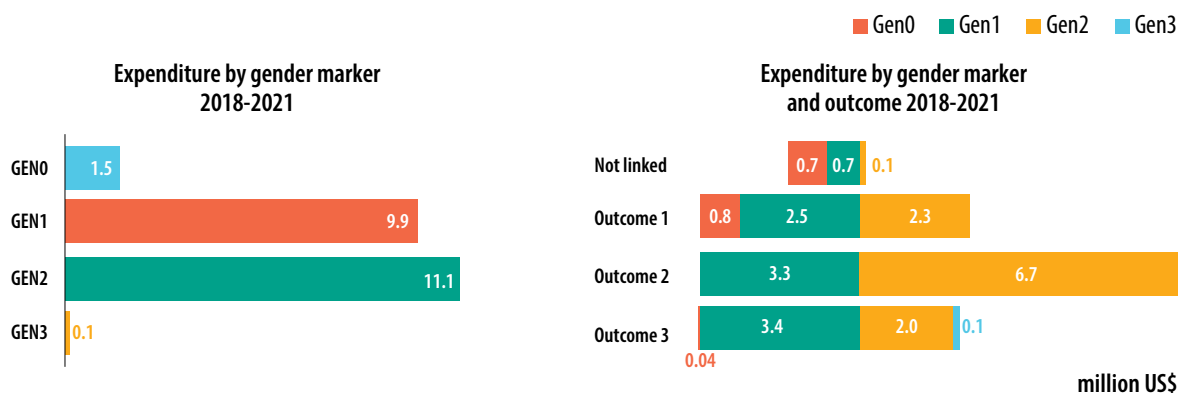
The CO has a gender focal point in place and interviews with colleagues and other stakeholders during data collection showed that the office demonstrated a clear intention to strengthen the gender aspects of its programme, including in communication with its partners. However, this intention was not accompanied by dedicated resources. The office does not have a gender strategy in place, nor specific resources allocated to gender-related activities with the gender focal point covering two other roles in the office. Although project teams were requested to bring ideas to the gender focal person for brainstorming, it was reported that most project designs were received for comments when they reached an advanced stage of development,

¹²⁹ Ghana Country Environmental Analysis (April 2020) World Bank

which made it difficult to incorporate a gender component. The gender marker tool, therefore, was only sometimes used to decide where a specific gender output was needed or how to improve it, and more often as a retrospective score. It was reasonable to expect that more staff should have incorporated gender as a core design component, because the CO had provided relevant gender training for all staff (and in some cases for partners) in all but one year of the CPD.

The inconsistent approach to gender was reflected in the gender marker scores for the projects implemented under the current country programme. Typically, projects related to social mobilization, social cohesion and peacebuilding were more likely to include gender components while those for the environment and climate-related areas tended to have better gender components when donors required that gender be incorporated into the project design, such as the GEF (which has required a gender action plan since 2018) and the Adaptation Fund. Overall, the percentage of expenditure on GEN3 projects (where gender equality is the main objective) was very low (less than 0.5 percent of total programme expenditure from all sources of funding), much lower than the corporate target of 15 percent in UNDP’s corporate Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021.¹³⁰ More than half of the expenditure was either expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way only (GEN1) or not expected to contribute to gender equality noticeably (GEN0). The number of projects rated as GEN1 was predominant at 58 percent of the total number of projects.

FIGURE 5. Distribution of gender markers by outcomes and expenditure (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP Atlas Project data, Power Bi, October 2021

In terms of gender-related results, using the IEO’s Gender Results Effectiveness Scale, some gender results achieved could have been classified as “gender-responsive”, meaning that efforts were made to address the differential needs of men and women, and focused on the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status, and rights. In this regard, UNDP promoted women’s civic participation in governance and political processes, through awareness-raising activities and training, and by working with government institutions to recognize the gendered elements of political engagement, violence and environmental issues. These activities were usually one-off training or sensitization sessions with little evidence of sustainability or long-term impact. The actual projects and activities supported individual women at the community level but did not benefit from the institutionalization and sustainability that would have occurred if women’s organizations had been strengthened. Under the environmental objective, the NDC Support programme had a dedicated component on gender and led to the establishment of a national climate change and

¹³⁰ UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021, p. 19.

gender working group, which provided assessments and guidance for enhancing gender integration in climate action in various sectors. Most of the other gender results could be classified as “gender targeted”, meaning they were limited to counting the number of men and women that were involved in the activities.

UNDP had a mixed approach to targeting the livelihoods that women typically engaged in. The ‘Adaptation Fund’ project made deliberate efforts to ensure that 60 percent of the project beneficiaries for each of the livelihood activities such as bee-keeping, agro-processing schemes, shea butter processing, dry season farming and fishing were women.¹³¹ Key informant interviews with eight different NGOs implementing different activities confirmed this was achieved. In the design of the ‘Ghana Shea Landscape’ project, a gender assessment and action plan was developed. However, the cocoa project has significantly lower numbers of women participants compared to men in nearly all activities, many of which were project-provided agricultural training or aspects of community governance/roles to which the project could relatively easily promote the inclusion of women. The project documents for the above projects recognized that household decision-making often influenced whether women fully benefited from livelihoods initiatives, however no interventions sought to address this element.

UNDP has done some limited work to introduce gender considerations when working in sectors where men hold the majority of institutional positions, such as energy. UNDP undertook a gender analysis of the energy sector to support the gender mainstreaming component of the Ghana Renewable Energy Masterplan. UNDP also supported the conduct of a gender audit of the energy policy, leading to a review of the draft policy to integrate gender considerations. Although the masterplan outlined the broad issues faced by women in the energy sector, it provided less detail on the corrective measures than the proposals in other sections of the plan. UNDP supported the masterplan through the ‘South-South Cooperation on Renewable Energy Technology Transfer’ project, which contained no gender disaggregated initiatives. Under the K-CEP project, 246 refrigeration practitioners were trained, all of whom were men. Given the preponderance of male position holders in these sectors, UNDP would not have met project targets if required to balance male and female participation. Nevertheless, both donors were open to gender-response designs, and UNDP could have added subcomponents to these initiatives and expanded partnerships with institutions or CSOs with greater gender expertise.

2.5 Country programme performance ratings

The following table provides an overview of the performance of the country programme, using the five internationally agreed evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and a set of parameters for each of the criteria. A four-point rating scale is used, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest rating.¹³² This ratings table should be read keeping in mind the findings presented in the previous sections, which provide more detailed justification for the ratings.

¹³¹ Antonio Arenas Romero et al., January 202, Ibid.

¹³² 4 = Satisfactory/Achieved: A rating of this level means that outcome exceed expectations/All intended programme outputs and outcomes have been delivered; 3 = Moderately satisfactory/Mostly achieved: A rating of this level is used when there are some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programmes that prevent an excellent rating but there were no major shortfalls. Many of the planned programme outputs/outcomes have been delivered and expected results likely to be achieved. Overall, the assessment is substantially positive, and problems were small relative to the positive findings; 2 = Moderately unsatisfactory/Partially achieved: A rating of this level is used when significant shortfalls are identified, but there were also some positive findings. Only some of the intended outputs and outcomes have been completed/achieved. Overall, the assessment is less positive; 1= Unsatisfactory/Not achieved: A rating of this level means that the contribution of the UNDP programme faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive assessments. There has been limited or no achievement of planned outputs/outcomes.

TABLE 2. Country programme performance ratings

Key criteria and parameters	Overall rating	Remarks/Justification
1. Relevance	3	Overall, the country programme was in line with national development priorities, with the UNSDP and UNDP strategic plan. The programme emphasized inclusiveness and gender equality, and efforts were made to be flexible and adaptative to the changing development priorities and challenges. However, the objectives were ambitious and the underlying assumptions were not clear.
1.A. Adherence to national development priorities	4	
1.B. Alignment with UN/UNDP goals	3	
1.C. Relevance of programme logic	2	
2. Coherence	2	Linkage among different outcome areas is not clear with limited synergies among them. UNDP has been able to position itself as a trusted partner of the government, but partnership with other development actors leaves room for improvement.
2.A. Internal programme coherence	2	
2.B. External programme coherence	2	
3. Efficiency	2	Delay has occurred in several projects due to lack of funding and the COVID-19 pandemic. At design, the budget was not realistically estimated and the office faced several challenges in resource mobilization. The office operated with unstable and inadequate staffing levels, with several interim senior management arrangements and extended periods when positions were left vacant. An inadequate M&E system limited the potential for learning and quality improvement.
3.A. Timeliness	2	
3.B. Management efficiency	2	
4. Effectiveness	3	Tangible results were achieved in the areas of climate and environmental actions and peacebuilding. There were fewer results in the governance area mainly due to the lack of funding. The programme was able to reach marginalized and vulnerable groups including women, youth, and people living with HIV/AIDS. This was particularly demonstrated with the response to the COVID-19 pandemic where efforts were made to reach vulnerable groups such as waste-pickers and provide information and health services to the communities in hard-to-reach areas. However, the office did not have a gender strategy in place, and no specific resources were allocated to gender. The ratio of projects rated with gender equality and women's empowerment as the main objective (GEN3) was much lower than corporate requirements.
4.A. Achieving stated outputs and outcomes	3	
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	3	
4.C. Prioritizing gender equality and women's empowerment	2	
4.D. Programming processes adhered to sustainable development principles	2	
5. Sustainability	2	Most projects were designed to strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions and groups, with mixed sustainability. Limited measures were taken to facilitate scaling up. UNDP made some important efforts to support financing for development but the work is still at an early stage.
5.A. Sustainable capacity	2	
5.B. Financing for development	2	

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



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

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. UNDP's programme is aligned with national priorities and UNDP has made efforts to adapt its programme to respond to the evolving context where possible. The programme objectives however were ambitious, and the lack of resources together with the pandemic challenged the delivery of the programme and the achievement of results.

UNDP has managed to position itself not as a donor but as a reliable and trusted development partner finding solutions to help the Government. It has earned this position thanks to its technical acumen, professionalism and responsiveness. UNDP's accountability, transparency and convening power which enabled it to bring multiple stakeholders together to discuss pressing and important development issues are also considered key strengths. The waste platform is an example of UNDP playing such a role. UNDP worked closely with key government agencies, aligning its programmes with national policies and strategies while at the same time bringing in international experiences and helping the country comply with internationally accepted standards. UNDP's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the work of strengthening communication channels and the linkages between diagnostics, planning and financing for pandemic recovery, demonstrated its efforts to adapt to the changes in context.

The change in the country context with Ghana graduating to LMIC status and the government's Ghana Beyond Aid vision had significant implications for UNDP's resource base. UNDP has made efforts to take into consideration the current trends, reposition itself, and use staff resources efficiently, but this has not been an easy or fast process.

Conclusion 2. UNDP is strategically positioned to support Ghana's climate change programme and activities, environmental concerns and climate financing. Important results have been achieved in terms of technical capacity-building and tool development for climate change action, sustainable environmental practices, and waste management.

Environment and climate action is the largest portfolio of the country programme, providing crucial support to the Government for the development of key policies and frameworks. In addition, UNDP's support includes the leveraging of financing instruments and partnerships for the country to deliver on its international commitments and national goals on climate change and environment. All this progress in terms of policies and frameworks stands the country in good stead to deal with climate change issues in the coming years. UNDP supported the development of a gender action plan for mainstreaming gender equality issues in all climate change frameworks and actions, but its implementation is still at an early stage.

Progress is also being made towards ensuring that climate actions directly contribute to the lives and livelihoods of communities. UNDP has contributed to improved access of rural communities to knowledge and tools to increase their resilience through the adoption of good environmental practices, resulting in the regeneration of the forest cover in a highly deforested area and increased income for farmers. However, community participation in local environmental initiatives has been weak due to the short-term nature of project interventions, and the effects of reforestation and forest regeneration efforts through community actions have been stymied by the lack of an appropriate land and tree tenure system in the country. As in

UNDP's renewable energy support, the programme has not successfully leveraged the means to promote wider replication of these localized initiatives, and the country remains dependent on high-emitting, inefficient energy generation.

The Waste Recovery Platform, facilitated by UNDP, is connecting ideas, people and resources to address the environmental challenges posed by poor waste management and to assist firms and local communities to move towards waste recovery and mainstreaming effective health care waste management in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. UNDP's ability to bring partners together to discuss ideas and solutions and its direct engagement with vulnerable communities of waste collectors are key success factors for this flagship initiative of the CO.

Conclusion 3. Most of the interventions under the governance and peacebuilding programme were devoted to promoting peacebuilding and maintaining security. More traditional governance programming aimed at increasing government accountability and transparency through, inter-alia, anti-corruption and civil society oversight activities was limited with largely one-off initiatives. Significant contextual changes and resource constraints negatively affected the achievement of results in this outcome area.

Recognizing that peace and social cohesion is critical, particularly given the emerging context, UNDP has focused on peacebuilding and security and has made progress in strengthening the national peace architecture through institutional capacity-building and sensitization activities. A number of interventions were also undertaken to strengthen legal assistance and the protection of rights, including expanding access to justice for poor and vulnerable groups and health services for the marginalized. Interventions that aimed at holding the government accountable, transparent and responsive in its discharge of the public's business were limited, affected by both the context and the lack of resources. Improving government accountability and transparency as well as inducing desired policy reforms is a time consuming and sensitive process, and while several individual activities such as training, sensitization, and manual development were implemented, they were largely one-off and the larger planned political and governance reforms were not yet realized.

With resource constraints, the outcome became less strategic and more dependent on implementing a relatively small number of projects, often with many sub-activities which did not add up to a coherent programme capable of achieving planned results. However, the implemented projects were appreciated and viewed positively by the stakeholders interviewed and did contribute, to a varying extent, to Ghana's peace architecture and political stability.

Conclusion 4. Most of the UNDP interventions had an institutional strengthening component, mostly at central level and with mixed sustainability. UNDP's COVID-19 response demonstrated its experience of working with local governments to develop COVID-19 recovery plans and resources mobilization strategies as well as continuing the provision of essential services to communities through the local health services.

Virtually all the projects were designed to enhance and strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions and groups, including staff in ministries, departments, agencies and commissions. The policies, frameworks and guidance tools that UNDP helped to develop in the areas of climate change, environment and peacebuilding and security will continue to be used beyond the life of the projects. Some of the developed training materials have been incorporated into the curricula of the concerned institutions (such as Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training), thereby strengthening their sustainability. However, most of the capacity-building and institutional strengthening has been concentrated at national level, with little focus on building capacity of officials at regional and district levels (for example, on integrating climate change and resilience promoting actions in local development plans).

At the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, UNDP proactively reprogrammed and redirected its efforts to support national response and recovery, including undertaking important work at the local levels. UNDP supported strengthening the capacity of district-level health services in a number of districts, in an effort to sustain health service capacity to treat those most affected by the pandemic. With a bottom-up approach, UNDP worked directly with the six pilot district governments and supported them in the preparation of local COVID-19 recovery plans as well as financing frameworks with resource mobilization strategies. This is currently a pilot initiative with six MMDAs; beyond this, institutional capacity-building at the district level has been limited.

Conclusion 5. UNDP has made efforts to target the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in its country programme. Although some steps have been taken to promote gender responsive approaches, the office does not have a gender strategy in place, nor specific resources allocated to gender-related activities. Results in terms of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment varied across different thematic areas.

UNDP country programme did target the most vulnerable and marginalized groups including women, youth, people with disabilities, people living with HIV/AIDS, and economically marginalized groups. Efforts were made in terms of strengthening their resilience through livelihoods opportunities, providing legal aid services, addressing stigma and discrimination, as well as strengthening COVID-19 awareness and prevention.

UNDP's intention to strengthen gender aspects of its programme was not accompanied by dedicated resources. Having said that, several steps were taken to mainstream gender into different initiatives aimed at improving the participation of women in governance processes, climate change and environmental programmes, in particular the Adaptation Fund project in northern Ghana and the COVID-19 response. Some efforts were made to address the differential needs of men and women and the equitable distribution of benefits, resources, status and rights but results achieved were limited. Most of the gender-related results were related to counting the number of men and women that were involved in programme activities. Little was done to strengthen women's and youth organizations as members of civil society, which would have added a more sustainable dimension to UNDP's work.

Conclusion 6. The M&E system did not provide a framework for strategic engagement about the performance of the CO, thereby limiting the potential for learning and quality improvement. The inadequate system to capture and demonstrate results and lessons learned, coupled with unstable staff capacity also hampered the ability of the CO to strengthen partnerships for resources mobilization, synergy and replication and scaling up of good practices.

There are several weaknesses in the system for monitoring, reporting, evaluating and learning. The results framework included several inadequately articulated indicators which led to reporting achievements that were not true measures of the articulated outputs and outcomes. Very few evaluations were undertaken, none at outcome level and none for the governance thematic area. Inadequate evidence-based reporting affected the potential for learning and improving performance.

The office did not always operate at a full and stable staff capacity, with some key leadership functions vacant at various times during the programming cycle. The remaining staff, particularly the experienced ones, took on multiple roles to cover for the vacant positions which undermined UNDP's performance, including its ability to invest time in actively pursuing programmatic engagement with other partners, actual and potential, or strengthening ongoing partnerships. UNDP invested in general communication which strengthened its visibility in the country. However, targeted engagement with key development actors to actively pursue partnerships and enhance synergy will require stronger complementarities between M&E and knowledge management.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

The following recommendations are provided to support UNDP’s contribution to Ghana’s development priorities. They cover the key elements of UNDP performance under the current programme cycle that could be improved to enhance the organization’s future support and take into account changes in the external context that should be considered in the design of the next country programme.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

UNDP should build on and strengthen its strategic positioning in the climate action and environmental management area. The CO should deepen engagement with key development actors in this area on strategic and programmatic issues for strengthened collaboration and synergy and possible scaling up of results. It should also continue to explore other opportunities for partnership with the private sector.

UNDP has established its position as a key partner of the Government in the field of environment and climate action and should build on this to strengthen its work. It may want to consider performing a stocktaking of its experience and knowledge in order to position itself as the Government’s advisor and quality assurer concerning climate action. UNDP should also deepen its engagement with other key development actors such as the European Union, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and IFAD which are implementing major initiatives on climate change and resilience-related areas which, prima facie, appear close to UNDP’s own programme objectives. Efforts should go beyond sharing of information in technical working group meetings to proactively engaging in discussions on strategic and programmatic issues to explore opportunities for synergy and possible replication and scaling up.

Efforts to explore partnerships with the private sector should continue. UNDP should develop a structured due diligence process for engaging with traditional and non-traditional private sector partners. This process should include assessment of risks and potential conflicts of interest. Overall, the process should aim to facilitate the partnership while ensuring that the due diligence exercise identifies worthy partners that do not threaten UNDP’s well-earned reputation.

Management response: **Partially accepted**

The recommendation does not sufficiently recognize our existing strategic leadership/partnership with development partners and Government. UNDP currently co-chairs the Environment and Natural Resources Working Group with the European Union and will continue to use this platform to engage with the Government and DPs around climate and environment sustainability. During the next programme cycle UNDP CO will also capitalize on the multi-stakeholder waste platform to deepen engagement with private sector and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Engage and make presentation on the new CPD to development partners of the Environment and Natural Resources Sector Working Group.	June 2023	UNDP		Not Initiated

1.2 Develop Carbon Market Engagement Strategy (Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement) to crowd in private sector investment for climate action.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated
1.3 Facilitate strategic engagement with UN Agencies in the context of the New Cooperation Framework for synergies and strengthened collaboration.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated
1.4 Organize series of dialogues to mobilize partnerships for climate and environmental action with focus on waste recovery leveraging on UNDP Waste Recovery Platform.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 2.



UNDP should consider continuing to work in the area of peacebuilding and conflict management given its strategic positioning and comparative advantage in this area, including the potential for realistic resource mobilization opportunities. Regarding the broader domain of democratic governance, including good governance accountability and transparency programming, the lessons learned from the current programme indicate the need for better planning and design in its efforts going forward. UNDP should consider integrating governance activities into other areas to strengthen its results, including promoting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups through its sectoral programmes.

UNDP needs to be more strategic and stay increasingly focused on what it does best and is recognized for, that is peacebuilding and, increasingly, internal and external security concerns. This being more strategic in the new country programme is consistent with the recognition that significant funding is not likely to increase in the next programme cycle. Given the possible threat of more incidents of violent extremism, there might be more donor interest to support security and prevention of violent extremism interventions alongside UNDP's recognized work in peacebuilding. UNDP should build on the results already achieved in these areas as well as its global experiences to mobilize resources and work on these themes. This is particularly important given the uncertain long-term prospects for internal peaceful politics as well as the areas of growing societal cleavage which foresee the need for more work in conflict prevention interventions.

For the core governance programme, given that other development partners/donors are unlikely to increase funding for democracy and governance programming based on past trends, UNDP should be strategic and consider integrating governance activities into its other sectoral programmes to better ensure that its future results in the democratic governance area are achieved.

The office should, to the extent possible with available resources and leveraging support from regional office and headquarters, strengthen its governance expertise for advocacy and engagement with the Government around backsliding in the areas of democratic consolidation and good governance practices (e.g. corruption, human right violations, reforms).

UNDP should consider promoting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups through sectoral programmes that can be supported by sensitization and awareness-raising campaigns and policy advocacy interventions. In this regard, UNDP can also be more supportive of non-governmental actors in civil society who represent and defend the interests and rights of these populations. UNDP is well placed to broker the relationship between the Government and CSOs which is becoming more contentious as time goes by.

Management response: Fully accepted 

The CO is already working in this area. The Conflict and Peace portfolio has been a key thematic focus of the Democratization and Peacebuilding Programme over the years. In the last two years, the CO has even started implementing interventions to address emerging issues of violent extremism and counter-terrorism. However, we agree that this can be further deepened with increased resource mobilization efforts. There are ongoing efforts to design a new governance programme which will also deal with issues of transparency and accountability. The new programme will further explore interventions in the areas of local participation and economic development, public sector reforms including state-owned enterprises, natural resource governance and climate change governance among others to make the unit attractive to funding from non-traditional donors. One key focus of the current governance programme is on promoting the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups; this informs the work that is done with the Ghana Legal Aid Scheme to ensure access to justice for the poor and vulnerable, and work that is done in increasing access to health services for persons living with HIV among others. We will further deepen these interventions in our new programme to strengthen results in ensuring no one is left behind.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Develop new Governance Portfolio to deepen interventions on key areas recommended by the Evaluation.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated
2.2 Adopt strategies to mobilize adequate resources for the effective implementation of the Governance Portfolio.	December 2024	UNDP		Initiated
2.3 Explore partnerships and platforms for integrated support to natural resource, economic and political governance at national and sub-national levels.	December 2024	UNDP		Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 3.



Supporting decentralized government structures is important in order to effect change at grassroots level and UNDP should build on the work already done on climate change tools and action plans, and integrated assembly financing framework. However, it should also undertake a detailed analysis of the situation regarding decentralization in Ghana to determine the extent of its future engagement with local government.

UNDP should build on the work already completed if resources are available and Ghana's efforts at decentralization are assessed to have been successful. While continuing to support the Government on rolling out policies and implementation frameworks on climate change, UNDP might want to consider paying greater attention to building the capacity of officials at regional and district levels for integrating climate change and resilience-promoting actions in local development plans. This would necessarily include incorporating the gender action plan into regional and MMDA plans.

A major consideration for UNDP's continued work at local government level should be based on the degree to which decentralization is assessed to have been successful and is likely to continue to be in the future in Ghana. Both the government's fiscal decentralization and political decentralization actions to date may not have been conducive to the success of local governments, both executives and assemblies, in terms of their constitutional mandates to effectively plan and deliver public goods and services. A combination of the inadequate release of public resources and the fact that MMD chief executives (mayors) are appointed by the President rather than through elections, has had the tendency to undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of local governments. UNDP therefore needs to undertake a detailed analysis of the situation to determine the extent of its engagement.

Management response: Accepted



Work has commenced in supporting local authorities in selected districts to carry out integrated green and inclusive COVID-19 recovery planning, innovative financing, and identification of SDG investment opportunities. This work will be upscaled in the next programme cycle.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Conduct assessments of the effectiveness of local institutions in serving the business community at the decentralized level.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated
3.2 Conduct holistic analysis of Ghana's decentralization deficits and entry points for effective political and economic engagements.	December 2022	UNDP		Not Initiated
3.3 Hold 'future of decentralization in Ghana' dialogues with key stakeholders.	December 2022	UNDP		Not Initiated
3.4 Include interventions at the decentralized level in new Governance Portfolio.	December 2022	UNDP		Not Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 4.



UNDP should further strengthen the gender aspects of its programme and make gender equality a critical component of its interventions. It should also anchor its programme on promoting women's empowerment, including supporting women CSOs and related networks and their organizational capacity to become agents for peace and security as well as creators of development solutions.

UNDP should seriously consider having a gender equality and women's empowerment strategy, with an annual action plan accompanied with resources for implementation. UNDP's strategy and implementation approaches should fully integrate a gender equality perspective and actively promote the social, economic and political empowerment of women. The office needs to increase the number of interventions that have gender equality as the main objective (GEN3) in line with UNDP's corporate objective of having at least 15 percent of budget for GEN3 projects – as defined in the UNDP Gender Equality Strategy 2018-2021 (currently this is at less than 0.5 percent).

UNDP should promote the active participation of women in community exchange mechanisms and dialogue for conflict prevention and social cohesion. UNDP should build on its current work with youth and continue to create sustainable and attractive opportunities for young women and men by promoting their access to capacity development programmes, financial resources and sustainable livelihoods.

The cross-sectoral nature of gender has made it difficult for it to be coordinated by one ministry (Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection). UNDP may want to consider working closely with the Government, advocating and facilitating the establishment of gender desks/focal points at Ministries, Departments and Agencies and MMDAs to ensure the inclusion of gender dimensions in both their annual progress reports to facilitate coordination by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection.

Management response: **Accepted**



Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Complete the CO Gender Seal Exercise to enhance capability to mainstream gender equality across programmes and operations.	December 2022	UNDP		Initiated
4.2 Develop and roll out for implementation a CO Gender Equality Strategy.	December 2022	UNDP		Not Initiated
4.3 Enhance efforts to increase the number of GEN 2 and GEN 3 projects in the CO.	December 2023	UNDP		Not Initiated
4.4 Develop and roll out for use a Gender Screening tool for Prodocs before finalisation.	December 2022	UNDP		Not Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 5.



The ability of an organization to effectively address each element of the programme cycle including the design, planning, managing and reporting on results is critical to producing those results. In this regard, UNDP should strengthen several elements of its system for results-based monitoring, reporting, evaluating and learning.

The ToC for the next country programme should be prepared based on thorough analytic work and should include the underlying assumptions and the risks that may have to be mitigated during implementation. It should also ensure integration among thematic areas to better build synergies.

UNDP should strengthen its M&E system to allow the provision of adequate evidence-based data on the progress of results against targets of clearly defined indicators, and the generation of information on outcome as well as output level changes that are directly related to UNDP's contribution. The collected data should be used in developing periodic progress reports for individual projects and thematic areas as well as the overall programme that feeds into annual reports (ROARs) and can be used by senior management to assess and, where necessary, recalibrate programme interventions. UNDP may consider adding outcome tracking tools like process-tracing, most-significant change stories and case studies, as well as periodic quantitative primary data collection (quantitative surveys) as part of its project evaluation mechanisms where possible. Data disaggregation should be integral to allow monitoring of impacts on target groups.

More robust methods should be developed for measuring the contribution that UNDP makes on institutional development as well as policy changes. These should include indicators on influence, attitude change, replication, and financial commitments. Through its project, UNDP should also strengthen capacities of national and subnational authority partners to generate and use data for improved policy development and monitoring.

In developing the costed evaluation plan for the next country programme cycle, more efforts should be made to improve the coverage of evaluations to entire programme or thematic areas. Evaluations should cover not just project evaluations required by donors but also outcome/thematic evaluations of priority or innovative areas to ensure the ability of the programme to review the assumptions, take stock of progress and adapt as required as the context evolves. Rigour of evaluations and knowledge management are important to increase prospects for scaling up pilots. It is also recommended that while a programme mid-term review is not a UNDP requirement, it should be included in the broader evaluation plan to ensure that mid-course corrections take place if warranted.

Management response: **Accepted**



Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Organize a results-based management (RBM) refresher training for staff and partners.	December 2022	UNDP		Not initiated
5.2 Develop a comprehensive M&E plan for the new CPD.	December 2022	UNDP		Not initiated

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

5.3 Put in place an RBM system to facilitate regular tracking and reporting on results.	December 2022	UNDP		Not initiated
5.4 Adopt effective strategies for promoting learnings from evaluations.	December 2022	UNDP		Not initiated
5.5 Institute quarterly RBM discussions with senior management and relevant colleagues.	December 2022	UNDP		Not initiated

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the Evaluation Resource Centre database (ERC).

ANNEXES



Annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the website of the Independent Evaluation Office at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/12798>

Annex 1. Evaluation terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation framework

Annex 3. People consulted

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. List of projects for review

Annex 6. Status of Country programme document outcome & output indicators matrix

Annex 7. Theory of change

Annex 8. Country at a glance




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