



Independent  
Evaluation  
Office

United Nations Development Programme

# INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION EGYPT





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responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT  
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# FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the third country-level evaluation conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Egypt after the Assessments of Development Results carried out by the Independent Evaluation Office in 2004 and 2012. This evaluation covers the programme period 2018 through 2021.

Over the last decade, Egypt has experienced major events and challenges that have influenced its development pathway (including the 2011 uprisings, political changes, population growth, rising inequalities and environmental vulnerabilities). Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, aims to improve the quality of life for Egyptian people by investing in human capital and the political, economic and social empowerment of youth and women. While efforts to achieve these objectives are underway, a new challenge was presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, which further exposed the vulnerabilities of Egyptian society and institutions.

The evaluation found that the UNDP country programme in Egypt has supported the Government's efforts to pursue its priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals, by being strongly positioned and providing reliable and efficient development services. UNDP work to support the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency has brought significant changes in the promotion of entrepreneurship, transparency and innovation. UNDP support to economic and urban development and job creation was well-conceptualized, and responded to the key challenges, but lacked foresight on how to address the structural challenges for youth employment and economic empowerment. In the environment area, UNDP significantly contributed to the expanded use of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies, and UNDP support to phase out ozone-depleting substances is showing promising results. However, many initiatives in the environment portfolio could benefit from past lessons and experiences with market transformation approaches, which could help with spin-offs and scale-up. The evaluation found that UNDP has partnered well with the Government, but partnerships with the United Nations system and other external development partners were limited.

As Egypt progresses towards its Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals, the next UNDP country programme should reassess its added value and capitalize on its broader comparative advantages. The evaluation recommends UNDP to strengthen digitalization and e-governance reforms and support entrepreneurship and job creation, with a focus on creating an enabling environment and ensuring sustainability. At the same time, UNDP will need to fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment across its work and support to the Government. UNDP will need to create intersectoral synergy between economic development and environmental management to promote the green transformation agenda and ensure the uptake and sustainability of environment and climate change interventions. Finally, UNDP should invest in expanding its partnerships with civil society, development partners and the private sector.

I would like to thank the Government of Egypt, national stakeholders, and colleagues from the UNDP country office in Egypt and Regional Bureau for Arab States 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 and recovery that responds to the aspirations of the people of Egypt.



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

<b>ARV</b>	Antiretroviral
<b>CCCPA</b>	Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	Carbon dioxide
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus Disease 2019
<b>CPD</b>	Country programme document
<b>CSO</b>	Civil society organization
<b>DFA</b>	Development Finance Assessment
<b>DIM</b>	Direct implementation modality
<b>EP</b>	Egypt Post
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FGM</b>	Female genital mutilation
<b>GBV</b>	Gender-based violence
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>GEF</b>	Global Environment Facility
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender equality and women's empowerment
<b>GHG</b>	Greenhouse gas
<b>GFATM</b>	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
<b>GOPP</b>	General Office for Physical Planning
<b>GRES</b>	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
<b>HCFC</b>	Hydrochlorofluorocarbons
<b>HDR</b>	Human Development Report
<b>ICPE</b>	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
<b>ICT</b>	Information communication technology
<b>IEO</b>	Independent Evaluation Office
<b>IFI</b>	International financial institution
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>INFF</b>	Integrated National Financing Framework
<b>ITI</b>	Information Technology Institute
<b>Km</b>	Kilometres
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and evaluation
<b>MoEA</b>	Ministry of Environmental Affairs
<b>MoF</b>	Ministry of Finance

<b>MoHP</b>	Ministry of Health and Population
<b>MoIC</b>	Ministry of International Cooperation
<b>MoSS</b>	Ministry of Social Solidarity
<b>MPED</b>	Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
<b>MSME</b>	Micro, small and medium-sized enterprise
<b>MSMEDA</b>	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency
<b>NAP</b>	National AIDS Programme
<b>NCS</b>	National Conservation Sector
<b>NDC</b>	Nationally Determined Contribution
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>NIM</b>	National implementation modality
<b>NRM</b>	Natural resource management
<b>NTP</b>	National TB Programme
<b>NTRA</b>	National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority
<b>NWES</b>	National Women's Empowerment Strategy
<b>ODS</b>	Ozone-depleting substances
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PV</b>	Photovoltaic
<b>RBAS</b>	Regional Bureau for Arab States
<b>RBM</b>	Results-based management
<b>ROAR</b>	Results-Oriented Annual Report
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SDS</b>	Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt 2030
<b>SGP</b>	Small Grants Programme
<b>TB</b>	Tuberculosis
<b>TIEC</b>	Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre
<b>TK&amp;K</b>	Takaful and Karama programmes
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNPDF</b>	United Nations Partnership Development Framework
<b>VAT</b>	Value-added tax
<b>VNR</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>WPS</b>	Women, peace and security

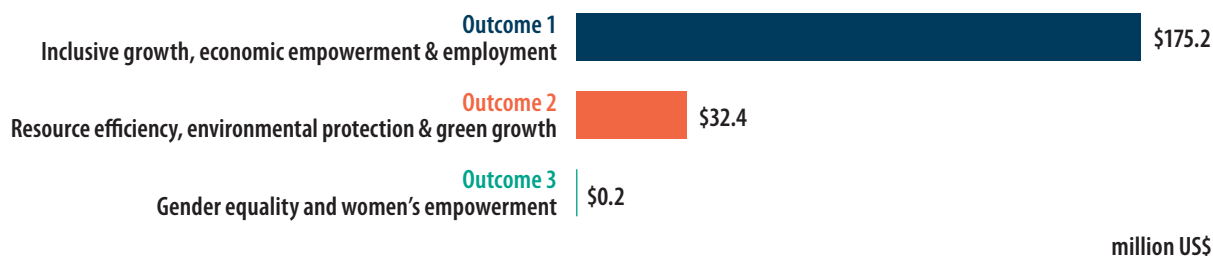
# Evaluation Brief: Egypt

Egypt is located in northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea between Libya and the Gaza strip. Its growth rate is driven by the performance of the economy and the strength of its banking system, in terms of liquidity, profitability, capital and resilience to shocks. The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to reverse the country's achievements in relation to fiscal consolidation, macroeconomic stability and sustainable development over the long term. Egypt faces several challenges with regards to governance, with a highly centralized, bureaucratic public administration characterized by poor legal frameworks, which can undermine government implementation capacity. Most land in Egypt is desert, with the Nile River providing a narrow strip of very fertile land making up less than 5 percent of the land area. Egypt is susceptible to a range of natural disasters, including periodic droughts, earthquakes, flash floods, and wind, dust and sandstorms.

## Total programme expenditure by funding source



## Programme finances by outcome (2018–2021)



## Key findings and conclusions

UNDP is strongly positioned as a reliable provider of development services in support of the Government's efforts, as reflected in the steady government financing of UNDP initiatives.

Efficient procurement and service provision have expanded services in local development and employment generation and integrated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into government plans, with extensive policy and institutional development support in the environment and climate change sectors. UNDP has effectively mainstreamed gender across its interventions, though work is still needed to ensure that they 'leave no one behind' and align with the country's SDG priorities.

UNDP operations were significantly affected by COVID-19, which also provided a window for UNDP to innovate and assist the country through the COVID-19 response. UNDP contributed to expanding the evidence-base on development issues and challenges in Egypt, to promote and integrate SDG priorities into government policies and plans, and address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

UNDP support to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) Development Agency has brought transformative changes through the promotion of entrepreneurship, transparency and innovation in the provision of services for MSMEs and job creation.

UNDP support to economic and urban development and job creation was well-conceptualized and responded to key challenges, but more effort is needed to build an enabling environment to overcome the structural challenges for youth employment and economic empowerment.

UNDP has significantly contributed to expanded energy-efficiency and use of renewable energy technologies. Initiatives addressing waste management, hazardous materials and solid waste have been more difficult to promote, though the phase-out of ozone-depleting substances has shown promising results.

Protected area financing and management systems have been supported by the amended Protected Area Law. Many initiatives in the portfolio could benefit from past lessons and experiences, which could help with spin-offs and scale-up.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1.** UNDP should strengthen its potential added value and deepen its development contributions, capitalizing on its knowledge, expertise and international networks as direct inputs to strengthening the Government's potential to fulfil its priorities. This also applies to projects designed to provide administrative and procurement services.

**Recommendation 2.** UNDP should expand its support to the strategic strengthening of digitalization and e-governance reforms.

**Recommendation 3.** UNDP should continue to support inclusive entrepreneurship and job creation initiatives, with a strong focus on building an enabling environment to address structural challenges and integrate sustainability mechanisms. UNDP should build on results and lessons from the implementation of initiatives in support of women's empowerment, gender and equity as a basis for the country office strategy to fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into its portfolio.

**Recommendation 4.** UNDP should consider creating stronger intersectoral synergy between economic development and segments of its support to environmental and climate change management, to enhance the potential of investment in green growth and the green economy. Interventions in support of the circular economy and innovation should be supported, to expand the Government's efforts to diversify the economy, and position UNDP as a leader in this field, building on its regional and global knowledge.

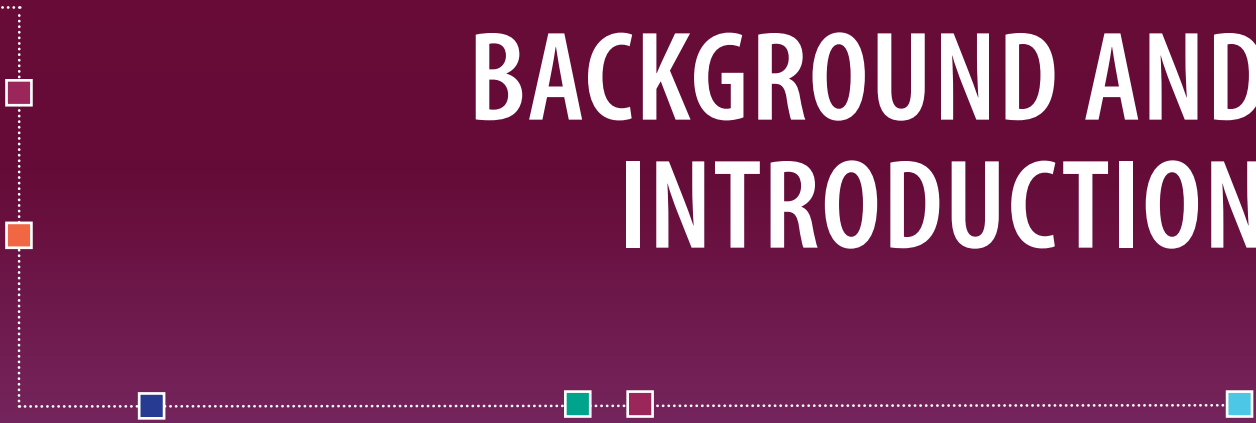
**Recommendation 5.** UNDP needs to increase the emphasis on sustainability and the uptake of its environment and climate change interventions, so that community benefits from its market-based approaches are sustained over time, with clear exit strategies. This includes building government absorptive capacity (where gaps exist), providing multi-pronged policy and institutional support (as needed), and fostering strong engagement with all stakeholder groups.

**Recommendation 6.** UNDP should reassess and reinforce its results-based management approach and strengthen its monitoring and evaluation capacity. Coherence and cross-thematic synergy should be entrenched in programme design and implementation.

**Recommendation 7.** UNDP should invest in existing and expanded partnerships with civil society, development partners and the private sector.

# CHAPTER 1

# BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



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

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

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

This is the third country-level evaluation conducted by UNDP in Egypt, after the Assessments of Development Results carried out by IEO in 2004 and 2012.<sup>2</sup> This ICPE covers the period 2018 to September 2021 of the current UNDP Country Programme Document (CPD) (2018–2022). The scope of the ICPE includes the entirety of UNDP activities in the country, covering interventions funded by all sources, including UNDP core resources and donor and government funds. It also includes any projects and activities from the previous programme cycle that continued or concluded in the current one, in accordance with the evaluation Terms of Reference (Annex 1).

The ICPE is guided by four main evaluation questions (Box 1). It presents findings, conclusions and recommendations which will serve as an input to the formulation of the new CPD of UNDP Egypt for 2023–2027.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Egypt country office, the Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS), the UNDP Executive Board, and the Government of Egypt.

### 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 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

## 1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process, and the evaluation methodology adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) norms and standards.<sup>3</sup> However, due to the coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, IEO and the ICPE team, in consultation with the country office, decided to conduct the evaluation remotely. The methodology was adapted to the changed circumstances, while still guaranteeing UNEG evaluation norms and professional standards. This included ethical considerations to ensure the highest standards of integrity and respect for the beliefs and customs of the social and cultural environment in the country, and due consideration to the values and principles of human rights, gender equality and do no harm.

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

<sup>2</sup> See <http://web.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/adr/egypt.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> See UNEG website: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

Following the terms of reference, the IEO recruited two international and one national consultant to support the data collection and assessment process. Purposive sampling was used, based on a number of criteria, including: programme coverage (projects covering the various thematic and cross-cutting areas such as gender, leaving no one behind and human rights); financial expenditure (a representative mix of large and smaller projects); geographic coverage (project location); maturity (completed and active projects); national (NIM) and direct (DIM) implementation modalities; GEN marker status; and donor (type of assistance). The sampling allowed for a good representation of the span of CPD work, and exploration of the project design process, institutional structures and processes, partnerships, policy development and sustainability.

Based on this analysis of the country office portfolio, the team selected 29 projects (27 percent of the portfolio) for in-depth review and analysis, representing a cross-section of UNDP work in the country across the three outcomes (Annex 5).

The evaluation team undertook an extensive review of documents. This included, among others, background documents on the regional and national context, documents from international partners (such as the African Union, international financial institutions [IFIs]), donor agencies, etc.) and other United Nations agencies; project and programme documents such as work plans and progress reports; monitoring and self-assessment reports such as the yearly UNDP Results-Oriented Annual Reports (ROARs); strategy notes; and project and programme evaluations conducted by the country office, including quality assurance and audit reports. The evaluation made extensive use of IEO thematic evaluations such as the evaluation of UNDP support in middle-income countries, the evaluation of UNDP support to youth economic empowerment, the evaluation of UNDP support to energy-efficiency, the evaluation of the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and the joint evaluation with Global Environment Facility (GEF) of the Small Grants Programme (SGP).

The desk review and portfolio analysis were used to undertake a stakeholder analysis to identify all relevant UNDP partners, and those that may not have worked with UNDP but play a key role in the outcomes to which it contributes. The analysis was used to identify key informants to interview during the main data collection phase, and to examine any potential partnerships that could improve the UNDP contribution to the country. The evaluation sought balanced representation of different types of actors involved in the programme: counterparts and implementing public institutions; local entities; final beneficiaries; the private sector; civil society; academia; and other international organizations present in Egypt.

The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was analysed through an assessment of progress made towards the achievement of expected outputs and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the intended CPD outcomes. To better understand UNDP performance and the sustainability of results, the ICPE examined the specific factors that have influenced the programme positively and negatively. UNDP capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was also considered.

The evaluation relied on information collected from different sources and then triangulated to the extent possible:

- A review of UNDP strategic and programme documents, project documents and monitoring reports, decentralized evaluations,<sup>4</sup> research papers and other available country-related publications. The primary documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 4, online.
- An analysis of the programme portfolio and theories of change by programme area, and a mapping of implemented projects against the goals set in the CPD.

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<sup>4</sup> 16 decentralized evaluations were conducted in the period under consideration.

- A self-evaluation questionnaire completed by the country office, which was further discussed and validated during the interviews.<sup>5</sup>
- Interviews with a total of 70 stakeholders. Semi-structured interviews were conducted virtually or by phone, representing UNDP staff, government representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), private-sector representatives, United Nations agencies, development partners, multilateral organizations, bilateral donors and programme beneficiaries. The interviews were used to collect data and assess stakeholder perceptions of the scope and effectiveness of programme interventions, determine factors affecting performance, and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the UNDP programme. A complete list of interviewees is available in Annex 3 online.
- In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming across the country programme and operations. Gender Marker data were used for the analysis of gender in programme design and expenditure.<sup>6</sup> Sex-disaggregated data were collected, where available, and assessed against programme outcomes. The IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) was used to assess the gender-related results achieved by the programme towards the different outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

The evaluation used a four-point rating system to assess the overall country programme around the five evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.<sup>8</sup> Ratings were first calculated for each output and then aggregated to arrive at the outcome-level performance score. A detailed summary of the rating is provided in Annex 8.

At the end of the data collection stage, preliminary findings were presented virtually to collect feedback from the Resident Representative, Deputy Resident Representative, and country office senior management team.

The draft ICPE report was quality-assured through an internal peer-review process and an external review process, before being submitted to the country office and RBAS for review of factual errors and comments. The revised report was then shared with the Government of Egypt and other national partners for comment. A final stakeholder debriefing was held via videoconference, which brought together the main stakeholders of the programme and offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results and recommendations included in this report and the management response presented by the country office.

## Evaluation limitations

The travel restrictions posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic limited the team's capacity to conduct in-person interviews and interact with different stakeholder groups and communities benefiting from UNDP support. Virtual technology allowed the team to establish and maintain quality in-depth interactions with a diverse group of key informants, however. Some interviews were conducted in Arabic to provide a higher level of comfort for the interviewees. The team encountered weak project monitoring, indicators

<sup>5</sup> Areas covered by the questionnaire are strategic positioning, value-added, effectiveness, COVID-19, cross-cutting issues, gender, joint programming, sustainability, South-South cooperation, innovation, operations, coordination with other United Nations agencies and partners. The Pre-mission Evaluation Questionnaire was completed by the country office team collaboratively.

<sup>6</sup> The Gender Marker is a corporate monitoring tool used to assign a rating score to project outputs during their design phase and track planned expenditure towards outputs that contributed to achieving GEWE. The gender marker does not reflect actual expenditure assigned to advancing GEWE. As the Gender Marker is assigned by project output and not project ID, a project might have several outputs with different gender markers.

<sup>7</sup> GRES classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive, and gender transformative.

<sup>8</sup> 4 = Satisfactory/Achieved; 3 = Moderately satisfactory/Mostly achieved; 2 = Moderately unsatisfactory/Partially achieved; 1 = Unsatisfactory/Not achieved.



and outcome monitoring data from the country office, which was mitigated by consulting wider sources of secondary data and an expanded desk review of documents.

Despite advanced planning and multiple follow-up requests with the country office, the evaluation team faced difficulties in securing some interviews, especially with United Nations agencies and donors. Challenges posed by remote data collection were mitigated by conducting a broader and more in-depth desk review and synthesis of existing data, as well as by increasing the number and quality of consultations with different stakeholders. This resulted in the elongation of primary data collection from two or three weeks (with in-country missions) to nearly three months. The contribution of the national consultant addressed some of these limitations by following up closely with the country office, reaching stakeholders and following up on interviews.

## 1.3 Country context

Egypt is located in northern Africa, bordering the Mediterranean Sea between Libya and the Gaza strip. With a population of over 100 million inhabitants, it is the most populous country in North Africa, the Middle East, and the Arab world, and the third-most populous country in Africa. The population of Egypt is growing at 1.92 percent per year,<sup>9</sup> and is forecast to reach 120 million by 2030 according to United Nations data.<sup>10</sup> Development aspirations in the country are guided by the national Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt 2030 (SDS).

Despite a large fiscal deficit, the Egyptian economy accelerated over the period between 2017 and 2021, with a growth rate of 5.4 percent and a 7.6 percent decrease in budget deficit and government debt in the 2020–2021 fiscal year.<sup>11</sup> The main drivers of this growth have been the performance of the economy and the strength of the banking system in terms of liquidity, profitability, capital, and its resilience to shocks, supported by the 2016 economic reforms.<sup>12</sup>

Recent data on the prevalence of poverty shows high disparities across the country's population. While the poverty rate is still rather high at 29.7 percent,<sup>13</sup> there has been a steady decrease in extreme poverty rates in the reference period of this evaluation, which currently stand at 4.5 percent (Figure 1).<sup>14</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a serious economic downturn, with a rise in the unemployment rate from 7.7 percent in the first quarter of 2020 to 9.2 percent by the end of April 2020.<sup>15</sup> Signs of recovery were recorded in the third quarter of 2021, during which unemployment decreased to 7.3 percent. In order to mitigate the negative effects of the pandemic, and lighten some of the pressure on households, the Government of Egypt and International Monetary Fund (IMF) enhanced cash transfers that were already in place in the form of "Takaful"<sup>16</sup> and "Karama"<sup>17</sup> since 2015, reaching over 3.1 million families. These measures were also in line with the SDS goals, which focus on the improvement of living standards and reduction of multidimensional poverty through the provision of social protection. A national social protection strategy addressing intergenerational

<sup>9</sup> 2020 World Bank data: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.GROW?locations=EG>

<sup>10</sup> United Nations World Population Index: [https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org/development/desa/pd/files/documents/2020/Jan/un\\_2017\\_world\\_population\\_prospects-2017\\_revision\\_databooklet.pdf](https://www.un.org/development/desa/pd/sites/www.un.org/development/desa/pd/files/documents/2020/Jan/un_2017_world_population_prospects-2017_revision_databooklet.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> UNDP (2021) Human Development Report: Egypt, p. 25: [https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human\\_development/egypt-human-development-report-2021.html](https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human_development/egypt-human-development-report-2021.html)

<sup>12</sup> UNDP (2021) National Human Development Report: Development a path for all. Egypt's pathways and prospects: [http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nhdr\\_2021\\_egypt.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/nhdr_2021_egypt.pdf); and IMF (2021) SBA Review, p.1

<sup>13</sup> Poverty was exacerbated by currency liberalization and the impact on the purchasing power of working-class Egyptians.

<sup>14</sup> UNDP and MoPED (2021) National Human Development Report.

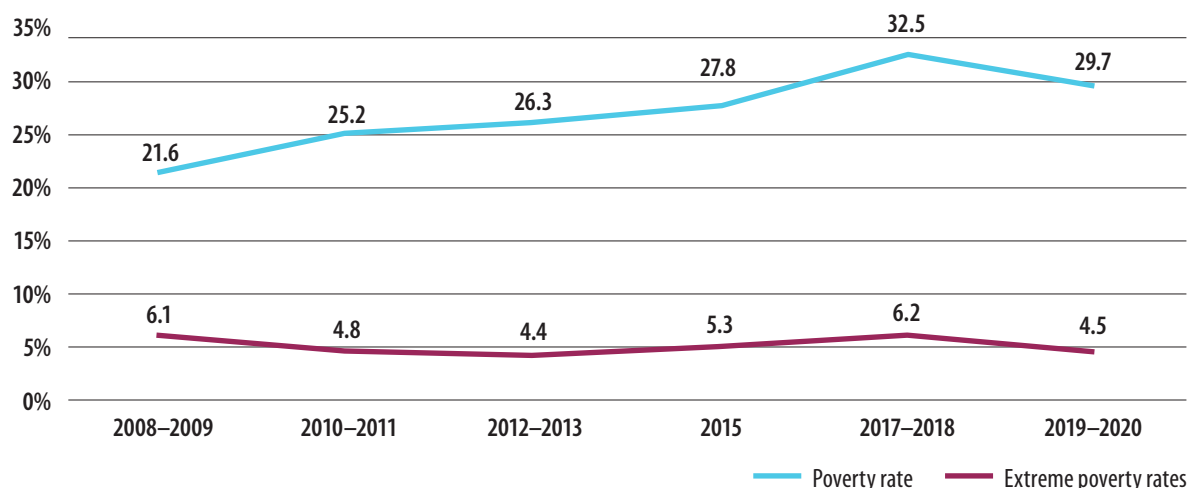
<sup>15</sup> United Nations (2020) Egypt COVID-19: Response and Recovery Interventions of the United Nations in Egypt.

<sup>16</sup> *Takaful* (Solidarity) is a conditional cash transfer targeting poor households with children.

<sup>17</sup> *Karama* (Dignity) is an unconditional cash transfer targeting the elderly, citizens with severe disabilities and diseases as well as orphans.

development challenges is being finalized to serve as a basis for more effective social protection. To counter adverse shocks to the Egyptian economy, the Government implemented the National Preparedness and Responsiveness Plan (2020), which targeted building a resilient economy and diluting the effects of COVID-19.<sup>18</sup>

**FIGURE 1. Poverty rates (population below the national poverty line) and extreme poverty rates (%) 2008–2020<sup>19</sup>**



Source: Egypt National Human Development Report, 2021

Despite a strong focus on the social protection system,<sup>20</sup> several recent studies and reports forecast the high potential of the COVID-19 pandemic to reverse the country's achievements in relation to fiscal consolidation, macroeconomic stability and sustainable development, in the long term.<sup>21</sup> the poorest households will be particularly hard hit, with forecasts of around 12 percent of Egyptians falling into extreme poverty and 44.4 percent (12.9 million workers) being driven below the poverty line. The CPD 2013–2017 notes that high growth rates in the preceding years had not sufficiently addressed subnational disparities. The Egyptian revolution, part of the Arab Spring, also had a major economic impact which rapidly depleted foreign investment and reserves.

A review of key governance indicators shows that Egypt faces several governance challenges.<sup>22</sup> Egypt's public administration is considered to be highly centralized, bureaucratic and characterized by poor legal frameworks which can undermine the implementation capacity of the Government. Additional challenges include nepotism and corruption.<sup>23</sup> To address these challenges, the Government of Egypt adopted a package of laws, including the Civil Service Law, to enhance the efficiency, transparency and accountability of the civil service.<sup>24</sup> In 2019, important constitutional changes were confirmed by a referendum, including extending the length of the presidential term and reinstating the Senate. The approval of the National Human Rights Strategy in September 2021 was designed to further strengthen a human rights-based culture and accountability, in partnership with civil society.

<sup>18</sup> See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/egypt>

<sup>19</sup> The national poverty indicator is defined as the percentage of the population living on less than \$1.90 a day at 2011 international prices, which is the same as the 'international poverty line'.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2020/11/17/takaful-and-karama-a-social-safety-net-project-that-promotes-egyptian-women-empowerment-and-human-capital>

<sup>21</sup> 2021 IMF, 2020 World Bank, 2020 UNDP HDR.

<sup>22</sup> A comparative review of the World Bank governance effectiveness index data (-2.5 weak; 2.5 strong) shows a rather bleak picture for governance effectiveness, though slight improvement was noted between 2015, when the index was -0.77, and 2019, when the index was -0.42. The index dropped again to -0.55 in 2020.

<sup>23</sup> The Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International ranked Egypt 106 out of 180 countries in 2019, and 117 out of 180 in 2020, a change of -11 (1 is considered the least corrupt and 180 the most corrupt).

<sup>24</sup> Government of Egypt (2019) National Anti-Corruption Strategy 2019–2022.

Egypt is a member of the United Nations and the African Union. It has ratified many United Nations human rights conventions, undertaking international commitments to adhere to the universal human rights standards laid down in these documents. The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has documented growing concerns across the board about the worsening human rights situation in the country.<sup>25</sup>

Egypt is ranked 134 of 153 countries for gender equality in the 2020 Global Gender Gap Index, a very low global ranking. While the gender gap in net enrolment rates in pre-university education in Egypt has almost disappeared, the gender gap in employment still exists and is a major challenge for the country's development plans.<sup>26</sup> Recent analytical reports show that the female literacy rate increased over the last four decades, to 69.5 percent in 2019.<sup>27</sup> However, despite this increase, the literacy rate for Egyptian women shows disparities and continues to pose an important development issue.

Women's political participation has seen progress in the new parliamentary term (2021–2026), where women won 27 percent of seats in Parliament (148 of 596), the highest representation since women gained the right to vote and run for office in 1957. While this is a great accomplishment for Egypt, it remains low compared to other countries in the region such as Jordan, Tunisia or Morocco. Women's increased political participation in Egypt is linked to commitments made to promote gender equality through the ratification of international gender equality standards.<sup>28</sup>

Egypt has ratified a number of international gender equality standards. These include the International Convention on the Political Rights of Women; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);<sup>29</sup> and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS). Egypt is not yet party to the Council of Europe Istanbul Convention on preventing and combating violence against women.

Gender-based violence (GBV) is prevalent in Egypt and, despite being illegal, female genital mutilation (FGM) remains one of the main obstacles to the protection of Egyptian women today. According to the 2021 Human Development Report (HDR),<sup>30</sup> 89.5 percent of Egyptian girls and women aged 18–64 years have undergone FGM. In response to this problem, the Egyptian Government adopted the National FGM Abandonment Strategy 2016–2020, which aims to reduce rates of FGM, enforce legislation criminalizing FGM, educate the community about its harms, and increase punishments for doctors who perform it. Under the auspices of the SDS, an Egyptian Women's Strategy 2030 was also adopted as a means to enhance gender mainstreaming and the fulfilment of women's rights. This strategy is aligned with previous national gender strategies.<sup>31</sup>

Egypt's situation with regard to natural resources, the environment and climate change is very much defined by its geographical location. Most of Egypt's land is desert, with only the Nile River providing a narrow strip of very fertile land making up less than 5 percent of Egypt's area, and 95 percent of the population lives within 20 kilometres (km) of the Nile River and its delta.<sup>32</sup> Egypt is susceptible to a range of natural

<sup>25</sup> OHCHR (2019) Egypt Universal Periodic Review Outcome Statement.

<sup>26</sup> UNDP (2021) Human Development Report: Egypt: [https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human\\_development/egypt-human-development-report-2021.html](https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human_development/egypt-human-development-report-2021.html)

<sup>27</sup> See: <http://ghdx.healthdata.org/organizations/central-agency-public-mobilization-and-statistics-capmas-egypt>

<sup>28</sup> OECD (2018) Women's Political Participation in Egypt: Barriers, opportunities and gender sensitivity of select political institutions: <https://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/womens-political-participation-in-egypt.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> Egypt was the first Arab country to ratify CEDAW but retains reservations to Articles 2 (para 9), 16 and 29 (para 2).

<sup>30</sup> UNDP (2021) Human Development Report: Egypt, p. 203.

<sup>31</sup> The Gender Strategy (2014 - 2017) was extended for two years and the current Gender Strategy (2020–2023) aims at GEWE interventions.

<sup>32</sup> The context overview is summarized from the UNDP Middle Income Country Thematic Evaluation (2020), specifically the Egypt case study, the UNDP country office responses to the pre-evaluation questionnaire, and the ROAR context summaries.

disasters, including periodic droughts, earthquakes, flash floods, spring windstorms (*khamins*), and dust and sandstorms.

Egypt ranks 94 out of 180 countries in the 2020 Environmental Performance Index rankings. Current environmental and climate change issues in Egypt include: agricultural land being lost to urbanization and windblown sands; increasing soil salinization below the Aswan High Dam; desertification (Egypt's temperatures have been increasing over the last 25 years, and the frequency of extreme weather events over the last 10 years<sup>33</sup>); oil pollution and coastal development threatening coral reefs, beaches and marine habitats; water pollution from agricultural pesticides, raw sewage and industrial effluents; poor solid waste management;<sup>34</sup> poor air quality in urban areas (vehicle emissions, burning of waste, and dust); limited natural freshwater resources away from the Nile (the only perennial water source, agriculture accounts for 85 percent of water use in Egypt<sup>35</sup>); natural habitat infringement; overharvesting of fish; rapid population growth overstraining the Nile and natural resources; and, more recently, coastal flooding in Alexandria and heavy rain in New Cairo. To address these issues, a 2050 National Climate Change Strategy was launched on the side-lines of the Conference of Parties COP26.

The combination of natural disasters, recent political instability, regional migration and demands from the nearest neighbours,<sup>36</sup> presents a challenging array of conditions and a level of unpredictability that constrain peaceful and progressive development in the country. A common thread for many of these issues is the lack of public awareness of appropriate solutions or institutional mechanisms to maintain and maximize the benefits of ecosystems, landscapes and biodiversity, while increasing sustainable economic activity (such as tourism) associated with them. Many communities that experience these issues (for example, farmers and the urban poor) are already marginalized, and not well placed to implement solutions.<sup>37</sup> There is a lack of an integrated and participatory approach that would ensure the integration of economic, social and environmental dimensions.<sup>38</sup> The policies and strategies of the various ministries are not integrated (for example, water management is dissipated amongst various agencies), there is not adequate participation of stakeholders in the policymaking process, and there is an ongoing need for economic incentives to engage the private sector and individuals.<sup>39</sup> To mitigate and adapt to the challenges of climate change, and introduce solutions to water scarcity, the Government introduced the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction, the National Water Resources Plan 2017–2027, and the Sustainable Agricultural Development Strategy 2030.

Egypt heavily subsidizes its energy, and this has ranged between 4.5 and 11 percent of GDP in the last eight years.<sup>40</sup> Industry accounts for 43 percent of the country's energy consumption, and industrial energy consumption per unit is 10 to 15 percent higher than the international average.<sup>41</sup> In recent years, natural gas has had to be re-routed from industries to power plants to maintain the electricity supply,<sup>42</sup> and the use of

<sup>33</sup> Government of Egypt (2019) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Biennial Update Report.

<sup>34</sup> The recent UNDP regional survey indicates that one in five rural Egyptian respondents feel that waste management is a priority. Waste recycling is poorly handled.

<sup>35</sup> By 2017, the per capita share of fresh water had fallen to less than 700 m3 per year, which is below the water poverty threshold (UNDP CPD).

<sup>36</sup> These include, water sharing (Nile River) between Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia; management of the Gaza border, with Israel; and, management of migration and workers between Libya and Egypt.

<sup>37</sup> The poverty rate in Egypt has been increasing for the last 20 years, which prevents marginalized communities from engagement in change processes.

<sup>38</sup> Examples of these observations are noted in: E-waste and medical waste project midterm review (2018); Bioenergy for Sustainable Rural Development Terminal Evaluation (2020); and Strengthening Protected Areas Financing and Management Systems Project Terminal Evaluation (2020).

<sup>39</sup> Government of Egypt (2019) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Biennial Update Report. For example, incentives are needed to encourage the use of natural gas for vehicles, rather than diesel/petrol. In 2020, Egypt issued the country's first green bonds, at a value of \$750 million, to finance or refinance green projects in sectors such as transportation, renewable energy and energy efficiency, and this move towards green bonds must be strengthened.

<sup>40</sup> The UNDP regional survey: Citizenship and SDGs (2021). Egypt is currently trying to reduce subsidies.

<sup>41</sup> United Nations Egypt (2018) One United Nations Egypt Annual Results Report.

<sup>42</sup> By 2017, demand for electricity was increasing by 10 percent annually (CPD).

coal has been allowed in the cement sector, to help meet the increasing energy needs.<sup>43</sup> The Government has taken tangible energy-efficiency and renewable energy measures within the Strategy for Integrated Sustainable Energy 2035, which aims to increase the share of renewable energy in the power sector to 42 percent by 2035, and encourage private sector investment through net-metering, feed-in-tariffs and other schemes.<sup>44</sup>

Egypt is party to many environmental conventions and protocols in line with international environmental obligations, such as: Biodiversity, Climate Change, the Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Military Use of Weather Modification and Herbicides, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83 and 94, and Wetlands. These signed commitments show Egypt's intent to contribute to global environmental solutions, but national implementation is still in progress, as the achieving the required policy changes can be challenging. Egypt is still constrained in regard to its climate change obligations, with limited availability and quality of data, the limited resources of the Ministry of Environmental Affairs (MoEA) (the coordinating entity), and limited greenhouse gas (GHG) verification systems. There has been more success with biodiversity, as Egypt announced in 2014, with 30 natural reserve areas covering more than 149,000 km<sup>2</sup> (about 14.7 percent of Egypt's land area), of which 13 have approved and activated management plans.

Adopted in 2016, the SDS serves as the main development document for Egypt, outlining the country's commitment to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through ten interlinked priority pillars.<sup>45</sup> Two key programmes have been implemented under the umbrella of SDS: the Administrative Reform Programme and the Economic Reform Programme. The SDS includes a strategic vision for the environment, an area which is expected to be "integrated in all economic sectors to preserve natural resources and support their efficient use and investment, while ensuring the next generations' rights to a clean, safe and healthy environment leading to diversified production, resources, and economic activities, supporting competitiveness, providing new jobs, eliminating poverty, and achieving social justice".<sup>46</sup> Central to the environment vision in the SDS is to identify the mechanisms for encouraging investment in natural resources and ecological systems, in order to support the economy and provide new job opportunities.

## 1.4 The UNDP programme under review

The United Nations began providing development assistance to Egypt in 1953. The United Nations Special Fund established a Cairo office to expand this work in 1958, which became the UNDP country office in 1966. For over 50 years, UNDP has been supporting the Egyptian Government and people in their efforts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable human development policies.

The UNDP country programme aims to contribute to the Government's SDS and three out of four outcomes of the United Nations Partnership Development Framework (UNPDF) 2018–2022,<sup>47</sup> as well as the UNDP Strategic Plan 2014–2017, emerging priorities in the new UNDP Strategic Plan 2018–2021, the SDS, and the SDGs. UNDP Egypt has three main areas of work, outlined in the 2018–2022 CPD: Inclusive Growth and Innovation; Climate and Disaster Resilience; and Gender Equality.

<sup>43</sup> Government of Egypt (2019) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Biennial Update Report. Coal is now being phased out, however.

<sup>44</sup> Government of Egypt (2019) United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Biennial Update Report. GHG emissions in Egypt have been increasing by about 2.35 percent per year since 2005.

<sup>45</sup> The SDS priority pillars are: economic development; energy; knowledge and innovation; transparency and government efficiency; social justice; health; education; culture; environment; and urban development.

<sup>46</sup> Government of Egypt Sustainable Development Strategy: Egypt Vision 2030.

<sup>47</sup> UNDP contributes to UNPDF outcomes: 1 (Inclusive Economic Development); 3 (Environmental Sustainability and Natural Resource Management); and 4 (Women's Empowerment). Outcome 2 (Social Justice) does not envisage UNDP contributions.

**TABLE 1. Country programme outcomes and resources (2018–2022) as of October 2021**

Theme	Country Programme Outcome		Budget (2018–2022) US\$	Expenditure (2018–2021) US\$	Delivery (percent)
Inclusive Growth and Innovation	Outcome 1: Goals: 1, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17	By 2022, Egypt has adopted equitable and sustainable development pathways and remains on track to achieve agreed targets for inclusive, sustainable, resilient and job-creating economic development.	220,242,000	175,179,000	79%
Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability	Outcome 2: Goals: 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15	By 2022, Egypt’s natural resources, including urban environments, are managed in an equitable, sustainable and productive manner to increase incomes, reduce food insecurity and mitigate environmental hazards.	46,789,000	32,403,000	79%
Social Inclusion and Women’s Empowerment	Outcome 3: Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 16	By 2022, women are fully contributing to Egypt’s development and all women and girl’s rights set forth in the Constitution, are respected, protected and responded to with no discrimination	430,000	225,000	52%
Regional Projects	Cross-sectoral		3,238,000	1,967,000	60%
Total			270,700,768	209,776,817	77%

Source: UNDP, Power Bi

The UNDP country programme portfolio includes a total of 108 projects under implementation within the current CPD (some of which started during the previous country programme), across the three outcomes. There is a big variation in budget allocations for projects in each pillar, from under US\$ 200,000 (mainly for projects within the gender equality and women's empowerment [GEWE] outcome) to multimillion-dollar projects, mainly in support to government efforts for inclusive growth, economic empowerment and employment.

The *Inclusive Growth and Innovation pillar* (Outcome 1) encompasses support to core government functions affecting the achievement of the SDGs and national development agenda, and support to the Government's economic reform, focusing on financial inclusion and integrated local development for the poor, youth and women. This programme area provides a framework to reinforce core government functions affecting the effective implementation of the SDGs and the sustainable development strategy, while focusing on partnership with in-country United Nations organizations to lead on the goals. It also supports the Government's



economic reforms, focusing on financial inclusion and integrated local development for the poor, youth and women through innovative programmes which could have maximum impact across goals and targets.

Within the *Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability pillar* (Outcome 2), UNDP supports Egypt to fulfil its international climate commitments and reporting, to protect biodiversity and promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable cities. In line with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, UNDP supports MoEA and partners with climate change adaptation initiatives focused, *inter alia*, on scaling up climate finance for the country's priorities. UNDP also helps Egypt to tackle climate change mitigation, alongside pollution abatement, by promoting energy efficiency in cities and key economic sectors, and small-scale renewable energy technologies with poverty reduction dividends, encouraging a shift to low-emission technologies in industry. Finally, UNDP supports the development and implementation of protected area management plans with MoEA and donors, to create effective linkages to the private sector, innovation, job creation and livelihood improvement, with a focus on women's economic empowerment, community-based development and increased access to renewable energy sources.

Under the *Social Inclusion and Women's Empowerment pillar* (Outcome 3), UNDP supports capacity in Government and women's machinery in general for analysis and solutions that promote women's entrepreneurship, participation in the workforce, and access to decent work. UNDP also supports the National Population Council to implement the national strategy on combating FGM, and expanded its endeavours to rural Upper Egypt with United Nations partners and the National Council of Women.

Following a midterm review of the CPD in June 2020,<sup>48</sup> the country office revised its Outcome 3 portfolio to adapt to the limited space for UNDP to operate in this area, given the technical expertise of other United Nations agencies that captured available funding in this area. At the same time, UNDP expanded its Inclusive Growth and Social Inclusion pillar (Outcome 1), to address issues of local governance, basic service delivery, social protection and urban development and ensure inclusivity, and strengthen national capacity to improve the quality of treatment, coverage, care and support for people living with HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) (outputs 1.6 and 1.7).

The CPD mainly uses NIM for its projects.<sup>49</sup> The UNDP programme in Egypt has been funded primarily by government cost-sharing, which represented approximately 77 percent (\$161 million) of expenditure from 2018 to 2021 (Table 1). Vertical trust funds made up 15 percent of the portfolio (\$30 million), including: GEF (\$15.1 million); Green Climate Fund (GCF) (\$9.7 million); Montreal Protocol (\$3.6 million); and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) (\$2.5 million). The country office received between \$221,000 and \$320,000 in core resources per year, representing around 1 percent of the portfolio. The remaining 6 percent of programme funding came from bilateral and multilateral donors (directly and through funding windows or trust funds) and foundations. Major bilateral donors include: Japan (\$4.4 million); Italy (\$1.8 million); the Netherlands (\$0.9 million); Canada (\$0.8 million); and the European Union (EU) (\$0.6 million). As of October 2021, the average delivery rate over the current CPD cycle was 77.25 percent.

The 2018–2022 country programme was expected to contribute to all 17 of the SDGs. At the time of the evaluation, total CPD expenditure over the four years (2018–2021) was close to \$210 million, 84 percent of which was in a single outcome area, addressing inclusive growth and innovation.<sup>50</sup> With regards to fund

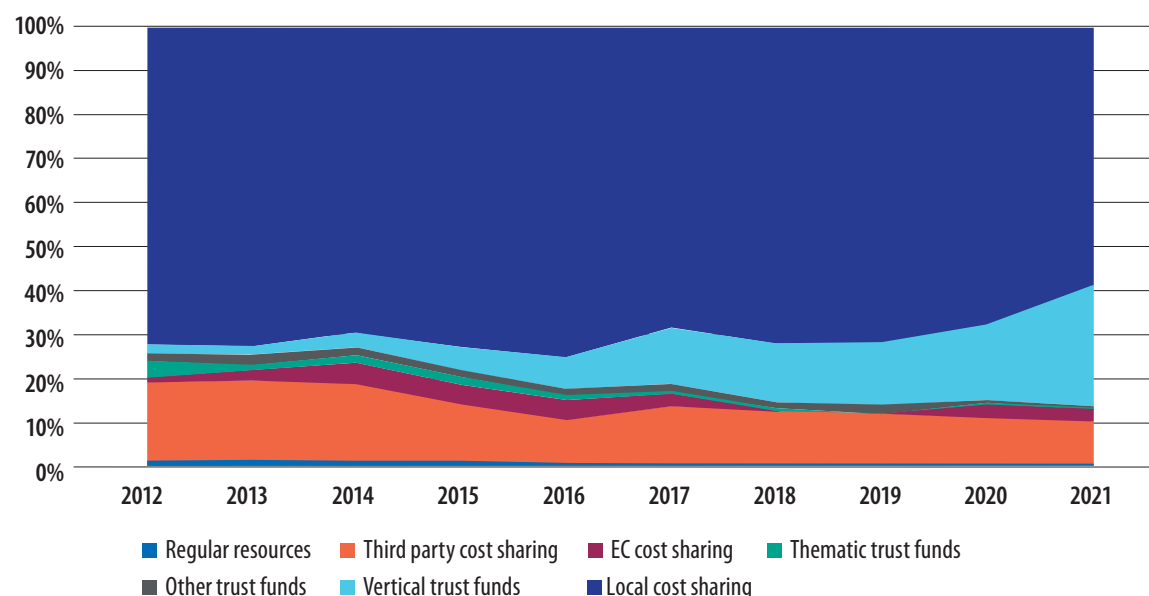
<sup>48</sup> UNDP RBAS (2020) UNDP Egypt Light Mid-Term Review.

<sup>49</sup> Over the current CPD cycle, 96 percent of UNDP Egypt projects have been implemented through NIM (95 projects) amounting to \$200 million, and 3 percent have been implemented under DIM (10 projects), amounting to \$6.2 million. 1 percent have been implemented through other modalities (1 projects), amounting to \$380,000.

<sup>50</sup> The budget of Outcome 1 was \$176.3 million, which constitutes 83 percent of the total programme budget of UNDP Egypt in the current CPD cycle.

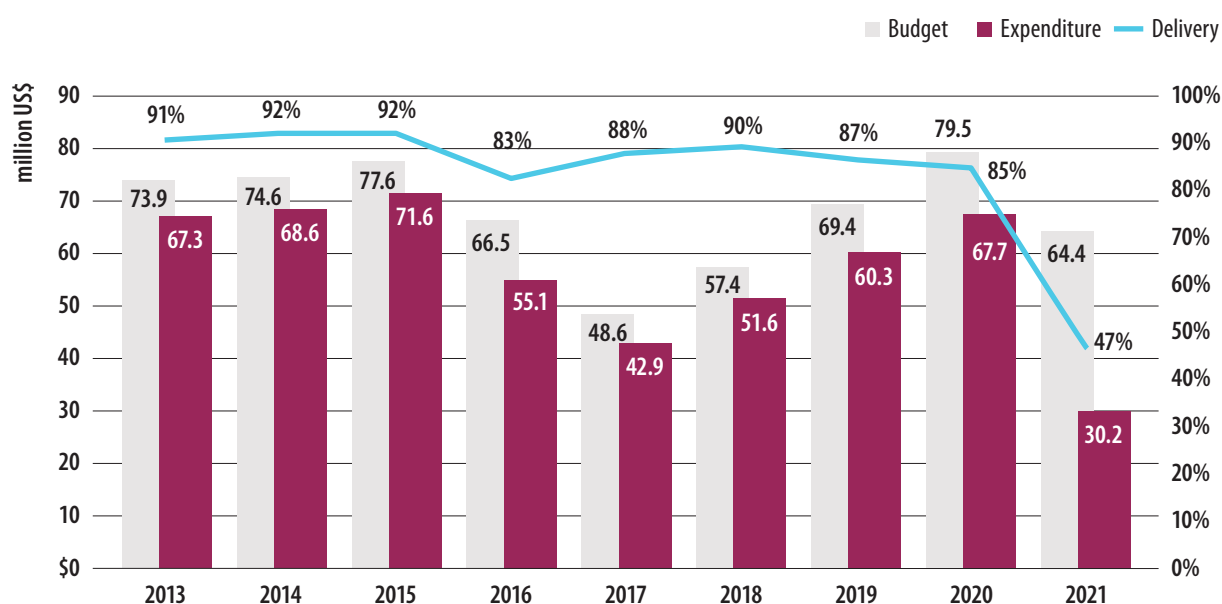
diversification, expenditure trends in the country office since 2012 show that government cost-sharing decreased from 72 percent in 2018 to 58 percent in 2021, while vertical funds have increased from 14 percent to 28 percent, alongside an increase in funding from other sources such as the EU and private sector (Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2. Expenditure trends by fund category (2012–2021)**



Source: UNDP executive snapshot December 2021

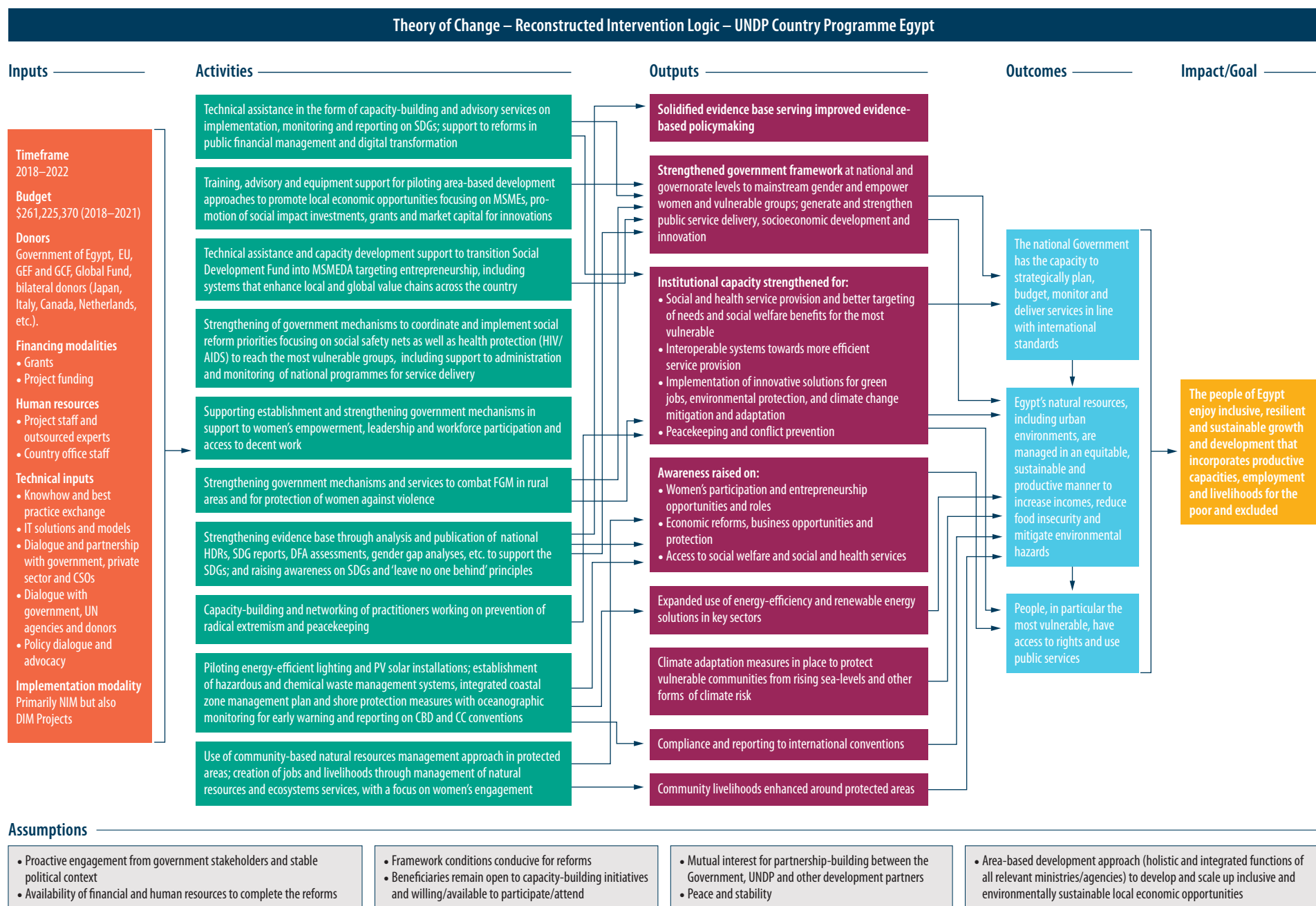
**FIGURE 3. UNDP Egypt country programme budget and expenditure (2013–2021)**



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS as of 3 October 2021



**FIGURE 4. Abridged theory of change (reconstructed) UNDP Egypt country programme**





# CHAPTER 2

# FINDINGS



This section of the report assesses UNDP contributions to the CPD outcomes, outputs and cross-cutting issues, and analyses the key factors that affected the achievement of expected results.

## 2.1 Outcome 1: Inclusive Growth and Innovation

**CPD Outcome 1.** By 2022, Egypt has adopted equitable and sustainable development pathways and remains on track to achieve agreed targets for inclusive, sustainable, resilient and job-creating economic development

### **Related Outputs:**

**Output 1.1** National institutions supported for data collection measurement analytical systems and monitoring on the SDGs and SDS

**Output 1.2** Evidence based integrated national development solutions developed using sustainable development frameworks

**Output 1.3** Strategies promoting entrepreneurship and job creation in selected governorates

**Output 1.4** New forms of partnership with private sector government and bilateral agencies to provide inclusive sustainable and innovative financing

**Output 1.5** Egypt's global and regional contributions to best practices in conflict resolution, peacekeeping and preventing violent extremism

**Output 1.6** Support institutional frameworks and capacities addressing local governance and basic service delivery, social protection floors and urban development to ensure leaving no one behind

**Output 1.7** National capacities are strengthened for quality inclusive health, and enhance capacities to improve treatment coverage, care and support services for people living with HIV and TB patients to live a dignified life and access stigma-free services

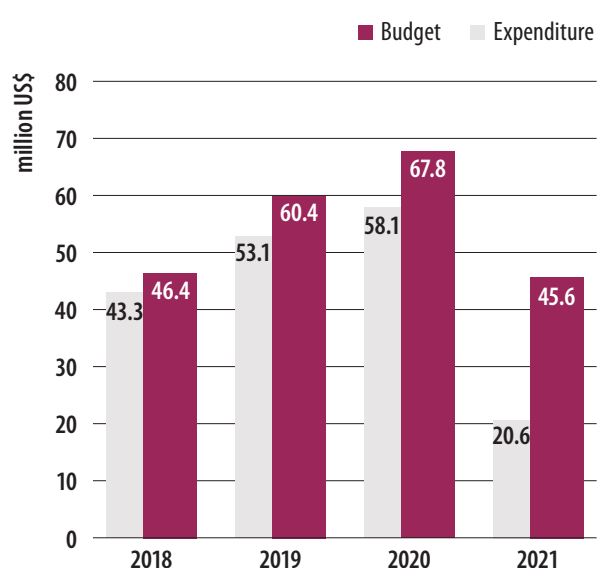
Egypt has been undergoing significant political and social transformation in recent years, including wide reforms of public service provision and digitalization, and investment in economic growth and diversification. In response to the reform priorities of the Government enshrined in the SDS and National Development Programme, and in light of its continuous support to government reform, UNDP developed a very comprehensive and diverse portfolio under the Inclusive Growth, Economic Empowerment and Employment pillar. UNDP aimed to contribute to sustainable changes which would enable the citizens of Egypt to enjoy inclusive, resilient and sustainable growth and development, incorporating productive capacity, employment and livelihoods for the poor and most vulnerable.

UNDP designed its support under this Outcome to cover three broad areas of reform: 1) government planning and digital transformation; 2) social and health protection and service provision; and 3) support to entrepreneurship and job creation. UNDP cooperation in these three areas included: investment in

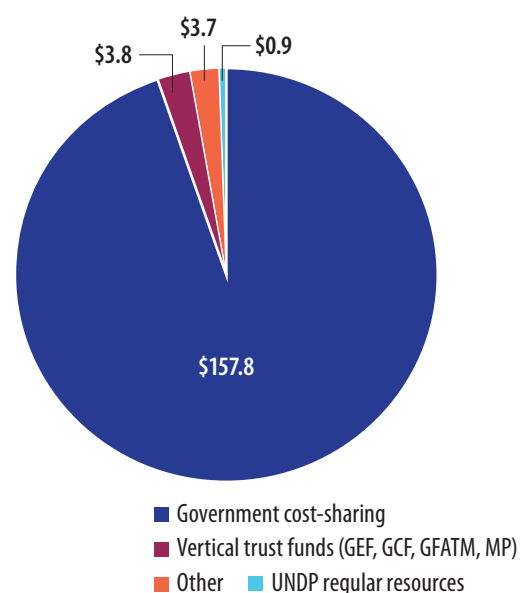
institutional capacity development; piloting innovative interventions; the provision of services and equipment; efforts to enhance the evidence base for more informed policymaking and advocacy on the rights and needs of those left behind; and fulfilling the UNDP convening role to bring Government, civil society, the private sector and other development partners together to discuss the SDGs and development needs and priorities.

During this programme cycle, 40 projects were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$220 million and expenditure of \$175 million, giving an 80 percent execution rate.<sup>51</sup> 31 projects (83 percent of expenditure) were NIM, and nine (17 percent) were directly implemented by UNDP. Government cost-sharing has been the main source of funding of this outcome, at \$157 million.

**FIGURE 5. Evolution of budget and expenditure for Inclusive Growth and Innovation (2018–2021)**



**FIGURE 6. Expenditure by fund category for Inclusive Growth and Innovation (2018–2021)**



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS as of 3 October 2021

The operational framework for UNDP work across these areas has been quite open, resulting mainly from UNDP long-term engagement and strategic positioning as a partner of the Government. Most of the interventions under this outcome, except from support to HIV/AIDS and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, were continued from the previous cycle. The majority of these interventions have been funded by the Government of Egypt, with some exceptions (e.g. Global Fund and individual donor-supported interventions).

**Finding 1.** UNDP has made notable contributions to expand the evidence base on development issues and challenges in Egypt, and used this to promote and integrate the SDGs and Agenda 2030 priorities into government policies and plans, and address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>51</sup> The financial resources correspond to the period: 2018 to 3rd October 2021.

Within the Egypt UNPDF, UNDP has led the promotion and integration of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 priorities into government policies and plans. The main foundation of UNDP work within this outcome has been support to operationalize Egypt's commitments to the SDGs and Agenda 2030, through capacity development and advisory support to identify accelerators and integrators for achieving the SDGs in Egypt, the development of a guiding framework for the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, as well as monitoring and reporting on achievement of the SDGs. Within these efforts, UNDP introduced the International Futures forecasting methodology, and presented the policy and quantitative evidence necessary for Egypt's optimal delivery on the SDGs, particularly in the fields of economic growth and social and environmental outcomes. UNDP also supported the Government to develop the SDG Financing Strategy, through efforts to convene the Government and partner United Nations agencies, contributing to achieving the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2030.<sup>52</sup> UNDP added value lies in its integrator role, working with four partner United Nations agencies to develop the financing strategy with clear contributions to costing priority SDGs.

The country office is developing the Development Finance Assessment (DFA) study, a key building block for the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF). The DFA study focuses on: a) a comprehensive review of the development finance landscape; b) mapping social protection schemes and the financing structure; and c) analysis of international/external investment and overseas development assistance pertaining to SDS goals and the SDGs, in particular social protection, including gender issues. The INFF is a first for Egypt, and will serve to complement and triangulate data, policy recommendations and partnerships of the United Nations with IFIs and the Government, notably through cross-referencing with the IMF-supported SDGs costing exercise and Medium-Term Revenue Strategy.

In unison with the policy work, UNDP offered extensive institutional capacity development support to the Government of Egypt, and in particular the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development (MPED) and its regional offices, as well as the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The aim was to improve the technological infrastructure for regional planning and communication, monitoring, evaluation and reporting for public employees across 24 ministries and 27 governorates. The evaluation of this support found that it had helped the institutions to enhance their awareness, knowledge, skills and tools to track progress achieved against national projects related to the SDS, the SDGs, the Global Competitiveness Index, and Africa 2063.<sup>53</sup> Interviews with national counterparts and other United Nations agencies corroborated this finding, noting that UNDP support in this area was relevant.

UNDP also assisted MPED to prepare the 2018 Voluntary National Review (VNR). At the time of this evaluation, UNDP technical contributions to the development of the 2021 VNR were underway, along with technical inputs for assessment of the impact of COVID-19 and the stimulus package on the Egyptian economy and the SDGs, within a wider review of progress on the SDGs. The COVID-19 impact study aimed to provide policy advice and recommendations to MPED on the measures needed to support the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector to mitigate and survive the COVID-19 crisis.<sup>54</sup> This study indicated that over 90 percent of the sample had been adversely affected by the pandemic and containment measures, while 30 percent had experienced dwindling cash flows with only enough reserves for another month. The enterprises surveyed indicated that they had laid off 17 percent of their workers on average, and another 3.9 percent of workers were expected to face dismissal. Stakeholder interviews noted that the

<sup>52</sup> Partner agencies were: ILO, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNDP, UNICEF and UN Women).

<sup>53</sup> UNDP 2018 data.

<sup>54</sup> The study was conducted in partnership with MSMEDA, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics and the African Development Bank, and included a national survey of MSMEs, which sampled 1,951 MSMEs to assess the impact of COVID-19 on businesses and their response to the stimulus packages launched by the Government.

study provided an evidence base for the Government to define its response measures and bring forward support actions for MSMEs across the country.

UNDP also published the Egypt HDR, in close cooperation with the Government of Egypt, titled “The Right to Development: Pathways and Prospects”. The report provides an analysis of key human development issues and their influence on the achievement of the SDGs, with a specific focus on human development areas such as women’s empowerment, energy efficiency and basic social services. Interviewees across stakeholder groups provided positive feedback on the national HDR, as the first to be presented in the country in a decade.<sup>55</sup> They appreciated that the report had been prepared with close collaboration between UNDP and MPED, indicating a level of government commitment to tackle human development issues, and some noted that publication of the reaffirmed the strategic position of UNDP as a government counterpart in this area.

Egypt has been a leader in the Arab world on SDG implementation, with the design and adoption of the region’s first national strategy on Agenda 2030 and the integration of the SDGs into national policies and priorities. UNDP has taken a proactive role in supporting and underpinning government efforts to integrate the SDGs into national plans, policies and budgets, with the aim of accelerating attainment of the SDGs, developing Egypt’s SDG Financing Strategy, integrating a gender dimension into the nationalization of the SDGs, as well as measuring the impact of COVID-19 on MSMEs to inform the development of stimulus packages. With UNDP leadership and through joint United Nations programmes, evidence has been generated to inform SDG acceleration and the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support approach. Notable studies included the “SDG Report: Egypt 2030” and “Policy Note on SDG Accelerators”, as well as other studies and needs assessments, which were perceived as relevant and useful by national, United Nations and donor partner respondents. Joint United Nations support to develop the national SDS monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system was also effective, leading to the aforementioned drafting of the DFA.<sup>56</sup> United Nations agencies and development partner interviewees noted the positive contribution of UNDP to overall SDG engagement, including efforts to maintain the coherence of SDG work, and sustain the momentum and linkages for SDG financing.

Progress on financing the SDGs from other sources such as the private sector has mostly come from advocacy events, as evidenced in the desk review. Examples of such support are the ‘mastery series’ to build policy dialogue on the SDGs, in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, and the ‘SDGs under a new normal’ workshop, both of which aimed to build partnerships with the private sector.<sup>57</sup> Results on leveraging investments for social impact (such as the facilitation of grants and market capital for business) have also been limited during this CPD. On the other hand, UNDP-supported climate change interventions and protected area management initiatives have created space for private sector investment in ‘green business’ and energy conservation, with local social, economic and wellbeing benefits consistent with some of the SDGs (mostly improved air quality and job creation).

**Finding 2.** UNDP support to the MSME Development Agency (MSMEDA) has brought transformative changes in the promotion of MSME entrepreneurship, transparency and innovation in the provision of services, and for job creation. Further investment (financial and technical) is needed to maintain and expand GEWE results.

<sup>55</sup> The previous national HDR was from 2010: [https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human\\_development/publication\\_1.html?utm\\_source=EN&utm\\_medium=GSR&utm\\_content=US\\_UNDP\\_PaidSearch\\_Brand\\_English&utm\\_campaign=CENTRAL&c\\_src=CENTRAL&c\\_src2=GSR&gclid=Cj0KCQiAhMOMBhDhARIsAPVml-EIZDvKbWLOP](https://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/library/human_development/publication_1.html?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=Cj0KCQiAhMOMBhDhARIsAPVml-EIZDvKbWLOP)

<sup>56</sup> This joint support involved UNDP and other SDG custodian agencies, in particular UNFPA, UN Women, ILO and UNICEF.

<sup>57</sup> The full title of the workshop was “SDGs under a new normal: private sector trade-offs and mitigation mechanisms, to explore new priority goals, the trade-offs and potential private business mitigating mechanisms”.

UNDP support to MSMEDA, the national leading agency for MSMEs, continued from the previous CPD cycle into the current one.<sup>58</sup> UNDP provided institutional capacity development and advisory assistance for the institutional transition of MSMEDA, in line with its Decrees of 2017 and 2018, and as the designated public entity responsible for developing the MSME sector directly or through the coordination of efforts by different stakeholders. Stakeholder interviews point to the high level of efficiency and effectiveness of UNDP support, strengthening the profile and positioning of MSMEDA as a provider of services to support economic development. UNDP support reached the MSMEDA central office as well as its network of 33 regional offices, covering the 27 governorates of Egypt. This institutional support to MSMEDA had many dimensions, including strengthening its financial and training services for MSMEs and job creation, and building its capacity to promote and mainstream gender.

The document review pointed to positive effects of UNDP support to the MSMEDA financial services structure, indicating improved mechanisms. For example in 2020, as part of the COVID-19 response, MSMEDA successfully disbursed 2.9 billion Egyptian pounds to finance MSMEs, which reached 103,255 enterprises (43,369 women and 59,886 men) and created 159,408 job opportunities (57,658 women and 101,750 men). UNDP also supported MSMEDA to implement capacity development for entrepreneurs and business start-ups, organizing over 500 entrepreneurship trainings which benefitted more than 12,000 participants.<sup>59</sup> Stakeholder interviews confirmed the positive transformational effect of UNDP support, noting a shift in the MSMEDA approach to funding entrepreneurship activities, along with greater transparency and innovation in its provision of services to MSMEs. Interviews with national institutions highlighted that this partnership had demonstrated the benefits of longer-term institutional support, when accompanied by the commitment of the beneficiary institution to enhance the effectiveness of its services.

The country office also supports the digitalization of MSMEs through an online e-learning platform to actively support 750,000 MSMEs, with special attention to those specialized in medical and electronic waste. The platform, which is built on the existing MSMEDA portal, aims to educate MSMEs on how to digitalize their sales and operations, taking into consideration the diverse needs of women, and the size of their enterprises. Interviewees pointed to the strategic efforts of MSMEDA to engage women, in particular young women. The joint efforts of UNDP and MSMEDA to reach more vulnerable groups resulted in a growth in women benefiting from financial services to 41 percent, of which 45 percent were in the age group between 20 and 35 years. Nonetheless, weaknesses were noted around, among others: results-based management (RBM); the engagement of relevant stakeholders and communities at initial phases of project formulation; capacity-building for local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in conflict development analysis; and innovation. A recent review of the initiative noted some level of cost-recovery in MSMEDA, but sustainability will remain a challenge until MSMEDA develops a strategy to become an independent entity.<sup>60</sup>

One important achievement has been the establishment of a Gender Unit to mainstream gender in MSMEDA and improve its interventions targeting women. In tandem, efforts were undertaken to integrate GEWE principles into MSMEDA policies and programmes, which resulted in MSMEDA receiving the Gender Equality Seal Award in 2019, awarded by the National Council for Women and UNDP. This is an important achievement for MSMEDA, as the first public institution in Egypt or the Arab region to receive this award, and only the second in the world.

<sup>58</sup> The 'Social Fund for Development' (or support to MSMEDA) project had several phases, with the initial agreement covering the period from 2007 to 2011. The agreement was later extended and amended to cover the period from 2012 to 2014. The final amendment was signed in 2016 and covered the period until 2018, and then 2018 to 2020.

<sup>59</sup> UNDP Egypt (2020) ROAR.

<sup>60</sup> UNDP (2019) Final Review of the Social Fund for Development Phase IV project.



Stakeholder interviews noted the UNDP role in this process, with some highlighting the risk of MSMEDA losing the Gender Seal award without the continued insistence of UNDP on the integration of such principles. These voices raised concerns about the sustainability of these results and the need for a follow-up report on the Gender Seal recommendations. Challenges remain in terms of the lack of targets, indicators or baseline data to gauge progress, as well as limited staff and resources to maintain the results and continue the expansion of gender mainstreaming in all MSMEDA operations, from the field to the head office.<sup>61</sup>

**Finding 3.** UNDP engagement in job creation initiatives has been diverse, with direct support to developing the capacity of start-ups, entrepreneurs and job-seekers, including traditionally excluded and vulnerable groups such as youth and women. The catalytic potential of such investments is positive from the perspective of the contribution to inclusive, empowering, resilient and job-creating economic development, though efforts to address the structural challenges for youth employment and economic empowerment have been limited.

UNDP efforts in support of job creation and entrepreneurship promotion have generally been dynamic, bringing catalytic effects for the diversification of MSMEs in Egypt and a positive impact on livelihoods. For instance, through UNDP support, MSMEDA reached an average of 100,000 enterprises per year, 41 percent women, and created an average of 150,000 job opportunities per year.<sup>62</sup> UNDP supported the institutional development of MSMEDA and its partnerships with other relevant country institutions, which assisted Egypt to achieve significant results in addressing socioeconomic challenges, in alignment with national economic development priorities and policies and the national COVID-19 response.

UNDP engaged in wider job creation and entrepreneurship support endeavours with MSMEDA, the Egypt Network for Integrated Development, the Information Technology Institute (ITI) and the Technology Innovation and Entrepreneurship Centre (TIEC), supporting innovative approaches and training for young and aspiring entrepreneurs, start-ups and existing businesses. The UNDP value proposition was to support, nurture and accelerate innovations towards market integration and employment. The partnership with Ministry of International Cooperation (MOIC) to implement the Egypt Network of Integrated Development resulted in outreach and training for 1,712 beneficiaries (75 percent women according to UNDP data), and the creation of 590 job opportunities (72 percent for women).<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, the work with ITI and TIEC presented an opportunity to reach out to young entrepreneurs with a diverse set of innovative digital entrepreneurship ideas, including trainings on fundraising, crisis management, telecommuting, etc. In partnership with TIEC, UNDP supported 166 start-ups (around 25 percent women) and trained 168,029 beneficiaries.<sup>64</sup> In partnership with ITI, UNDP developed a pool of highly qualified information technology professionals and entrepreneurs through a professional training programme in information communication technology (ICT) and entrepreneurship which reached around 1,000 people. Approximately 166,926 beneficiaries were reached through the online platform MahraraTec. In addition, UNDP engaged in digital and entrepreneurship support for resilience and the post-COVID transition, including initiatives such as Generation Unlimited, the Youth Challenge, and the Arab Virtual Entrepreneurship Exhibition. However, these interventions have been rather fragmented and one-off engagement efforts.

UNDP also supported Qodwa.Tech, an initiative for women's economic and social empowerment and digital inclusion. Qodwa.tech promotes and enables girls and women to acquire tools and skills using ICT solutions, engaging them across all governorates of Egypt, and especially remote, marginalized and underserved

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Country Office pre-mission self-assessment questionnaire (p. 11).

<sup>63</sup> In 2020, UNDP created 160,777 jobs (37 percent women). Source UNDP Egypt 2020 Annual Report.

<sup>64</sup> UNDP Egypt (2020) ROAR.

communities. Qodwa.tech was chosen as a champion project in the 2020 World Summit on the Information Society international competition, as result of wide outreach, awareness and coaching sessions to provide a comprehensive business ecosystem. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Qodwa.tech telemedicine centres, 14 of which were in isolation hospitals, raised awareness of proper protective behaviours and safety measures among residents in remote areas, and helped to provide medical consultations for patients and training for medical staff in isolation hospitals.

Overall, UNDP efforts have contributed to improving economic and business opportunities across Egypt, in particular for youth, women and more vulnerable groups. However, in the majority of cases the focus has been at individual level and less on the enabling environment, with fewer large-scale economic empowerment results.

**Finding 4.** The UNDP contribution to public administration reform has enhanced institutional capacity and strengthened ICT prerequisites for improved public services. However, these efforts have been fragmented and implemented in silos, limiting their catalytic potential for wider reform.

UNDP investment in public administration reform has included a variety of support, including a focus on digitalization and enhanced access to services, particularly in remote areas. For example, UNDP has been supporting the modernization of Egypt Post (EP) since 2005, providing institutional-level technical assistance for the integration of ICT and helping to enhance the efficiency and accessibility of a number of relevant public services that it delivers to citizens. As a result, a General Department for GIS was established, along with a National Postal Code system with a distinct seven-number code for each district in Egypt. UNDP also supported the renovation of 1,360 post offices between 2018 and 2020, a command-and-control centre has been developed and a call centre expansion plan implemented.

EP and UNDP efforts to enhance service provision resulted in the establishment of 27 government services (including for obtaining vehicle licenses, train tickets, ATM expansion and online payment of utility bills), and the production and distribution of payment cards, including chipped debit cards for EP clients (under agreement with Visa International and MasterCard) and “Easy Pay” prepaid cards.<sup>65</sup> Stakeholder interviews emphasized the importance of such cards for citizens, particularly in remote areas, noting that this new EP service raised their profile and popularity among citizens, which was seen as an added value of UNDP support. With UNDP support, EP also started development of an e-commerce portal to provide MSMEs with a one-stop access point, with the aim of enhancing ease-of-business for Egyptian entrepreneurs. UNDP also initiated efforts to cooperate with the private sector on digitalization.

In other efforts, UNDP supported a comprehensive plan to develop databases of social benefit recipients, and the digitalization of Savings Booklet accounts which are now managed electronically. Stakeholders noted important outcomes of this support, primarily in terms of easier accessibility to such services for the most vulnerable and generally a more transparent and efficient system of social benefit distribution.

UNDP also supported the National Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (NTRA) and the Ministry of ICT to enhance the regulatory environment for the telecommunication sector and ensure high quality internet, broadband and mobile services across the country through increased quality and coverage of ICT infrastructure and services, including for remote areas. Through these efforts, UNDP has supported the development of policies, strategies and mechanisms related to the growth and sustainability of the telecommunications sector, and institutional capacity development and support to enhance network security infrastructure. Despite UNDP support and engagement, which provided for the delivery of outputs,

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<sup>65</sup> According to UNDP data, 2,562,244 chipped debit cards and two million ‘easy pay’ cards were distributed in 2020.

transformative results have been slow to emerge, as changes within this sector are incremental and depend on a number of factors (such as network issues, political and technical support, etc.), many of which are beyond UNDP control. UNDP also assisted NTRA to launch a Technical Centre to provide sign language access to emergency services for people with hearing or speech impairments. This has been particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, to assist people with hearing disabilities to check their symptoms and get proper health support.

Overall, the evaluation found that UNDP investment in public administration reform has been varied, and contributed to enhanced institutional capacity and strengthening ICT prerequisites for improved public services. However, UNDP support did not translate into stronger transformative results for wider public administration reform, as interventions were fragmented due to the narrow windows for reform and funding opportunities. UNDP supported targeted institutions individually (e.g. EP, MoF, NTRA), but did not invest in efforts to explore common areas or synergies between interventions, which could have increased the leverage and catalytic potential of the outputs delivered within each intervention. One of the reasons for this individualized approach, highlighted by stakeholders, is that government institutions also operate in silos.

**Finding 5.** UNDP has effectively supported MoF to reform its internal structures and public finance management processes. Public Finance Management reform is still underway, but some institutional changes within MoF provide positive outcome prospects.

UNDP provided technical assistance and advisory support to MoF to improve the effectiveness of its performance by instigating a strong, inclusive organizational culture and developing capacity for a stronger focus on the results-focused capacity development of its staff. The main results of UNDP work with MoF include the development of the MoF Strategic Map and draft Guarantee Policy Guide, currently awaiting approval of the Ministerial Economic Committee. The Guide aims to streamline the guarantee process and analyse inherent risk, as well as encourage alternatives to the issuance of guarantees. Key MoF management staff participated in strategic-thinking learning events. UNDP work with MoF also resulted in the establishment of an Internal Audit Unit, equipped with the necessary internal audit guidelines and policies, and various training opportunities for audit staff. This function is important, since MoF supports the establishment of internal audit units in the State administrative apparatus, and has the potential to strengthen public administration accountability and compliance by enhancing performance and governance across the public sector. With UNDP support, the Internal Audit Unit conducted audits for various sectors of MoF, including the Mint Authority. At the time of this evaluation, evidence of the use of government audit reports was not readily available, given their classified nature.

UNDP supported MoF to identify and prioritize 15 commodities through value chain analysis, and the establishment of a National Committee to monitor the flow of those commodities for better tracking of shortages and/or market distortion.<sup>66</sup> Interviewees from supported national institutions emphasized the relevance of this support for strengthening institutional structures and systems within MoF. This support, which is still underway, has positive transformative potential to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of government assistance programmes for commercial entities, and the definition of financial mechanisms to support economic growth.

**Finding 6.** UNDP peacebuilding efforts have boosted South-South cooperation, convening actors to discuss relevant themes in a conducive and inclusive environment. This process is ongoing and has the potential to boost international and intersectoral cooperation in the field of peacebuilding.

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<sup>66</sup> Commodities included grains like wheat, rice and corn, sugar crops and mills and food oils.

UNDP has played a strong and positive role in support of Egypt's regional peacebuilding and partnership aspirations. UNDP has provided stable support and partnership with the Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCCPA) to support its capacity-development and outreach to national and international partners. CCCPA works as a leading training centre and think tank on issues of peace and security, and organizes a series of high-level events and workshops on issues such as preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism, advancing the WPS agenda, and human trafficking. UNDP has played the role of facilitator and knowledge broker, contributing its international expertise and networks, and bringing new tools developed at regional level, such as the Prevention of Violent Extremism Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit and other relevant United Nations peacebuilding and peacekeeping conceptual frameworks. In addition, UNDP supported CCCPA resource mobilization efforts to enable delivery of its expanded mandate, covering all peace and security-related issues globally with a focus on Africa and Arab world. This support resulted in the successful renovation and mobilization of resources (from the Government of Japan and UNDP RBAS) and strengthened CCCPA communication of results for greater donor visibility and outreach. Evidence from the document review suggests that CCCPA has strong positioning and has benefitted from strong relationships with key partners including international donors, United Nations agencies and specialized departments such as the United Nations Department for Peacekeeping Operations and the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office.

Within these partnership efforts, CCCPA and UNDP have worked on the Aswan Forum for Sustainable Peace and Development, an initiative of the Government of Egypt to provide a venue to address the peace, security and development challenges facing the African continent. CCCPA is the Aswan Forum Secretariat, which provides a good space for both CCCPA and UNDP (as its strategic partner) to influence and facilitate regional and international exchange on these themes. Importantly, the Inaugural Meeting of the Forum had a high level of global participation, presenting a pivotal strategic opportunity to share the current work and future vision of UNDP on multiple subjects relating to sustainable peace and development. It also provided opportunities to highlight the newly-launched HDR, and issues such as conflict prevention, peacebuilding financing, crisis response, reintegration, stabilization, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, WPS and Youth, Peace and Security, climate change and security, the governance agenda in Africa, and others. The second Aswan Forum, "Shaping Africa's New Normal: Recovering Stronger, Rebuilding Better", built on the inaugural Aswan Forum and its conclusions to advance a positive and ambitious agenda through decisive leadership and innovative solutions, as Africa charts its path for post-COVID recovery.

The evaluation of CCCPA found that the Centre had established itself as a pioneer in streamlining gender in peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in the region.<sup>67</sup> This was reflected in the actions of the Arab Women Commission, which directed its Secretariat to work closely with CCCPA on building Arab capacity in the field of WPS.

Some challenges remain in terms of the sustainability of the Centre, given the lack of long-term financing arrangements which would support the scale-up of activities in niche areas beyond peacekeeping, including mediation, preventing radicalization and extremism leading to terrorism, combating human trafficking, and WPS.

<sup>67</sup> UNDP (2018) Evaluation Report: Strengthening the Capacity of the Cairo Centre for Conflict Resolution and Peacekeeping in Africa Project.

**Finding 7.** UNDP provided horizontal capacity-strengthening support to institutions addressing urban development and local governance. The contribution of UNDP to results is difficult to evidence for almost all of the initiatives under this output.

UNDP has been a strategic partner to the Government for projects tackling urban challenges related to imbalanced growth and discrepancies in the distribution of economic development and services. However, this evaluation found that UNDP focused on horizontal institutional support, without any clear targeting or intervention logic for where and how this was expected to promote changes across the sector. This is mainly due to the institutional arrangements for UNDP support, which was expected to provide a number of experts or services more efficiently than if procured directly through government institutions. As the procured services were multiple and diverse, and many spilled over from the previous CPD, interviewed government officials could not pinpoint particular UNDP contributions to results. Documents and interviews showed that UNDP support was directed to efforts to prepare Egypt's land-use map, as a foundation for further spatial development, environmental protection, budget allocation and investments. At the time of this evaluation, this map had not been finalized.

UNDP assistance was also provided to the General Office for Physical Planning (GOPP) to develop or review several plans and integrated development solutions.<sup>68</sup> UNDP also supported the wider institutional development of GOPP through on-the-job capacity-building in systems management and the operation and utilization of new tools and technologies, such as the GIS enterprise platform. Consultants worked hand-in-hand with GOPP Information Centre staff to design the system interface and functions. Stakeholder interviews revealed that such support interventions brought results for the national planning system, albeit without a clear picture of deeper UNDP engagement beyond the roles of procurement agent or administrator of the consultant pool, though further utilization of the plans and solutions was not clear.

To support the transformation of land use for socioeconomic development, UNDP engaged in demining of the north-west coast of Egypt, as a foundation for the expansion and diversification of land use in this area. Such efforts resulted in the clearance of 1,674 km<sup>2</sup> of land, where explosive World War II remnants were cleared to enable the establishment of development projects in the area. Lands cleared for the benefit of the Ministry of Housing aimed to pave the way for the development of the New City of Al Alamein, which is expected to provide thousands of employment opportunities and become an international coastal city and tourist hub, as a communication and socioeconomic point between all the cities of the north-west coast. According to UNDP data, corroborated by stakeholder interviews, Phase-I of the New City provided 279,375 job opportunities and a better quality of life for residents through the services provided. All interviewed stakeholders emphasized the importance of this project for the further development of Egypt, along with the positive long-term support of UNDP which was effective and stable, contributing to results for the local population. This support has a strong catalytic potential for the expansion and enhancement of Egypt's socioeconomic development, as emphasized by relevant stakeholders.

**Finding 8.** UNDP support to the Ministry of Social Solidarity (MoSS) has been scattered, and achieved mainly output-level results without clear catalytic potential. Initiatives to further strengthen MoSS capacity on inclusivity, coverage and accessibility to vulnerable groups during COVID-19 are yet to be implemented, which limited the opportunity for UNDP to leverage its current work, or for MoSS to effectively reach vulnerable groups during the COVID-19 pandemic.

<sup>68</sup> These include the National Strategic Plan for Alexandria City; the Giza Urban Strategic Plan; the master plan and urban design for development of Al-Dahab and Al-Bekbasy, Orssaya and Dissany islands, as well as the first phase of detailed plans for Al-Warraq Island; planning visions for the Saqqara antiquities area and the Al-Fostat area; the review of the national strategic plan; support to preparation of the baseline report on GIS enterprise and associated software network, etc.



UNDP engagement with MoSS included a number of interventions, including support to develop a socio-economic situational analysis of the Sinai region as a basis to plan measures to improve the lives of the most vulnerable groups and transform the region to fulfil its socioeconomic potential. This support has had a leveraging and multiplying effect on the results of UNDP local governance and economic development support, as confirmed by interviewed stakeholders. In addition, UNDP assisted MoSS to promote the national 'Waaï' Programme in the North Sinai region through an assessment study to analyse gender gaps in education, health, employability and social protection. The Waaï programme included a comprehensive package of advocacy information, education and communication materials addressing various social protection issues tackled by MoSS, targeting families registered in the Takaful and Karama (TK&K) social protection programmes.<sup>69</sup> The Waaï programme used several channels to deliver these messages to TK&K beneficiaries through the service points of various government agencies, social media and television campaigns. Stakeholders noted that the support of MoSS community social workers (*Raeadat*) and beneficiaries for the enforcement of MoSS policies and procedures was instrumental to behaviour change within the Ministry, for example in moving beyond purely pecuniary (social transfers) or security (North Sinai) measures, to also contribute to social change. Stakeholder interviews show that this programme has been helpful to expand services and raise awareness among the most vulnerable groups who benefit from TK&K support, ensuring that they have access to information and knowledge that would not otherwise be available. Other support to MoSS consisted of the design of corruption and risk mitigation measures for the cash transfer programme, on which 75 percent of those enrolled are women. UNDP also assisted MoSS to update its organigram with detailed job descriptions and procedures, allowing it to map and structure its intervention efforts.

Initiatives to further strengthen MoSS capacity were especially relevant to address needs that emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. One case in point is the EU-funded 'MoSS COVID-19 Response' project,<sup>70</sup> which aimed to strengthen MoSS capacity through the adaptation and expansion of existing Waaï programme advocacy and awareness tools, the digitalization of systems to better support beneficiaries to respond to COVID-19, the improvement of the socioeconomic status of vulnerable groups amid COVID-19, and support to elderly care institutions, homeless shelters and people with disabilities to decrease the risk of COVID-19 infection. The project has partially started, with some minor activities, but due to an issue with value-added tax (VAT) exemption from the Government, there is a risk that it may be cancelled.<sup>71</sup> Most likely, if the VAT issue is resolved, the project timelines, deliverables and contract will have to be revised and renegotiated, which will add further delays. While the VAT exemption is beyond UNDP responsibility, and has been a recurring issue for United Nations agencies, and the evidence and stakeholder feedback gathered suggest that UNDP should have played a more proactive role to anticipate these types of risks, keep donors informed, and maintain transparency throughout the contract negotiation process. These delays were critical, considering the promptness required during a crisis and the importance of building institutional capacity to support vulnerable groups to cope with COVID-19.

**Finding 9.** UNDP support to the National AIDS and TB programmes has led to positive results in addressing structural gaps in case detection and treatment. However, challenges remain in terms of the protection of rights and access to services for people living with HIV and TB.

<sup>69</sup> In particular, the programme addresses 12 interlinked social protection issues including: maternal and child health, family planning, education, drug abuse, the rights of persons with disabilities and early detection of disabilities, human trafficking, child marriage, economic empowerment, social inclusion, positive parenting education, FGM, good hygiene practice, and other socioeconomic problems within a unified MoSS portfolio.

<sup>70</sup> Full project title: 'Strengthening Institutional and Human Resources Capacities of the MoSS - Support to COVID-19 Response'.

<sup>71</sup> The VAT seems to be a recurring issue. On 21 February 2021, a UNDP audit of the Egypt country office recommended that they discuss the issue of VAT reimbursement with the Office of Operations, Legal and Technology (OLT) for guidance and resolution. The country office action plan consisted of requesting written feedback from the Government, and then seeking advice from the OLT.

To support the expansion of health services, UNDP led the implementation of the Global Fund programme to support the institutional capacity-building of the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) and relevant NGOs to implement the National AIDS Programme (NAP). UNDP support was directed to strengthening the capacity of healthcare service providers within antiretroviral (ARV) centres, fever hospitals and psychiatric and mental care facilities, along with an overall scale-up of the existing clinical care treatment programme for people living with HIV. As a result, UNDP interventions in 2019 and 2020 supported NAP to expand the coverage of ARV and clinical centres from 14 to 27 governorates to ensure universal HIV-related coverage, including the establishment of 11 new virological clinics (for HIV, Hepatitis C and B) within different psychiatric and mental health hospitals to provide harm-reduction, treatment and care services for people who inject drugs (the main driver of HIV risk in Egypt over the past three years). According to UNDP data, these efforts reached 4,400 individuals with targeted behaviour-change interventions, and enabled 1,548 of them to know their status.<sup>72</sup> In 2020, through the 'Strengthening HIV/TB Response' programme, UNDP reached 4,027 people (3,531 men and 496 women) with HIV prevention packages, and supported 2,305 people to access HIV testing services.

Through the National TB Programme (NTP), UNDP supported MoHP to improve its diagnostic capacity and thus the notification and treatment enrolment of TB cases, and progress from conventional methods, particularly for diagnosis of rifampicin and multi-drug resistant TB, to more advanced and sensitive diagnostic methods. This enabled the NTP to address structural gaps related to case detection and treatment, and support Egypt's vision to end TB by 2030. UNDP support to NTP has enabled the adoption of a shorter regimen policy for TB treatment, specifically drug-resistant varieties, which constitute a major challenge for the national TB response.

The national HIV and TB response support programmes implemented by UNDP provided critical assistance to national institutions to overcome the decline in available resources for HIV, and the severe interruption of HIV prevention activities for key populations.<sup>73</sup> The programme engagement with NGOs and service providers has helped groups vulnerable to HIV to overcome stigma and build strategies for the prevention of HIV transmission among key populations who are traditionally excluded or left behind.

NAP encountered challenges during the COVID-19 crisis in terms of service provision, in particular for counselling and testing services which are the entry point for HIV-related prevention, care and treatment and essential for tackling structural issues to end HIV/AIDS. UNDP and national partners worked together to define mitigation measures and reprogramme activities to ensure full implementation of the programme. Document review and stakeholder interviews confirmed that, despite NGO services and advocacy activities, challenges persist in the protection of rights of people living with HIV and TB, stigma and unequal access to services. Interviewees highlighted that access to services has worsened in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, although interviews with national government and NGO partners showed that NAP had managed to provide support despite these challenges. Obstacles for reaching drug users and sex workers include the limited number of local NGOs working with HIV-affected people in Egypt, the lack of NGO resources, insufficient experience and capacity for reaching key populations and the stigma and discrimination surrounding HIV-affected people.

<sup>72</sup> Targeted intervention denotes raising awareness about HIV modes of transmission and prevention methods, counselling, access to harm reduction commodities (e.g. condoms and syringes) and referral to different services, etc.

<sup>73</sup> Key populations are defined groups who, due to specific higher-risk behaviours, are at increased risk of HIV, irrespective of the epidemic type or local context. Also, they often have legal and social issues related to their behaviours that increase their vulnerability to HIV.

## 2.2 Outcome 2: Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

**CPD Outcome 2.** By 2022 Egypt's natural resources, including urban environments, are managed in an equitable, sustainable and productive manner to increase incomes, reduce food insecurity and mitigate environmental hazards

### Related Outputs:

**Output 2.1** Expanded use of energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions in key sectors

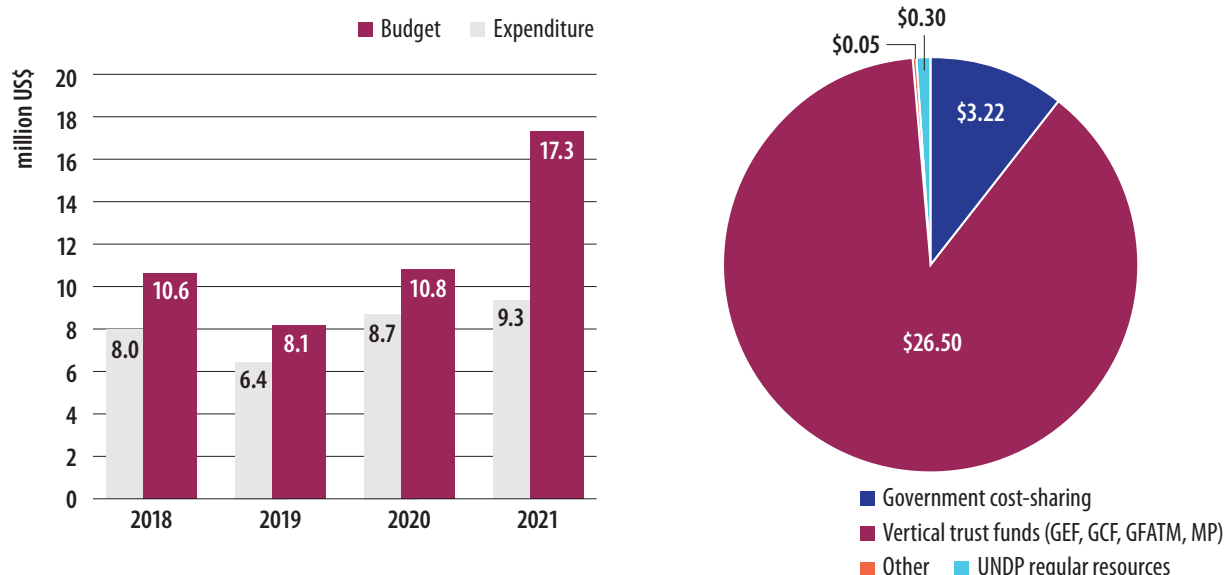
**Output 2.2** Climate adaptation measures in place to protect vulnerable communities from rising sea-levels and other forms of climate risk

**Output 2.3** Compliance and reporting to international conventions

**Output 2.4** Community livelihoods enhanced around protected areas

The CPD places emphasis on climate change adaptation initiatives, with the continuation of protection for low-lying lands in the Nile Delta (including the development of an integrated coastal zone management plan and early warning system) and implementation of the Nationally Determined Contributions climate strategy, with a focus on sectoral climate change adaptation plans. The CPD also notes ongoing efforts in climate change mitigation, along with pollution abatement, with a focus on energy-efficiency in cities and the expansion of small-scale (pro-poor) renewable energy. UNDP also pledged to continue initiatives to eliminate ozone-depleting substances (ODS), in line with the Montreal Protocol, Kigali Agreement and other international protocol obligations. Finally, UNDP articulated ongoing support for the development and implementation of protected area management plans, with clear linkages to job creation and more effort on waste management.

**FIGURE 7.** Expenditure by fund category for Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability (2018–Oct. 2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS as of 3 October 2021



A total of 25 projects were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$47.2 million and expenditure of \$32.6 million, with a 69 percent execution rate (to October 2021). This portfolio was mainly nationally implemented with UNDP support. 20 projects (92.5 percent of expenditure) used NIM, while five (7.5 percent of expenditure) used DIM. Vertical trust funds have been the primary source of funding, accounting for approximately 81.3 percent (\$26.5 million) of expenditure. This main funders of this outcome have been the GEF Trust Fund (51 percent of expenditure), GCF (30 percent of expenditure), and the Italian Government, as well as the Government of Egypt (about 19 percent of expenditure to October 2021).

**Finding 10.** UNDP continues to be a preferred partner of the Government of Egypt in the environment, natural resource management, energy, and climate change sphere. Its main strengths include extensive experience with policy and institutional development to support innovations in environmental and climate change management, with an increasing emphasis on market-based approaches, and successful brokering of vertical funds (GEF and GCF).

Egypt's priority issues in relation to climate change, natural resource management (NRM) and environmental quality are well-defined, in line with Egypt's Vision (SDS) and international obligations, which emphasise climate change adaptation, mitigation (through increased energy-efficiency and accelerated transition to renewable energy), and NRM (especially in protected areas).<sup>74</sup> Continuing from previous programme cycles, UNDP has supported Egypt with initiatives linked to these visions and directions, and made progress in the development of urban plans, capacity-building for NRM and biodiversity, support for water systems and protected areas, development of low-carbon technologies, and the use of green/circular economy measures and systems. All of these earlier initiatives have set the stage and informed the current portfolio of UNDP projects under this outcome, which are firmly tied to Egypt's vision, with a special emphasis on job protection and creation. As such, UNDP has established itself as a preferred partner of the Government to support its efforts in this area.

UNDP has helped Egypt to secure significant project funding in each of the GEF cycles up to the current programme period, as well as the first GCF project in Egypt,<sup>75</sup> making UNDP Egypt the largest GEF portfolio in the region.<sup>76</sup> Consistent GEF project design, with parallel tracks of policy and institutional development, awareness-raising and capacity-building, and development and testing of innovations and associated sustainable financing mechanisms, and the continuity of most staff across cycles, has given UNDP project teams a solid understanding of project design and implementation, a valuable feature in its partnerships with various ministries. UNDP experience over the last ten years has also helped the Government make appropriate shifts in project emphasis, such as the increasing emphasis on the use of renewable energy to broaden the focus from energy efficiency and the reduction of GHG emissions.

<sup>74</sup> Egypt Vision 2030 (SDS), the Integrated Sustainable Energy Strategy to 2035, and in documents supporting Egypt's climate commitments as defined in the Paris Agreement. The SDS strategic vision for the environment to 2030 notes that the environment is expected to be "integrated in all economic sectors to preserve natural resources and support their efficient use and investment, while ensuring the next generations' rights; a clean, safe and healthy environment leading to diversified production, resources, and economic activities, supporting competitiveness, providing new jobs, eliminating poverty, and achieving social justice". The main theme of the environment vision is to identify the mechanisms for encouraging investment in natural resources and ecological systems in order to support the economy and provide new job opportunities. In addition to these strategic visions and climate obligations, Egypt committed to obligatory reporting with various conventions and protocols (for example, ODS initiatives within the Montreal Protocol).

<sup>75</sup> Nile Delta and North Coast climate adaptation.

<sup>76</sup> UNDP (2020) Light Review. Note that Egypt consistently has slow project start-ups and has requested extensions for almost all GEF projects, reflecting factors specific to Egypt's governance and security issues, but also to the limited absorptive capacity of the various ministries. UNDP also has limited capacity. The project load has increased over the last few years with no increase in staff numbers. The Accelerator Lab, in particular, considered that staff do not have time to pick up innovations and new approaches that the Lab is working on.

UNDP has learned from previous experience in project design, and helped government partners to set more practical and realistic targets for NIM projects.<sup>77</sup> The continuity and technical competence of UNDP staff, and the repository of collective project experience, are invaluable assets in the partnership with the Government, private sector and local community partners.<sup>78</sup> UNDP has gained the confidence of a wide spectrum of partners in Egypt, including the private sector and various elements of civil society. This is especially evident in energy-efficiency, renewable energy, and protected area initiatives. UNDP has played a key role in the various GEF and GCF projects, helping government partners to coordinate and integrate project activities.<sup>79</sup> This was especially evident in the various protected area initiatives, which require bridging policy development, awareness-raising, capacity-building, and testing of innovations.<sup>80</sup> Several agencies and ministries noted UNDP willingness and ability to solve project implementation problems.<sup>81</sup>

Partners highly appreciate UNDP support through projects that directly address Egypt's obligations under various international conventions and protocols. These include, among others: enhancing capacity for implementing the Rio conventions, development of Egypt's Fourth National Communication, Egypt's first Biennial Update Report, the initiative under the Regional Centre for the Basel Convention (addressing transboundary movement of hazardous waste), and the Montreal Protocol. With a strong built-in capacity-development component, these projects and the climate change associated initiatives have contributed to better awareness and understanding of the climate vulnerability and adaptation needs of the country.

**Finding 11.** UNDP has contributed significantly to the expanded use of energy-efficient and renewable energy technologies in Egypt. Successes in this sector mainly reflect a sharp focus on simple technologies able to demonstrate cost-savings over time with significant reductions in GHG emissions. While some initiatives are being scaled up through the strong financing mechanisms available, for some others replication is at risk due to a lack of incentives or clarity of roles between local and central government.

UNDP has supported a strong portfolio of initiatives dealing with energy efficiency (lights and transportation systems) and the development of renewable energy (biogas and solar photovoltaic [PV] rooftop panels). Mostly centred on urban areas and tourist locations, these have been relatively successful and sustainable, as opposed to the 'Biogas' project in rural areas where uptake was challenged due to policy issues and equipment operation and maintenance costs.

The 'Rooftop PV' and 'Energy Efficient Lighting' projects have both been successful, with clear demonstration and uptake of PV systems and LED-type lighting with different applications and relatively accurate estimation of cost-savings over time, and with so-called 'market transformation' financing mechanisms in place to scale up the installation of these two technologies.<sup>82</sup> UNDP records show that the 'Rooftop PV' project has supported more than 10 megawatts of solar energy production,<sup>83</sup> equivalent to over nine tons

<sup>77</sup> Lesson learned from the 'Sustainable Transport' project, and evident in the 'Energy Efficient Lighting' project, as well as the 'Nile Delta climate adaptation' project.

<sup>78</sup> A corollary of this continuity of staff and long-standing partnerships with donors and implementing partners, is a perceived position of comfort and assumptions about relationships. One donor was frustrated that UNDP was making too many assumptions about their funding and what it could be used for. On the other hand, some private sector entities noted that UNDP had helped them access the Government of Egypt and build relationships there. UNDP leads Technical Groups, such as the Planet Group, which create bridges to various ministries, as well as other United Nations agencies like UNIDO, IFAD and FAO.

<sup>79</sup> Several implementing partners felt that GEF projects are too rigid in their project plans and budgets, and would have liked more flexibility and control themselves, but this reflects the GEF process more than UNDP management of GEF projects. Given this situation, almost all implementing partners appreciated the dedication and support of UNDP staff. This is especially important, as some government project managers continue to work intermittently on initiatives and rely on UNDP continuity.

<sup>80</sup> Source: Evaluation of Protected Areas Financing project.

<sup>81</sup> Bicycle sharing in the Sustainable Transport project and LED applications.

<sup>82</sup> "Market transformation" financial mechanisms include, for example, the PV project which relied on a defined feed-in tariff, and later net metering, and benefitted from increasing electricity prices as Government subsidies were withdrawn, acting as inducements.

<sup>83</sup> 126 projects in 15 governorates, in various sectors.

of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) equivalent per year avoided.<sup>84</sup> The development of installation and maintenance capacity has been an important part of the project, as well as the creation of a PV projects financial calculator indicating the payback period under different circumstances, which has been crucial to inform uptake by end-users.<sup>85</sup> Several private sector entities are now implementing PV projects without GEF project support, and making their own demand/supply deals (selling excess electricity to nearby businesses).<sup>86</sup> Technical capacity and new jobs related to the solar PV sector have also been developed.

Within the ‘Energy Efficient Lighting’ project, pilot projects demonstrated a significant improvement in energy savings from LED lighting systems, as cooling systems do not have to address heat from incandescent systems. As a result, the improved lighting systems reduced the total energy consumption of the cooling load in buildings by about 50 percent, in addition to the reduction in electricity consumption from the LED lights themselves.<sup>87</sup> The GHG emissions reduction target for this project was exceeded by 17 times, with an estimated installation of 100 million LED bulbs, the target of 22 million exceeded as an indirect impact of the 43 pilot projects. UNDP reported a cumulative reduction of 3,487 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent from these two initiatives up to 2019.<sup>88</sup>

The ‘Sustainable Transport’ project was also expected to contribute to the reduction of GHG emissions, but actual implementation of an urban bus system and a university bicycle-sharing scheme was constrained by COVID-19, so uptake remains unclear.<sup>89</sup> However, there have been references to various new urban bus schemes implemented by the private sector in and around Cairo, with GHG emission reductions expected and riders experiencing more comfortable buses, shorter commuting times, and reduced costs.<sup>90</sup> The project also enabled the Cairo Governorate to issue the first ever ban on street parking in the central business district, with full utilization of off-street parking facilities. However, the development of this project was challenged. A “park-and-ride” business model was developed and ready for implementation at the newly constructed Sheikh Zayed and 6<sup>th</sup> of October city bus terminals, but alternative corridors could not be implemented in different cities due to lack of interest of the respective local regulatory authorities, and interest in a tram system also waned. UNDP supported studies on freight transport and truck energy consumption, but the Ministry of Transport was not responsive to them. Conflicts between central and local governments contributed to inaction in some areas.

The ‘Biomass Energy’ project, which ended in 2020, succeeded in promoting household biogas units in rural Egypt. Until 2018, the project supported the implementation of over 1,500 units in 18 governorates, including household, community, and farm-level biodigesters, exceeding project targets. Cost-sharing was a key principle of the project, mostly in-kind and from end-users but also from the Government. There was 90 percent client satisfaction in the one to two years after commissioning the biodigester units. However, post-project monitoring found that some biodigester units needed maintenance after a few years (and some became non-functional), indicating the need for better operational and maintenance training for users and more effective ways to pay for maintenance service and materials. Service providers did respond

<sup>84</sup> In November 2020, Egypt PV was awarded the best project internationally in the “Low Carbon” category of British Energy Institute’ annual competition.

<sup>85</sup> Source: Project Manager, Industrial Modernization Centre.

<sup>86</sup> Two evaluation respondents noted that hotels and commercial blocks are making their own power producer agreements with neighbouring users, although the exact number is not known.

<sup>87</sup> The heat from regular lights needs to be dissipated by electricity-intensive air conditioning, and significant cost-savings can be achieved with LED lights. The Marriott Hotel, for example, recorded a 22 percent saving in their electricity bill, with a payback period of one-two years for their LED installations. The American Chamber of Commerce achieved payback in less than a year.

<sup>88</sup> UNDP (2019) ROAR.

<sup>89</sup> 100 bicycles and 12 terminal points were established in Fayoum (both early in 2020).

<sup>90</sup> These buses still use diesel, but will eventually be replaced with electric buses. It is difficult to measure the impact of the project due to dissipated data collection and the effects of COVID-19 on passenger numbers. However, as a result of the project, the Government is currently implementing a Bus Rapid Transit system with a dedicated bus lane on the ring road around Cairo, and is negotiating with a bus service provider introduced to Egypt through the UNDP-GEF project, to operate it.

to maintenance needs, but pandemic restrictions constrained this response, which is now picking up. MoEA signed a protocol with MSMEDA to develop a systematic policy framework and provision of financial incentives for bioenergy technologies, but more time is needed to implement this and determine its effectiveness in scaling up and replicating biogas technology.

**Finding 12.** Initiatives addressing waste management for hazardous materials and solid waste have had more difficulty to achieve successful outcomes than the energy initiatives, due to complicated technologies, concern for policy implications, and a disparate set of end-users. However, the ODS phase-out in some sectors in Egypt has shown promising results, reflecting Montreal Protocol obligations.

UNDP has been helping the Government of Egypt with the management of medical and e-waste, an initiative in which private sector engagement has been encouraged. While the initiative has been gaining momentum, the management of the medical waste component has been particularly challenging, with a shift in waste disposal approaches from incineration (proposed initially) to non-incineration technologies (autoclaving). The project met its target of handling about half of the medical waste produced, but this material still ends up in a landfill. A health care waste management policy was developed, however, and the project provided input to a draft Law on Waste Management which includes consideration of e-waste and hospital waste.<sup>91</sup> There have also been some successes in Gharbia, with the inauguration of medical waste sorting at five hospitals (which now treats up to five tons per day) and related training. The e-waste component, which is expected to be disassembled and recycled, was 67.5 percent achieved, with private companies trained and certified to handle e-waste, and significant uptake and management of e-waste at retail outlets. The project supported the establishment of a national committee for the management of e-waste, chaired by MoEA and with the participation of all key relevant parties, to direct national policy in this respect.

UNDP has had long and successful engagement with the National Ozone Office of the MoEA to address reductions in hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) as per Montreal Protocol requirements, and more recently reductions in hydrofluorocarbons as covered by the Kigali Agreement.<sup>92</sup> Through grants and technology assistance to system houses, seven large companies and 74 small foam companies, UNDP assisted the Government of Egypt in phasing out 615 Metric tons of HCFCs in 2020, to reach a total of 1,947 metric tons of reduction in ODS with various initiatives over the last five or six years. This has contributed to a 100 percent phase-out of 141b substances in Stage I (used in the production of rigid polyurethane and polyisocyanurate or phenolic insulation foams).<sup>93</sup> UNDP continues to support Egypt in Stage II (due to end in 2023). UNDP has also supported MoEA to successfully complete trials of UNDP-procured machines with technology that does not use ODS (for three very small users), thus creating alternatives to the use of HCFC foams. These initiatives have largely been successful due to the very specific technologies and targeted industries associated with Montreal Protocol requirements, and the long partnership between UNDP and the National Ozone Office. All approaches and processes applied in these projects have been developed and tested over the last 20 years.

**Finding 13.** UNDP support to the Government of Egypt has successfully advanced the integration of local social and economic priorities with biodiversity and protected area management, with a strong emphasis on tourism which provides the highest chance of revenue generation and sustainability of protected area management. Protected area financing and management systems have been defined, and government

<sup>91</sup> The establishment of the Waste Management Regulatory Authority in 2020 has helped considerably with policy and regulatory development and associated revenue streams.

<sup>92</sup> UNDP may be able to assist Egypt in accessing funding through the Kigali Cooling Efficiency Programme.

<sup>93</sup> UNDP Egypt (2020) ROAR.

revenue support for protected area management has increased in the last few years, supported by the amended Protected Area Law.

UNDP has been supporting four initiatives focused on biodiversity and protected area management, developed based on lessons learned from similar interventions over the last ten years.<sup>94</sup> These are starting to gain traction with local communities, despite the significant pause over the last year and a half due to COVID-19.<sup>95</sup>

The ‘Strengthening Protected Area Finance and Management Systems’ project has been one of the longest running (2009–2020), though full implementation of project outcomes was caught in pandemic restrictions.<sup>96</sup> This project addressed priority sites in eight protected areas, with initial efforts aimed at dealing with vandalism and the overexploitation of resources, rather than working on new management and finance systems. It also focused on the technical and institutional capacity of the MoEA National Conservation Sector (NCS) and protected area management teams, and testing of innovative financing approaches including the development of an online permit system. The terminal evaluation of the project found that the permit system (recently started) contributed to a 30 percent revenue increase.<sup>97</sup> The project encouraged ecotourism by transforming visitor facilities and infrastructure into world-class ecotourism sites.

The project also contributed to drafting of an amended version of the Protected Area Law, which was to be ratified by Parliament in 2020. In addition, the Constitution now explicitly includes the conservation of natural resources and protected areas. Progress has also been seen in a new policy to re-invest 25 percent of annual protected area revenues to support the development and management of the protected areas network. A comprehensive five-year Protected Area Financing Strategy was prepared and approved at national level, and about \$2.2 million in government cost-sharing was also earmarked, a 41 percent increase over nine years, with some funds invested in protected area infrastructure. UNDP also assisted in promoting sustainable development in four protected areas: Wadi Rayan, Wadi El Gemmal, Siwa and Qatrani.<sup>98</sup>

SGP effectively issued the first grants addressing biodiversity conservation, land degradation and climate change in July 2019. At the time of the midterm review there were apparently only limited results in target landscapes, but with strategies and threats identified, priority actions proposed and a series of indicators largely aligned with the project results framework outlined. Less clear was the alignment with local and national development plans and programmes. The midterm review noted that the target landscapes were geographically expansive, extending beyond governorates in some cases, creating institutional challenges.<sup>99</sup> This initiative has been significantly delayed and will probably need to extend beyond the 2021 closing date. However, consultations with some SGP recipients indicate significant satisfaction with the support, especially in terms of: income from solid waste management in the Fayoum area; organic and agricultural waste composting in Etsa district; soil levelling and irrigation canal repairs by the CSO Dandra; and the installation of LED lamps in Qena. All interventions were accompanied with institutional development in support of local sustainability.

The ‘Biodiversity and Tourism’ project was just getting started when the COVID-19 pandemic curtailed consultations and field visits. Project management adapted well, maintaining regular meetings with a

<sup>94</sup> Protected area financing, biodiversity and tourism are relatively new and only recently documented, and related SGP landscape initiatives.

<sup>95</sup> There is increased government funding going to protected area management, and NCS is in the process of hiring 250 more staff. Increased entrance fees have helped considerably in the past.

<sup>96</sup> Italian funding support was woven into this and the more recent ‘Biodiversity and Tourism’ project.

<sup>97</sup> UNDP Egypt (2020) Terminal Evaluation. Strengthening Protected Areas Finance and Management System.

<sup>98</sup> UNDP provided local communities living in and around protected areas (500 people, 400 of whom were women) with the skills needed to develop and implement a tourism itinerary focusing on marketing a unique, multiple, intangible experience (rather than just marketing handmade products).

<sup>99</sup> For example in the Upper Egypt and Delta regions and encompassing complex administrative jurisdictions such as Greater Cairo.



wide range of stakeholders, developing the framework for strategic environmental assessments of tourism development in different areas,<sup>100</sup> updating the criteria for 'Green Star Hotel' certification to include the use of renewable energy, supporting the increase in protected area entrance fees, and supporting a policy on single-use plastics. It is too early to expect tangible results under the circumstances, but as the lines between the 'Biodiversity and Tourism' project and other or previous protected area financing initiatives are blurred in the reporting, accountability for expected performance is unclear.

**Finding 14.** The sustainability of UNDP project outcomes and financing of new initiatives remains a major challenge, and results have been mixed. While there has been good uptake of energy-efficiency and renewable energy projects, this has been less obvious in local protected area management initiatives. Many initiatives in the portfolio could benefit from past lessons and experiences, to help with spin-offs and scale-up. Several projects were caught up in COVID-19 pandemic restrictions at the point of testing, implementation or sustainability.

Most of the initiatives under Outcome 2 are funded through GEF and GCF, with cost-sharing from the Government of Egypt. This funding has been critical to design and test innovations and solutions, but there continues to be an expectation of future vertical and donor funds to sustain and scale up initiatives. For example, UNDP has tried to maintain project management of the 'Energy Efficient Lighting' project with government funds until a new GEF project is approved. The project itself is self-financing, bringing cost-savings relatively quickly as a result of market transformation, standards and labelling guidance, leading to replication and uptake, but the related government institutional structures were not being financed. This raises the question of the extent to which government structures are required to maintain innovations in a marketplace that can already see short-term benefits.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, in the 'Rooftop PV' project, payback periods for investments were demonstrated to be quite short,<sup>102</sup> and the private sector started to make their own investments and energy demand-supply deals without the need for government intervention.<sup>103</sup>

Implementation of the 'Sustainable Transport' project was caught in national COVID-19 restrictions, and was not able to develop compelling case studies to encourage the use of public transport or bicycle sharing schemes. As such, uptake and replication is not yet evident, except where private bus operators filled the transport breach.<sup>104</sup> With the 'Bioenergy' project, initial sustainability challenges related to financing mechanisms constrained uptake, and biodigesters were therefore not properly maintained and increasingly abandoned, discouraging potential users. However, the Bioenergy Association for Sustainable Development was established to create institutional sustainability and support standards for the design and construction of biodigester units and operation guidelines for biogas systems developed by the Government. Initially, the lack of end-user subsidies and micro-credit, for both farmers and service providers, posed a serious risk to the financial sustainability of project results, but a micro-credit line has been established through a protocol signed by MSMEDA.

<sup>100</sup> The Red Sea area, north-western Mediterranean and desert areas. The framework explored legal gaps and shortcomings.

<sup>101</sup> There are several examples of market conditions changing to support the uptake and sustainability of innovations: the local production of less expensive LEDs and solar panels (the latter now 30 percent cheaper than a few years ago), less expensive ways to make foam, private sector incursion into urban transport schemes. These are not shackled to government control and policies. Apparently, the notion of tax credits to spur public and business uptake of innovations is being discussed, but this is a very slow process, according to some government project managers.

<sup>102</sup> In under five years there have been many clear examples, and calculators to support investments of different sizes.

<sup>103</sup> Private sector actors throughout Egypt, including factories, hotels, and commercial buildings, have installed solar PV systems. The private sector had access to financing from various banks, which had been trained in renewable energy sector loans, and externalities improved, such as increased electricity prices and less expensive solar PV equipment, as well as the ability to make independent supply/demand contracts. There is also scope for independent power producers to make their own arrangements to supply adjacent businesses.

<sup>104</sup> For example, the Government is currently negotiating with a Bus Rapid Transit service provider for the Cairo area and if this is implemented it would reflect its uptake and sustainability.

The sustainability of the 'E-Waste and Medical Waste' project is at risk. The latest review indicated that there is a need for a clear exit strategy so that mechanisms and structures are created during the project implementation period to guarantee some sustainability.<sup>105</sup> There is also a need to raise awareness and augment the economic and social aspects of recyclers. A policy paper was submitted to MoEA and MoHP to encourage private sector investments in medical waste treatment, but its potential traction is still unclear due to the insufficient time frame for substantive testing of pilot centres and communication of the results and lessons.<sup>106</sup> There was also a significant shift from incineration technologies to alternative environment-friendly approaches, which has shortened the time to demonstrate viability and potential scale-up and replication. UNDP is aware of this and working on increased private sector uptake. E-waste initiatives were less complicated, and a voucher system at the point of collection and sale was an elegant and effective solution that will help with sustainability.<sup>107</sup> Building on the outputs of UNDP GEF project, the World Bank has developed a new GEF project to address the management of e-waste and medical waste.

The current climate change adaptation initiative in the Nile Delta and North Coast is promising. The previous project allowed experimentation with different designs and the customization of optimal approaches at specific locations. These systems may work over time, as a one-metre accretion of sand dunes is now evident after a few years. These structures will require constant monitoring and maintenance by the Shore Protection Authority, but the initial cost of the dune systems is only about 10 percent of the cost of hard structures, and accordingly, maintenance is less expensive. The livelihoods and natural resources saved are likely to be worth much more than the cost of the dune systems.<sup>108</sup>

The protected area and biodiversity initiatives supported by UNDP have considerable geographic scope and momentum, founded on the experience of initiatives over the previous ten years, and relying heavily on tourism revenues and the development of local livelihoods. However, these are quite susceptible to externalities such as the impact of COVID-19 on global tourism. While there is an expectation that global tourism will rebound in the coming years, the current situation has challenged the institutional structures and operations required to more effectively plan and implement protected area management and biodiversity conservation.<sup>109</sup> The terminal evaluation of the 'Protected Areas' project recommended legislation to declare the NCS within the MoEA an autonomous general authority, to increase institutional effectiveness for protected areas and biodiversity conservation, as the institutional structures, processes, and clear funding required for planning are not yet in place.<sup>110</sup> With regard to livelihoods, more work is needed on business planning and the demonstration of net benefits, to move from anecdotal information to empirical data. While local livelihood revenues have increased at some project locations, these still need to be examined for time and opportunity costs and net benefits, to encourage further uptake and replication. There is also an obvious requirement for project-funded protected area infrastructure to be kept up and maintained, which is not happening in all cases.<sup>111</sup>

<sup>105</sup> UNDP (2018) Midterm Evaluation Management of E-Waste and Medical Wastes.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> E-waste is left, and new electronic products are sold at a discount.

<sup>108</sup> The associated small livelihoods projects, receiving both financial and technical support (for 1.5 years), in cooperation with MoSS, have been focused on local entrepreneurship, such as drainage schemes and greenhouses, but apparently the sustainability of these initiatives has not been discussed.

<sup>109</sup> One respondent noted that the Government of Egypt is "very slow to change policies, and that politicians and top officials change plans all the time, which impacts on uptake and sustainability of initiatives" (for biodiversity and tourism). Furthermore, there have been efforts to create visibility for projects and secure additional funding: the 'Biodiversity and Tourism' project has emphasized events and visibility, and secured an additional \$2.5 million, but funding *per se* does not secure sustainability.

<sup>110</sup> UNDP (2020) Terminal Evaluation; Strengthening Protected Areas Finance and Management System. The recently introduced e-permit system, developed by the project, will certainly help channel tourism revenues directly into protected area development and management.

<sup>111</sup> In Wadi Gemmel, the community would like ownership, which currently rests with Government.

SGP also supports community-based conservation activities, but the two-year delay in approving grants can lead to rushed project closures, which compromise exit strategies and sustainability prospects, especially for integrating the landscape approach into local development plans and simplifying the multi-stakeholder governance structures envisaged for each landscape.<sup>112</sup> There is also a concern of insufficient time to test and adjust approaches.<sup>113</sup> For example, one project is struggling to calculate revenue flows related to hotel waste management near a protected area, and there appear to be too many entities involved in the waste collection and recycling process. SGP grants that have involved the installation and maintenance of solar PV panels and LED lighting in Qena have been much more straightforward, due to the obvious cost benefits and the external forces driving the market.<sup>114</sup>

Overall, the portfolio shows that UNDP has put a lot of emphasis on market transformation approaches in its various climate change, protected area and waste management initiatives, some of which are quite effective and sustainable. However, the lessons learned from successes and challenges with the market transformation approach are not well systematized or captured, and can only be extracted from specific project files or individual team members. As a result, experiences and lessons which could help spin-offs and scale-up, while in the collective memory of UNDP staff, are not evident to others (current or future UNDP, government or private sector staff etc.), and may not be properly used to address uptake and sustainability in future project design.

## 2.3 Outcome 3: Social Inclusion and Women's Empowerment

**CPD Outcome 3.** By 2022, women are fully contributing to Egypt's development and all women and girls' rights set forth in the Constitution, are respected, protected and responded to with no discrimination

### **Related Outputs:**

**Output 3.1** Support implementation of the national women's strategy, 2030, and enhance the capacity of NCW

**Output 3.2** Support the implementation of women economic pillar under the National Women Strategy

**Output 3.3** System to combat violence against women strengthened

UNDP has been engaged in a wide range of activities and efforts during the current CPD, which focus on the inclusion of women and improvement of their rights and living conditions and aim to highlight the problems for women in Egypt. UNDP was engaged in supporting government and institutional efforts centred on the National Women's Empowerment Strategy 2030 (NWES), specifically the economic empowerment pillar. The NWES included elements of combating GBV, addressing violence against women (especially women

<sup>112</sup> The recent global SGP evaluation noted that Egypt is challenged to address landscapes with millions of people; the focus has therefore been on selecting examples of interventions that might be replicated within specific landscapes.

<sup>113</sup> For example, one SGP project discovered that biogas applications for small farmers are not economically viable, and the focus shifted to larger farming operations to facilitate uptake. This moves away from helping marginalized communities. Furthermore, natural gas was introduced into one community, undermining interest in biogas.

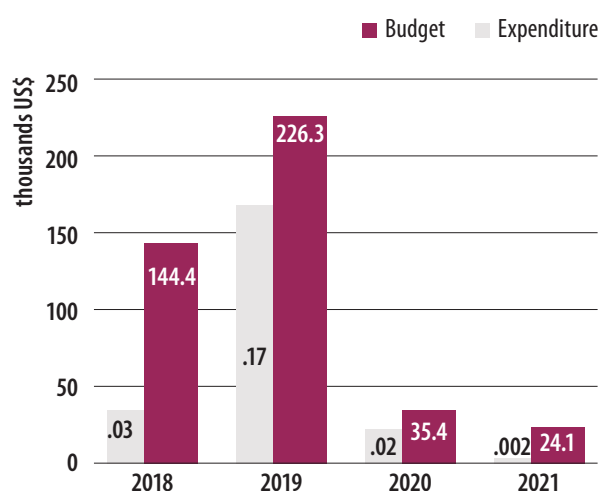
<sup>114</sup> This raises the question of why a grant is needed to spur activities that have quick and obvious benefits. Despite SGP challenges, Egypt was one of the first countries to establish a link between the SGP and full scale projects on a national level; considered a model for SGP globally.



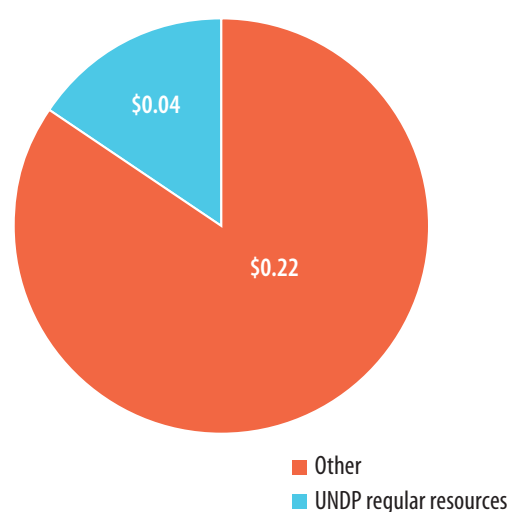
with disabilities), supporting economic empowerment, building the capacity of women, and raising awareness on issues related to women and gender equality. A lot of activities integrating a gender dimension were carried out, covering a broad range of topics and problems, through interventions across Outcome 1 and Outcome 3 (to a lesser extent due to funding shortages). A review of project data by Gender Marker shows that, out of 127 CPD projects, 25 are GEN0, 24 GEN1, 59 GEN 2 and nine GEN3.

A total of three projects were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$400,000 and expenditure of \$200,000; a 52 percent execution rate.<sup>115</sup> One project (37 percent of expenditure) was under NIM, and two (63 percent of expenditure) were directly implemented by UNDP.

**FIGURE 8.** Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of Social Inclusion and Women's Empowerment (2018–2021)



**FIGURE 9.** Expenditure by fund category for Social Inclusion and Women's Empowerment (2018–2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS as of 3 October 2021

**Finding 15.** The UNDP CPD design included an overambitious framework for actions under Outcome 3. Subsequent funding shortages and difficulties in positioning itself as a leader in some thematic areas (e.g. FGM and GBV) resulted in the suboptimal engagement of UNDP within this outcome, and the subsequent failure to achieve envisaged results.

The UNDP CPD included an ambitious scope of interventions in support of GEWE, presented under Outcome 3, although the bulk of activities supporting GEWE were already integrated under Outcome 1. The ambitious planning of UNDP was premised on the potential extension of an EU-funded project to combat FGM and GBV, which would have created a healthy core of funding to extend UNDP efforts in these areas from the previous CPD. However, a range of factors beyond the control of UNDP created indefinite delays to launch such programmes, including delays in obtaining the necessary clearance and approval from the Government, bureaucratic obstacles for approval of the financing agreement with the EU Delegation, and the impact of COVID-19. The failure to get approval for the programme affected UNDP resource mobilization, resulting in serious underfunding of the outcome and only scattered small interventions. Furthermore, the UNDP window of opportunity for leadership in this area was diminished by the stronger advocacy of

<sup>115</sup> The financial resources correspond to the period 2018 to 05 October 2021.

‘thematic’ agencies, resulting in them taking the lead in this area. UNDP needs to coordinate better with MoIC for acceleration of the necessary clearance processes.

This evaluation found that UNDP did not take proactive steps to work with national stakeholders on broad GEWE issues planned under Outcome 1, beyond its work on gender mainstreaming with existing sectoral partners. Stakeholder interviews corroborated this, showing somewhat conflicting views on the UNDP role in GEWE. Some government and development partners saw the potential for UNDP to add value to the area, while a number of other actors noted that smaller United Nations agencies with a dedicated GEWE mandate should lead such efforts, considering their strong technical expertise and experience in the country.

UNDP was involved in a joint programme with other United Nations agencies on GEWE issues, but its role was somewhat marginal, focusing mostly on coordination and linking with different actors. There was a general perception among key informants that UNDP should have done more consultation and analysis before embarking on a standalone GEWE outcome, to make sure of the added value it could bring. UNDP tried to fill this void by expanding Outcome 3 outputs to cover social inclusion development solutions, but these efforts were not fully integrated into the theory of change of the CPD and did not organically link to Outcome 1.

**Finding 16.** UNDP work on GEWE mainly focused on the socioeconomic empowerment of women. Such support has had positive results on enhancing women’s access to business financing.

UNDP activities in the field of women’s rights and gender are focused on the clear overarching goal of the standalone gender pillar in the CPD, and a review of the wider UNDP portfolio shows that a number of strategic interventions have had a strong GEWE focus. For instance, UNDP cooperation with MSMEDA resulted in positive gender mainstreaming efforts. UNDP reinforced its work with MSMEDA to achieve its gender strategy goals in general, including: a) increasing access to MSMEDA services for women entrepreneurs (financial, non-financial and access to jobs); b) ensuring representation of the interests of women and men entrepreneurs at all governance levels; and c) ensuring an organizational culture conducive to women’s empowerment, internally and externally. In line with these efforts, UNDP supported MSMEDA to provide direct financial services to 43,492 women,<sup>116</sup> and non-financial services through online training to 185 women, one of the most tangible outcomes of the programme. As noted in Finding 2, UNDP support was also instrumental in helping MSMEDA to achieve the Gender Seal Award for public institutions. Stakeholder interviews with MSMEDA confirmed that UNDP support was important to raise awareness and catalyse changes in the way that they apply a gender lens to entrepreneurship and socioeconomic development, though challenges persist. Interviewees noted persisting gender norms and traditions which are obstacles for women to engage in business activities. Though some improvements were voiced overall, these could not be directly correlated to UNDP support. Another challenge discussed in Finding 2 links to the continued focus of MSMEDA on maintaining gender standards after the expiry of UNDP support, as most of the practices introduced need time to take root and become engrained in institutional culture, which is still not the case.

**Finding 17.** UNDP GEWE efforts, outside of entrepreneurship support to women, lacked consistent and sufficient funding, leading to small-scale, fragmented, one-off activities without strong catalytic potential.

UNDP set a rather ambitious results framework in the CPD to work on GEWE across all programme portfolios. However, it encountered difficulties in securing funding for the planned activities, in particular on FGM, leading to a very scattered, underfunded and abandoned portfolio, without a clear strategy or resourcing

<sup>116</sup> UNDP (2020) ROAR, p23.

plan. A number of sector interventions included GEWE dimensions, which cannot be clearly placed under this outcome but cumulatively contribute to GEWE as a whole. Some relevant interventions and results are presented below.

An important line of work for the country office was to support implementation of the women's economic empowerment pillar of the NWES. In response to strategic priorities, UNDP supported TK&K, among Egypt's largest social protection schemes, implemented by MoSS and covering 3.6 million families. Through this support, 585 women rural leaders (*raedat refiyat*) and 200 TK&K beneficiaries (80 percent women) in 11 governorates were reached. The 585 *raedat refiyat*, including 20 consulted on the messages prior to training and 200 pre-testing beneficiaries, received training on the 'Waa' awareness-raising and advocacy programme. A further 600 *raedat refiyat* and 100 MoSS staff were trained on specific Waa issues.

In terms of the social inclusion of women, the country office 'Women's Empowerment' pillar broadened to include 'Social Inclusion' after the February 2020 midterm CPD review. UNDP Egypt worked on addressing inequalities through three prominent initiatives: 1) a study on violence against women with disabilities; 2) measures to address the intersectionality between GBV and HIV in Egypt; and 3) a socioeconomic assessment for North Sinai highlighting the underlying issues facing this particularly disenfranchised governorate. In the case of the second initiative, to address the structural issues experienced by women the country office managed to reach out to female sex workers and women who inject drugs and increase their uptake of the HIV prevention package and access to HIV testing services to know their status. In addition, UNDP worked on the availability of health services for key populations at disproportionately high risk of HIV infection.

Interventions under the economic development stream focused on supporting implementation of the women's economic empowerment pillar of the NWES. In terms of concrete activities, in 2018 UNDP initiated a first discussion among key stakeholders on the policy changes needed to support women's financial inclusion. Furthermore, UNDP implemented the 'Women Drivers of Economic Growth' project, which aims to unlock women's potential and strengthen their contribution to Egypt's economy by: enhancing the responsiveness of banks and non-banking financial intermediaries to women's financial needs, strengthening the financial capacity of women through financial education and digital literacy, and expanding the access of women to markets through gender-sensitive trade and public procurement policies.

Some notable, albeit fragmented, results were found in combatting GBV and violence against women. In 2020, a case study on violence against women with disabilities was conducted in collaboration with the National Council for Women, the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics, MoSS, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Women. The study assessed a stratified, systematic random sample of 6,000 eligible women from TK&K registered beneficiaries. The study was finalized but is awaiting final review and publication due to delays caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic. However, it is expected to influence both policymakers and public opinion in relation to safeguarding women with disabilities, as well as increasing UNDP visibility and possibly helping to strengthen UNDP positioning in this line of work.

Investments and efforts started and achieved in 2018 and 2019 were halted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but UNDP managed to maintain relevant channels of communication with Egyptian authorities and focus on relevant gender-related issues, including GBV and the inclusion of women.

## 2.4 Overall programme implementation

**Finding 18.** UNDP is strongly positioned as a reliable provider of services to support the Government's development efforts, as reflected in the steady government financing of UNDP initiatives. UNDP engagement is valued for its efficient procurement and service provision, the expansion of services in local development and employment generation, integration of the SDGs into government plans, and extensive policy and institutional development support in the environment and climate change sectors.

UNDP has maintained its strategic positioning as a reliable partner of the Government across the entire portfolio, which is also reflected in its long-term partnerships and projects, and steady government funding. Stakeholder respondents pointed out that these long-term partnerships have been valuable for government institutions, enabling them to receive stable ongoing support for their reforms across different areas. Particularly valued is the UNDP focus on the development of institutional capacity at central and governorate levels, and its commitment to innovation and the expansion of services involving job creation, livelihoods and gender mainstreaming. In addition, the extensive experience of UNDP with policy and institutional development to strengthen innovations in environmental and climate change management, with increasing emphasis on market-based approaches, and its successful brokering of vertical funds (GEF and GCF) to advance these initiatives, is seen by stakeholders as highly relevant and strategic.<sup>117</sup> The role of UNDP in convening and coordination for the integration of the SDGs into government plans and programmes has further consolidated its positioning in the country *vis-a-vis* other development partners. Equally important in cementing UNDP strategic positioning has been its contribution to job creation, guided by principles of inclusivity, which have resulted in improved wellbeing, opportunities, social justice and equality for marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The evaluation found that the UNDP value proposition was important from two perspectives. Firstly, UNDP has the ability to perform faster and with fewer bureaucratic procedures than the Government (e.g. in procurement, outsourcing experts), which facilitates the timely delivery of needed assistance. Secondly, the United Nations identity is an important added value, as it helps to underpin reforms while also connecting national institutions with other donors and national and international actors. In negotiations with donors and networking with other national and international actors and fora, cooperation with UNDP is considered important, bringing significant funding to necessary reforms and facilitating Egypt's regional and South-South cooperation ambitions.

The speed of UNDP procedures has been seen as a crucial added value for the Government, as stakeholders note that government procedures are generally cumbersome and too bureaucratic, often making it hard to procure timely services or assistance for core reform areas. For that reason, government stakeholders emphasized, UNDP is seen as a preferred partner who can utilize government funds for reforms that require a fast response in a more efficient and effective manner, with quality outsourced expertise and services. A large proportion of UNDP projects are implemented through NIM, whereby initiatives are led and managed by national counterparts. This creates a good basis for national institutions to ensure that interventions are relevant, but also creates challenges for UNDP to take a more proactive role in the planning, implementation and follow-up of interventions and ensure full transparency and accountability in implementation. One limitation noted by key informants was that some UNDP processes are long and do not have clear instructions, which can affect the efficiency of these processes.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>117</sup> GEF-funded projects have been especially successful in advancing energy efficiency and renewable energy uptake by the private sector throughout Egypt, with the business cases for these readily demonstrated.

<sup>118</sup> Completion of the necessary paperwork and documentation can take a long time and be cumbersome.

Interviews with government representatives revealed that the NIM arrangement is appreciated by institutions to obtain the services and expertise they need. At times, individual ministries deliver multiple projects, supported by the United Nations and IFIs, creating workload issues.<sup>119</sup> In these situations, UNDP has been consistently supportive of implementing partners to help coordinate and manage the various government, civil society and private sector stakeholders involved in parallel projects. In general, however, with the NIM arrangement there is little engagement of UNDP teams, as they focus on administrative management and the procurement of goods and services and expertise, rather than providing in-house thematic expertise.<sup>120</sup> These features of UNDP status and staff experience and capabilities have helped UNDP to maintain its strategic position and ensure that it remains a partner of choice for the government. However, some UNDP interlocutors see limitations in such an approach, with a desire for more thematic engagement beyond the administrative role, especially in sectors where capacities are limited such as good governance, public administration reform or public finance management. UNDP internal capacity to do so is also limited, so UNDP outsources thematic expertise when needed, which in turn further limits their deeper engagement.

**Finding 19.** Limitations in the results frameworks have prevented linkages between specific projects and development outcomes in the CPD, and hindered potential synergy between projects or outcomes. There are ongoing challenges in defining and monitoring realistic performance indicators, and regularly reporting on progress and performance. These contribute to weaknesses in UNDP M&E processes.

Government funding and the NIM modality provide opportunities for government partners to engage proactively with UNDP in project design, which should help them to clarify expectations and strengthen ownership of project results. However, the document review and interviews show that results frameworks suffer from weak or overambitious indicators, insufficient baseline data, and unclear or superficial monitoring procedures. The implementation of NIM projects is mainly steered by government staff, with little engagement of UNDP teams who mainly focus on administrative management and sourcing external expertise. Once in place, UNDP-contracted experts work with government institutions with little or no oversight or input from UNDP, so linkages between projects and UNDP can be lost. Furthermore, most projects focus on horizontal institutional support, so it is hard (even for government stakeholders) to pin down the exact areas of UNDP support and contribution, especially for social and governance areas. While this approach does not affect government ownership of initiatives *per se*, it has prevented the timely, targeted and full-scale monitoring of initiatives, obscuring their actual achievements and contributions to outcome-level change.<sup>121</sup>

There is also a lack of connectivity, synergy and coherence between outcome portfolios within UNDP. For instance, governance projects and community-based initiatives in protected areas often have overlaps or complementarities, in terms of the thematic engagement of target groups or beneficiaries or underlying principles and rights issues, but with different project officers, timeframes and locations. This creates a silo approach with limited or no opportunities to exchange or build synergy. While the intervention logic of individual projects is straightforward and clear, horizontal institution-building, which can take place within several different initiatives, is not so visible or not always described as such in project documents. The desire of UNDP to invest more deeply in these areas is further hindered by the fact that the national

<sup>119</sup> For example MoEA, which has a large project load and a constant need to coordinate with other agencies and ministries. UNDP has helped to make linkages between institutions and initiatives, particularly for protected area management and climate mitigation actions.

<sup>120</sup> There is, however, more technical input from UNDP staff evident with climate change and protected area initiatives, not just procurement.

<sup>121</sup> In addition to several Outcome 1 projects, there are several examples from Outcome 2: lack of understanding of the impact of coastal protection on livelihoods; and lack of data on the impact of improved protected area management on livelihoods and environmental quality.

institutions conducting implementation also work in silos, as the mandates and revenue flows of different government institutions drive agendas, and projects rarely work across ministries or build government coherence on key themes.<sup>122</sup> This lack of connectivity, between UNDP initiatives and between the mandates of ministries and government agencies, has limited the potential for cross-sectoral learning and exchange of experiences, which might otherwise have created development synergies. It has been somewhat easier to link environment and climate change NIM initiatives to UNDP, where it is heavily involved in the design phase, serves on project steering committees, and leads technical groups that include the Government, donors and IFIs.<sup>123</sup>

This reflects difficulties in monitoring UNDP achievements and contributions to reform processes and innovations within its portfolio. The evaluation found that not all projects are subject to UNDP M&E procedures or vertical fund M&E requirements, which creates difficulties to organize consistent monitoring standards and processes across interventions.<sup>124</sup> Stakeholder interviews reveal that RBM and M&E training events are not systematically organized with partner government institutions, and there is little technical support to ensure that standards are applied. Nonetheless, UNDP has been advocating for RBM practices within the Government, reinforced by the 2019 UNDP IEO global National Evaluation Capacity conference on the theme “Leaving no one behind: Evaluation for 2030”, which was held in Hurghada, Egypt. Organized in close partnership with MPED, the conference aimed to raise awareness and strengthen the national evaluation architecture and competencies, in line with the Decree by which MPED is mandated to track economic development.

Government representatives revealed that they conduct their own monitoring, which they feel is sufficient for them to make decisions on projects and prioritize adjustments. One hindrance to this is that UNDP provides horizontal sector support, which by definition is not always clear and systematic, as much of the support to procure expertise or services for arising issues is provided on request. This approach has limitations, which some UNDP respondents considered could be overcome with country office thematic expertise and capacity to engage beyond an administrative role, and facilitate learning, knowledge sharing and course correction through more integrated M&E processes. However, UNDP in-house sector or thematic expertise is underdeveloped, particularly in the governance area, and it relies on outsourcing such expertise at the request of the Government. UNDP M&E processes could have benefited from greater empowerment of teams to engage more closely with project implementers to request consistent data to better understand their progress and contributions. Instead, there is no systematic overview of project progress towards the achievement of results or contributions to the outcomes set out in the CPD, as evident during the evaluation.

In other cases, especially in the energy and environment area, most M&E activities adhere to GEF requirements, but there are still challenges in capturing measurable results which have a knock-on effect in the reporting of project progress.<sup>125</sup> This is compounded by the lack of timeframes for the achievement of perfor-

<sup>122</sup> Several evaluation respondents noted the silo issue. For example, the ministries of environment and transport don't necessarily see urban transport issues the same way, or the ministries of environment and agriculture have widely separate mandates.

<sup>123</sup> Almost all evaluation respondents were clear that Outcome 2 projects were supported by UNDP

<sup>124</sup> GEF and GCF projects, in Outcome 2, undergo both midterm reviews and terminal evaluations. It is often these processes that highlight the M&E challenges faced by implementing partners. For example, with protected area financing, there was no mechanism to monitor revenue increases attributable to the project. There was a similar problem with measuring the impact of uptake of LED lamps – assumptions had to be made to estimate GHG emissions reductions.

<sup>125</sup> Several projects are not well documented within the UNDP country office system. COVID-19 may be a factor in some cases, but in any case, many projects lack progress reports including: the various HCFC projects, the 'e-waste/medical waste' project (has not been documented since 2019), the 'Minya solid waste' project (albeit, only operational for 1.5 years), the 'Nile Delta/North Coast climate adaptation' project (for over three years), the 'Rio' project, 'Biodiversity and Tourism' project (with many aspirational “will” statements), and SGP project. On the other hand, individual project beneficiaries, such as hotels using LED or roof-top solar panels, could be very specific about the net benefits, as evident in their electricity bills.



mance indicators,<sup>126</sup> lack of targets and results indicators,<sup>127</sup> lack of alignment of project and outcome-level indicators,<sup>128</sup> and overambitious and unrealistic targets.<sup>129</sup> External evaluations also pointed to limitations in project results frameworks, as well as the need for adjustments to match activities with the capacity of local NGO partners and the actual circumstances in target landscapes, monitoring of co-financing contributions including from partners not identified at the start of the project, and facilitating synergy with other initiatives.<sup>130</sup>

As regards decentralized evaluations, the UNDP quality assurance rating of external evaluations of UNDP projects shows that, of the 11 conducted during the current CPD, two were satisfactory, six moderately satisfactory and three moderately unsatisfactory. At the time of the evaluation, efforts were being made to improve the quality of evaluation reports, in cooperation with the regional office.

**Finding 20.** UNDP support across all portfolios has maintained a strong focus on inclusion, including governance and social issues that disproportionately affect women, associated capacity-building for marginalized communities and women, and the development of livelihoods to enable marginalized communities to engage more fully with NRM and climate adaptation and mitigation.

Across all thematic areas and portfolios, UNDP has succeeded in advocating for mainstreaming and boosting inclusivity, equity and equality principles. The bulk of activities and related outputs have focused on increasing efficiency and access to government services, both for citizens (public administration, social and health services) and entrepreneurs and businesses (government grant schemes, training and entrepreneurship support), for the benefit of the most marginalized and excluded groups. This evaluation found ample evidence of ways in which the specific needs of men and women, and vulnerabilities (of people with disabilities, living with HIV or TB, women victims of GBV, etc.) have been addressed, described in detail in this report.

For instance, UNDP supported training of NCS, where half of the management staff are women, and the development of the protected area payment for ecosystem services approach will further enable the inclusion of women, communities, indigenous and vulnerable groups in the economy of protected areas. In some areas, women have made up 80 percent of participants in community-based NRM training, and livelihood incomes have increased in the last few years.<sup>131</sup> Other initiatives have focused on female university students (the bicycle sharing scheme at Fayoum University), or involved women in training courses associated with medical waste management (especially as women predominate in the health care sector). UNDP has also supported the training of women in HCFC reduction and job creation in solar technology. Women have been significant beneficiaries of the 'North Coast Climate Adaptation' project, involved in building dykes. A significant factor may be the high numbers of women in government portfolios related to the environment, which has helped to ensure that inclusivity is a serious consideration during project design.

<sup>126</sup> The 'Sustainable Transport' project needed a revision of the project logframe target to avoid complicated policy and regulatory changes, the construction of transport infrastructure that no longer suited the circumstances, and challenges in calculating CO2 emissions reductions due to the project. While some risks were correctly identified, mitigation took long. The Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Housing and MoEA all had various project roles which complicated accountability for performance.

<sup>127</sup> For example, the 'Biogas' project.

<sup>128</sup> The 'Green Sharm el Sheikh' project had issues with discrepancies in protected area indicators, especially in aligning project activities with the total area of the protected areas and the calculation of total energy savings and renewable energy capacity (as a key objective of the project, and therefore needing to be clear and realistic).

<sup>129</sup> For example, the target of reducing plastic waste by 90 percent. Source comparison of the Project Identification Form (PIF) to review of the Project Preparation Grant (PPG) documents.

<sup>130</sup> The midterm evaluation of the Small Grants Programme.

<sup>131</sup> From the 'Protected Area Financing' project documentation, although anecdotal without empirical data. One example is the training of 350 Bedouin women in the St. Catherine protected area through the 'Improving Employment and Income Opportunities' programme, which also included access to financing.



UNDP has been exemplary in setting up and supporting stakeholder and community consultations for almost all projects, with due attention to the views of beneficiary communities with regard to project sites and interventions. In a recent review of UNDP gender-focused initiatives, it was noted that UNDP staff have been diligent in applying a gender lens to all projects. Some of the challenges have been: applying a gender lens to the strictly technical aspects of projects; addressing the lack of gender awareness in various ministries; and ensuring that socioeconomic elements are included in as many projects as possible. While there has been a good level of consultation and training related to job retention and alternative livelihoods, one respondent noted that more capacity-building is needed for all stakeholders in the development of protected area management plans. Interviews with United Nations agencies also noted the wealth of UNDP experience in integrating women and environment activities, providing UNDP with a niche compared to other United Nations agencies and development actors in the country.

**Finding 21.** Project externalities and government bureaucracy have caused frequent delays in all outcome areas. Despite this, by clarifying respective roles and processes and capitalizing on the long collective experience with key ministries, both the Government and UNDP have guided implementing partners to mitigate delays and get initiatives back on track, with some meeting or even exceeding delivery targets.

Since the Arab Spring, some project delivery delays have stemmed from project externalities and government bureaucracy and capacity issues, including cumbersome security clearance requirements, slow site selection and approval processes, issues with the accommodation of projects within busy ministries, inter-ministerial coordination, and the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>132</sup> As a result, some projects have run for up to ten years.<sup>133</sup>

Across all thematic areas, one of the most consistent bottlenecks for the efficiency of projects is delays in security clearances or approvals for projects, which are beyond the control of UNDP, or in many cases partner government institutions. The document review and stakeholder interviews pointed out that security clearance and approval delays are inevitable due to cumbersome bureaucratic procedures. At the same time, project partners emphasize attempts to mitigate such delays with more realistic planning, setting achievable targets and helping to develop and manage project partnerships.<sup>134</sup> They also cite the application of efficient UNDP procurement and recruitment procedures, which generally save time and ensure the fast delivery of services compared to government processes. Slow government procedures, including security clearance and approvals, are considered an important reason to partner with UNDP for long term projects (some lasting for decades), as once projects are cleared and approved, they generally run smoothly and without major difficulties. Such measures have helped projects affected by externalities and start-up issues to accelerate and meet or exceed delivery targets.<sup>135</sup>

84 percent of Outcome 2 projects in the current programme are (or were) delivered through NIM, with just four ministries or agencies carrying the project delivery load.<sup>136</sup> There is a consistent pattern of slow project starts, and requests for extension of ongoing GEF projects.<sup>137</sup> This reflects some project externalities, such as COVID-19 restrictions, security clearance and environmental approval processes, or government

<sup>132</sup> Discussed in more detail in Finding 22.

<sup>133</sup> For example, ten years for the first phase of climate adaptation in the Nile Delta and 11 years for protected area financing. Both projects, however, resulted in innovations that informed the second phases.

<sup>134</sup> This has been required with some Outcome 2 projects that are implemented by one ministry, but involve two or three others, with the need for good clarification of roles and expectations. UNDP helped with this.

<sup>135</sup> For example, the SGP, the current phase of Nile Delta climate adaptation, and the solar PV project all had slow starts, some due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but have accelerated in the last year. The solar PV project has exceeded its original targets, and the Nile Delta project is expected to achieve its target for shoreline protection early.

<sup>136</sup> MoEA has been responsible for delivering 60 percent of all projects.

<sup>137</sup> The 'energy efficient lighting' project, Nile Delta climate adaptation, protected area financing, the 'Biogas' project, the 'Sustainable Transport' project, and HCFC phase-out in the foam sector.

deliberations for engaging with the private sector. It also reflects the process of accommodating projects within specific ministries, to select project managers, identify mechanisms for managing partnerships,<sup>138</sup> clarify the respective roles of UNDP and ministries with regards to procurement, M&E and reporting, and understand the policy implications of new initiatives.<sup>139</sup> The extensive GEF project experience and continuity of UNDP staff have supported UNDP efforts in clarifying project objectives, roles and expectations, and getting projects mobilized and on track.

There are several examples of project delivery challenges, and eventual “catch-up” on outcomes. In the ‘Sustainable Transport’ project, procurement was hampered by the involvement of multiple decision-makers and the policy implications of new technologies and services, but it was ready to test at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>140</sup> The ‘Rooftop PV’ project, with initially slow delivery, accelerated project steering committee and board meetings which helped the project to exceed its targets. The ‘E-Waste and Medical Waste’ project had a very slow start due to project manager recruitment issues and the site approval process, but is now gaining pace, despite the pandemic. The ‘Protected Area Financing’ project was initially delayed with high turnover in project management (six different project managers), but good flexibility and adaptive management in the steering committee helped to accelerate the project, including a new policy to accommodate protected area financing.<sup>141</sup> Finally, despite a slow first call for proposals and then COVID-19 restrictions, SGP, a DIM project executed by a United Nations Office for Project Services consultant, increased delivery from 13 percent in 2019 to 74 percent by October 2021.

**Finding 22.** COVID-19 affected UNDP operations significantly, but also provided a window for UNDP to innovate and assist with the COVID-19 response. UNDP was flexible with its programme to respond to the changing priorities of the Government. UNDP support to the government response through the Socioeconomic Response and Recovery Plan has been timely and relevant.

2020 and a significant part of 2021 were marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected and slowed down UNDP and government interventions across the board. The review of the UNDP portfolio showed that only a few projects were started or expected to start in 2020, and these encountered difficulties, with delivery rates below 77 percent as of October 2021 (using expenditure as a proxy). On the other hand, a number of projects in the portfolio were more advanced, in final stages or finalized by the time the COVID-19 pandemic started, and did not suffer such delivery problems. The document review and stakeholder interviews corroborated that most ongoing projects were challenged by the pandemic, with little ability to change their design, implement critical field activities or bring in international experts considered core to their operations.

While projects with government funding had more flexibility to adapt to the circumstances, in almost all cases (particularly GEF and GCF projects) it was difficult to change project design, which is worked out two or three years before implementation. These projects had little or no scope for adjustment to accommodate COVID-vulnerable populations. Such examples were found across the inclusive growth and environment portfolios, which were not able to procure international consultants or hold introductory stakeholder consultations. Some projects nearing completion were caught in pandemic restrictions. For example, the ‘Sustainable Transport’ project was ready to implement student bicycle-sharing and new bus routes, but

<sup>138</sup> Especially when various ministries are involved, requiring memoranda of understanding.

<sup>139</sup> These were all cited by various evaluation respondents as examples of items causing project delays.

<sup>140</sup> This project is not on the list for Outcome 2 in the current programme period. It was started in 2011 but had activities and implementation of pilots extending until at least February 2020.

<sup>141</sup> One respondent noted that NIM project delivery does create Government ownership of initiatives, and lessons are learned. Another respondent said that ministries are very busy with their operational mandates, and projects help to create a focus for innovations and new initiatives, for example in protected area financing. Policy integration, when more than one sector is involved (e.g., transport and environment), continues to be challenging in Egypt.

student mobility and bus travel plummeted in March 2020, and these project results are still to be seen. The GCF 'North Coast Climate Adaptation' project had just started construction of coastal dykes when pandemic restrictions were imposed. However, in the last year, with contracts now started in multiple locations, the project has caught up with its dyke construction target, which it may exceed in 2022. SGP was suffering delays even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and these were further exacerbated in 2020.

The review of projects and stakeholder interviews showed that most projects adapted well to COVID-19 by increasing the frequency of virtual partner and stakeholder consultations, reverting to reviews and studies that focused on the development of guidelines and policies, and increasing visibility in social media to maintain the momentum of projects and ensure the delivery of key priority interventions. The main driver for successful adaptation was considered to be effective partnership with government institutions, given that both parties were encountering the same challenges.

COVID-19 also presented an opportunity to accelerate some innovative ideas. In response to the specific needs of people with disabilities, UNDP supported the development of a mobile App with crowdfunding support to assist people with disabilities to access support services during COVID-19. This included a sign language chatbot to provide guidance and support for people with hearing disabilities to test their symptoms and get the proper health support. In addition, UNDP supported the *Eltibbi* e-health platform to provide tele-health consultations to remote areas and women, and conducted a gender-sensitive telephone survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on entrepreneurs. The study resulted in policy recommendations on the required measures for MPED. UNDP also supported women in Upper Egypt to convert their garment factory to produce masks at discounted prices for the community, with crowdfunding to raise capital and increase production. Such support was viewed as relevant and effective to assist communities and help beneficiaries take active measures to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods and inclusion.

UNDP assisted the United Nations interagency response to COVID-19 as a lead contributor to the Socioeconomic Response and Recovery Plan (which localized the Framework for Immediate Socioeconomic Response), and the United Nations country team Crisis Prevention and Response Plan, which was approved in April 2020. UNDP also supported the development of the 'Impact of COVID-19 on the Private Sector in Egypt: Challenges and Opportunities' report, prepared in partnership with European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt.

UNDP also assisted the Government with medical, testing and protective supplies. For instance, UNDP provided the busiest chest hospital and COVID-19 triage centre in Cairo with a 'CT' scanner, a GenExpert machine and over 60,000 COVID-19 PCR tests, for improved screening and diagnosis. Support was provided to an inter-ministerial committee on the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 through an international webinar and policy paper on digitization. Finally, UNDP extended its support to MoSS to expand the advocacy and awareness-raising tools from the Waai programme to cover COVID-19.

UNDP provided effective administrative support for setting up and maintaining an *ad hoc* facility to treat United Nations staff affected by COVID-19. United Nations agency interviewees noted their satisfaction with the facility and overall UNDP performance in conducting operations and coordinating administrative support. The country office management was quite proactive in managing and assisting staff to adjust to remote working and ensure business continuity by identifying and trying to mitigate some key issues in the division of labour and establishing a teleworking culture.<sup>142</sup>

<sup>142</sup> The country office conducted a survey with staff to gauge perceptions on remote working and collect feedback on the office management performance.

**Finding 23.** UNDP has invested in cultivating partnerships with the Government, private sector, and to a lesser extent other development partners, to plan and implement initiatives addressing economic development, energy, climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. Cooperation with civil society on governance and inclusive growth has been minimal over the reference period but more evident in environment initiatives. The private sector has been an active partner of UNDP, and has been especially quick to pick up energy innovations with clear net benefits.

As noted by national partners, UNDP is strategically positioned with the Government and has built stable and long-term partnerships with government agencies and institutions. This is beneficial for resource mobilization, as reflected in budget allocations from the Government. The 2020 partnership survey, which assessed a number of UNDP attributes according to partners, found that the greatest added value of UNDP was seen to be in programme and project implementation and capacity-building. These results are higher for Egypt than RBAS and UNDP overall results. Stakeholder interviews also reflected a high level of ownership of UNDP interventions by national stakeholders, along with satisfaction with the quality of services and results. The country office has developed a Partnership Communication Action Plan to analyse its current partnerships and identify the most strategic partnerships for investment in key strategic areas for the UNDP country office. This evaluation found the partner analysis template useful for identifying key informants and analysing the partnership landscape in Egypt. Strategic partnerships are envisioned with Japan, Denmark, the European Investment Bank (EIB), IMF, EU and other United Nations agencies such as the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization (ILO), across all three outcome areas.

UNDP used its convening power to bring various actors together on issues related to the SDGs and their financing, including IMF, United Nations agencies such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), ILO, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and UN Women, international donors and partners, CCCPA and the Aswan Forum. These interventions have brought important results and helped to leverage other types of support for government efforts on SDG financing and regional aspirations. However, only a small number of joint projects have been implemented with other United Nations agencies (e.g. on SDG financing and support to the INFF), and external stakeholders emphasized that UNDP could have done more in this area. Interviews with external actors pointed out that a proactive approach to seeking synergy with other United Nations agencies and development partners was lacking, beyond individual actions. For example, UNDP and UNICEF had the opportunity to work together through a third party to assess the socioeconomic status of North Sinai, but for internal reasons in both organizations this collaboration did not materialize. UNDP and UNICEF enjoy good collaboration, but this opportunity would have been significant considering the lack of United Nations presence in the region. Interviewed donors considered that United Nations coordination was rather scattered, and pointed to confusion around UNDP involvement in gender-focused projects, which they saw as a more organic fit with UN Women or UNFPA. Donors also considered that UNDP and other United Nations agencies needed a deeper analysis of donor priorities and more joint programmes with division of labour based on their respective mandates. Donors expressed an interest in greater engagement in policy work, while noting that UNDP has no obligation as this is not stipulated in contract agreements.<sup>143</sup> However, this provides a new space for UNDP to further nurture and strengthen partnerships.

In terms of private sector partnership, UNDP has strongly supported the expansion of entrepreneurship and ICT, offering support to a number of individuals, including young women and men, through hackathons, training and business support for start-ups and MSMEs through its work with MSMEDA. UNDP has also

<sup>143</sup> A case in point is the EU funded projects, with the EU delegation transitioning towards becoming a development partner.

worked with the ICT industry to support innovations and new ideas, as well as e-governance services. Some important partnerships with the private sector were noted in the environment sector, including banks and hotels for energy projects, and tour operators in the Red Sea area for protected area management initiatives. While these have been unwieldy at times and difficult to solidify into permanent institutional structures, they have clarified the broad range of expectations and roles needed to advance energy conservation, climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation in Egypt, and many have been well supported with relevant training. As an active partner in UNDP-supported projects, the private sector has been especially quick to pick up energy innovations, where net benefits were clear and visible.<sup>144</sup> However, UNDP cannot accept funds directly from the private sector, preventing both sides from engaging in deeper partnerships or joint efforts. The lack of a model to bring government and private sector together in one partnership with UNDP also prevents the exploration of interesting possibilities, especially when it comes to innovation.

UNDP cooperation with civil society has been limited, focusing on the implementation of Global Fund interventions and some scattered and fragmented one-off interventions for women's empowerment. There were no other types of engagement during this programme cycle. Some stakeholders noted the lack of legislation to engage civil society in projects like NAP, NTP or Protected Areas, as the NGO law was only passed in 2020. One exception to this is SGP, which by its nature is directed at civil society groups, promoting uptake of innovations developed in larger projects (for example, the use of solar power, LEDs and biogas or effective waste management) and developing self-financing approaches for ongoing uptake and replication throughout Egypt.<sup>145</sup>

An important aspect of cultivating new partnerships (whether with the private sector or civil society) is to capture and disseminate the approaches and benefits of innovations (like sustainable tourism, LEDs, solar panels, sustainable transport) and make the business case for uptake. UNDP has done this well, which is especially evident with the uptake of solar energy approaches. The multi-stakeholder platforms established by MoIC have the potential to improve coordination and resource mobilization efforts among different partners in Egypt.

**Finding 24.** UNDP has been effective in mainstreaming gender into both programming and country office functions. Results could be further accelerated in the environment and climate change portfolio, however, where the majority of initiatives are still gender-targeted.

The assessment of UNDP interventions across all three outcomes shows that gender mainstreaming has been a strong priority of the UNDP Egypt country programme 2018–2022. To date, 70 percent of total programme expenditure has been devoted to GEN2/3 projects, 67 percent of which were GEN2. The country office is committed to increasing investments in GEN3 projects, as stipulated in the Gender Equality Strategy 2020–2023. Outcome 3 is dedicated to GEWE, with all projects in this outcome marked GEN3.<sup>146</sup> Activities in the inclusive growth, economic empowerment and employment portfolio have generally been gender transformative. In particular, UNDP support to MSMEDA has presented opportunities to achieve gender transformative results, through the establishment of a Gender Unit and the 2019 Gender Equality Award for the Public Sector, as discussed in Finding 2, and also through the provision of direct financial services, training and other empowerment initiatives for local communities. UNDP support to the Waai and TK&K programmes has boosted social outreach and helped to address the important issues of child marriage and

<sup>144</sup> The benefits of energy innovations such as solar PV panels and LEDs are easily tracked through electricity bills, and investment costs can be paid off after three to five years, after which there are annual net benefits.

<sup>145</sup> Community groups have also been involved in building shore protection structures along the Nile Delta coast.

<sup>146</sup> Although Outcome 3 is the primary portfolio for GEWE, the outcome and associated projects have received relatively little funding and resources: \$1.5 million according to the midterm CPD evaluation, with only \$430,000 budget and \$225,000 expenditure from 2018–2021.



trafficking, FGM, and social and gender exclusion, through training, messaging, guidelines, and strengthening M&E. UNDP strives to address the intersectionality of GBV and HIV in Egypt, including outreach to female sex workers and other at-risk groups such as intravenous drug users, to increase uptake of HIV prevention packages and provide access to HIV testing services. UNDP also provided training to healthcare service providers to ensure that vulnerable groups were better able to access services through targeted healthcare facilities in different governorates to ensure geographic coverage.

The environment and green growth portfolio has been mostly gender-targeted, with programmes focusing on the inclusion of women and youth beneficiaries. 72 percent of the programme expenditure for this outcome was marked for GEN2 projects, and none for GEN3. There have been efforts to integrate gender dimensions into the ‘Enhancing Climate Change Adaption’ project, through a socioeconomic baseline study that included women, youth, the elderly and people with disabilities. The ‘Community Development’ programme included specific benefits and training directed to women. Furthermore, there have been efforts to employ female engineers in construction sites. UNDP has integrated GEWE into its work on climate change, but a deeper focus on GEWE could be implemented in this portfolio by moving beyond gender-targeting to address the different needs of women and men. The 2020–2023 Gender Equality Strategy outlines some entry points for integrating GEWE, including enhancing the capacity and role of women in the management of hazardous (medical) waste by training female nurses.

Gender has been effectively integrated across the country office, which has a national officer gender focal point, and regional and global resource person. There is a Gender Focal Team, chaired by the Deputy Resident Representative, which has a dedicated action plan, but this evaluation found an unclear division of roles, which were not stipulated in the 2020–2023 Gender Strategy.

The country office achieved the “gold” gender seal in 2016 and 2018. In 2018, the Egypt country office fulfilled all 13 benchmarks and was lauded for the vibrant culture of gender mainstreaming in the office, including the sustained support of senior leadership for GEWE and the localization of effective workplace policies.

Staff parity has generally been achieved, with female representation at most levels except senior management which is male dominated (Resident Representative and Deputy Resident Representative).<sup>147</sup> Female representation is especially prominent at national officer level, which may be due to the Egyptian cultural context where development is perceived to be a female field. Overall, this represents an important contribution and showcase for women’s employment, given the broad male domination in the Egypt workforce.

## 2.5 Country programme performance rating

An overview of the country programme performance rating is provided below, based on a 4-point scale; where 4 is the highest and 1 the lowest.<sup>148</sup> The results of the evaluation are rated based on the following five criteria, each comprising a set of parameters: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability. This rating table should be read keeping in mind the findings presented in the previous sections of the report, which provide the basis and detailed justification for the ratings.

<sup>147</sup> At the beginning of this evaluation, the Resident Representative in the post was a woman. The office has 44 female (56 percent) and 34 male (44 percent) employees, including 52 staff (31 women, 21 men), 11 service contract holders (2 women, 9 men), and 12 United Nations volunteers (8 women, 4 men).

<sup>148</sup> 4 = Satisfactory/Achieved, 3 = Moderately satisfactory/Mostly achieved, 2 = Moderately unsatisfactory/Partially achieved, 1 = Unsatisfactory/Not achieved.

**TABLE 2. Country programme performance rating**

Consolidated rating table	Overall rating	Remarks/justification
<b>1. Relevance</b>	3	
1.A. Adherence to national development priorities	3	The UNDP programme adhered to national development priorities and strongly aligned with Egypt's priority needs regarding sustainable development, inclusive growth, environment, natural resources and climate change, incorporating social and economic needs/benefits within project design to the extent possible. The programme has strong alignment with UNPFD and UNDP goals. The programme logic underpinning most areas of intervention was relevant and strong, but less realistic for GEWE where it lacked UNDP strategic positioning. The UNDP programme was fragmented in areas that did not receive optimum financial support.
1.B. Alignment with United Nations/UNDP goals	4	
1.C. Relevance of programme logic	3	
<b>2. Coherence</b>	2	
2.A. Internal programme coherence	2	UNDP interventions would have benefited from more efforts to strengthen linkages and deepen coherence within and across its portfolio, for a more holistic approach. UNDP failed to seek and empower inter-portfolio coherence between interventions, but was successful in linking entrepreneurship and economic empowerment of women and ensuring cross-linkages at project level. UNDP programme interventions were coherent with government efforts, but more efforts need to be invested to ensure coherence with other United Nations agencies and IFIs.
2.B. External programme coherence	2	
<b>3. Efficiency</b>	3	
3.A. Timeliness and management efficiency	3	UNDP has been efficient and delivered its assistance in a timely manner overall. Some hindrances to efficiency were linked to slow government and donor procedures, which affected implementation of some interventions. Most (NIM) projects had slow starts, as government implementing partners clarified and established their roles and staff/resources. There were also external delay factors, such as COVID-19. UNDP was quite effective in addressing delays and constraints and helped to get most initiatives back on track, adhering to expected actions and outputs. The management of portfolios has been efficient across the programme.
3.B. Management efficiency	3	



<b>4. Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>	
4.A. Achieving stated outputs and outcomes	3	<p>Overall, programme outputs were delivered successfully in close cooperation with the Government. Outcome-level achievements varied, with more visible success in economic development and entrepreneurship, but less in the areas of social protection and GEWE, where UNDP has brought some important results, albeit mainly at individual level with limited transformational potential.</p> <p>While UNDP interventions focused on ensuring outreach to socially-excluded groups such as women, rural communities, people living with HIV and TB, youth, etc., more efforts are required to integrate and support these marginalized communities and most vulnerable groups in interventions to ensure that no one is left behind. Investments were mainly designed from a premise that support to institutional capacity strengthening would result in better and more sustainable delivery of services. Environment-related results were generally more effective and are progressing well, but were not particularly designed to address inclusiveness and GEWE. The HDR was an important intervention in this regard.</p>
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	3	
4.C. Prioritizing GEWE	3	
4.D. Programming processes adhered to sustainable development principles	2	
<b>5. Sustainability</b>	<b>3</b>	
5.A. Sustainable capacity	3	<p>The sustainability prospects of UNDP interventions in the country have been mixed, with energy-related initiatives demonstrating better uptake and sustainability potential. UNDP strongly supported financing for development through direct engagement with IFIs and the Government on SDG financing, but also through direct interventions in the economic development area. While this has varied across the programme, UNDP has been particularly effective in securing development financing for environmental initiatives and given prominence to market transformation approaches and the demonstration of the net economic and social benefits of initiatives. Most initiatives, except for GEWE, have good potential for scale-up and replication with minimal project support in the future.</p>
5.B. Financing for development	3	



# CHAPTER 3

## CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE



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

## 3.1 Conclusions

**Conclusion 1.** UNDP is well positioned as a reliable and credible partner of the Government for the provision of services and institutional capacity-strengthening across the spectrum of UNDP thematic engagement, and for linking and connecting different actors. However, concerns remain regarding the lack of depth of its engagement beyond administrative support. UNDP has a lot to offer the Government and development partners beyond procurement and administrative services, but its internal structures and in-house expertise are weak.

Stable UNDP support and input into the capacity-strengthening of government systems and institutions is well aligned with country priorities in the areas of economic development, social protection and inclusion, climate change, and the environment. This stable support is reflected in strong and steady financial contributions from the Government, as the largest contributor to the UNDP funding base, as well as large ongoing contributions from vertical funds brokered by UNDP (including GEF and now GCF), which have supported innovations and pilot projects addressing environment and climate change issues. Another comparative advantage of UNDP has been its support for SDG integration into government programmes and policies, and the development of a national SDG financial strategy by bringing a wide range of actors to the table. In its design, UNDP work across all focus areas and related activities was ambitious, envisaging deep engagement in reforms. However, the implementation of UNDP work in some areas (economic and urban development, public administration reform, governance, social protection and inclusion) was limited to the provision of administrative services and/or horizontal institutional support by outsourcing experts. Partners benefiting from these services recognize that UNDP offers competitive advantages, but its in-house expertise and structures are not optimal to offer the full technical potential beyond administrative and procurement services. Some opportunities and progress are emerging, such as UNDP programme technical support for energy initiatives, where UNDP staff experience in the sector has helped to facilitate projects and leverage new partnerships with the private sector, but to a lesser extent in other outcome areas.

**Conclusion 2.** UNDP support to economic and urban development and job creation was well conceptualized and responds to the key challenges of Egypt's transition economy. However, more effort is needed to build an enabling environment to overcome structural challenges for youth employment and economic empowerment. While UNDP engagement has resulted in strengthening the capacity of key government institutions to integrate a gender and equity perspective, an ongoing challenge has been the apparent "silo" effect of different ministerial mandates, hampering initiatives where policy integration and cross-sector efforts are needed to further inclusive growth, effective environmental management or adaptation to climate change.

UNDP responded effectively to the needs of MPED, MSMEDA and other government agencies for the implementation of economic and urban development, job creation and entrepreneurship measures, and the improved reach and benefits of social protection, providing necessary institutional support and administrative services. UNDP performance was highly appreciated by partners, confirming the role of UNDP as a key supporter of Egypt's priorities in the inclusive growth field. Through this support, UNDP has contributed to a multiplier effect, boosting economic and business potential across Egypt, in particular for youth, women and more vulnerable groups. However, the focus has often been more on the individual and less on the enabling environment, leading to individual-level rather than large-scale results on economic empowerment. UNDP demining activities and support to urban planning and development have strong

transformational potential in terms of enhancing livelihoods and urban development in areas that could not previously be inhabited. In particular, UNDP support to Egypt's efforts to build the new city of Al Alamein has been commendable. The new city is expected to provide thousands of employment opportunities and become an international coastal city and tourism hub, serving as a communication and socioeconomic point between all cities of the north-western coast.

UNDP support has also contributed to a significant uptake of energy-efficient approaches and renewable energy use, with the private sector now leading the way, and similar efforts in sustainable urban transport are waiting to be tested. There has also been progress in proper revenue streams to support protected area management in Egypt, and significant institutional changes and policies will improve waste management. All of these have involved significant engagement with key government ministries, often requiring the clarification of mandates, roles and expectations, as most still operate in silos. UNDP could have done more to create cross-portfolio synergies between economic development and environment and climate change, to expand the potential of efforts to build a green economy and decrease the carbon footprints of businesses and other economic activities.<sup>149</sup> More explicit connections could be made between social inclusion, environment and economic development initiatives, to ensure that investments across these sectors do not leave anyone behind, and maximize resources and results.

**Conclusion 3.** UNDP support for enhancing public services and public finance management showcases the effectiveness of targeted engagement and has catalytic potential to enhance the transparency and accountability of public institutions. Given the strong partnerships established over the years, there are further opportunities for UNDP to pursue core governance support in areas such as administration reform or e-governance/digitalization, which are comparatively more open for engagement.

UNDP technical assistance to government institutions was critical to strengthen government entities and governance processes (such as audit competencies, public and e-services, public finance management, ICT and digitalization) with transformational potential for enhanced efficiency, accountability and access to services for citizens. For instance, cooperation with MoF which resulted in the establishment of the Government Audit Unit was a big achievement, bringing a more systematic approach to auditing government organizations. The Audit Unit is still in its initiation phase, but has the potential to increase accountability and transparency in the utilization of public funds. The support that UNDP provided to EP over the years has boosted the expansion and modernization of the post office network and services, serving as a public service provider reaching the most remote areas. In particular, UNDP support for ICT solutions was transformational, as it translated into more efficient and transparent public and financial services, which has brought benefits for Egyptian citizens. UNDP support to enhance the use of modern technology and strengthen e-services to reach wider groups of citizens has been particularly relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, when e-services became crucial to overcome restrictions in fulfilling basic administrative tasks. Such examples showcase the importance of such technical support, combined with the institutionalization of practices and capacity, to further full administration reform linked with changes to a work culture that has relied for decades on paperwork and bureaucratic measures. Given its long-established partnerships with government institutions and the private sector, there is space for UNDP to strategically pursue core governance reforms in administration, e-governance and digitalization, where the Government is comparatively more open for engagement. Engagement with the private sector in the area of digitalization has been initiated during this cycle of programme implementation, providing a foundation for further efforts.

<sup>149</sup> Multi-stakeholder platforms can be a nexus between economic development, the environment and climate change and enable diverse stakeholders to explore synergies. Economic principles, including multi-stakeholder platforms, SDG finance mapping and the Global Partnerships Narrative could also contribute to enhanced dialogue and identification of synergies.

**Conclusion 4.** UNDP-supported initiatives have been highly relevant and somewhat effective in addressing priority environmental quality and climate change issues in Egypt, meeting or exceeding associated targets in many cases, especially for GHG emission reductions, while ensuring inclusivity. While sustainability prospects have been mixed, energy-related initiatives in particular have demonstrated good uptake and sustainability potential, with strong engagement of the private sector as key partners.

UNDP-supported initiatives within the energy and environment portfolio are highly relevant and strongly aligned to Egypt's strategic vision and priority issues. With the long continuity of key UNDP staff, UNDP has consolidated its extensive experience with policy and institutional development to support innovations in environmental and climate change management, with an increasing emphasis on market-based approaches, and successful brokering of vertical funds (GEF and GCF). This is most evident in projects dealing with energy efficiency and renewable energy technologies in Egypt. Successes in this sector mainly reflect a sharp focus on simple technologies that can demonstrate cost-savings over time (with significant reductions in GHG emissions). Initiatives addressing hazardous materials and waste management have been more difficult to push to successful outcomes due to complicated technologies, concern for policy implications, and a disparate set of end-users. Two exceptions are the new system for e-waste management, which is managed through private sector retailers, and the successful ongoing phase-out of ODS (HCFCs) in the foam sector, designed to meet Montreal Protocol obligations.

The sustainability of project outcomes and community benefits, as well as the financing of new initiatives, continue to be a key challenge, and results have been mixed across the portfolio. There has been increased emphasis on generating revenue flows and making the business case for uptake and scale-up of innovations that support climate change mitigation and protected area management. This has been particularly successful in initiatives founded on broad partnerships that include the private sector and local community organizations, and engaged through relevant training and pilot projects (notably energy projects and protected area initiatives). A combination of self-financing approaches and engaged partners has contributed to the expected sustainability of many initiatives, most evident with LED lighting, roof-top solar PV and sustainable transport. However, there is room for improvement overall, as many of the lessons learned from successes and challenges with the market transformation approach over the past years are not well captured or readily available for the design of new interventions, but can only be extracted from the various project documents.

Inclusivity principles are well designed into the environment portfolio, with promising results that have benefited vulnerable and marginalized groups (especially SGP, protected area management and climate change adaptation). There is still potential to further deepen the application of leaving no one behind and GEWE in environment, disaster risk reduction, climate change and energy efficiency initiatives.

**Conclusion 5.** UNDP has effectively mainstreamed gender across its interventions, but further work is needed to integrate and support marginalized communities and the most vulnerable groups to ensure that no one is left behind and align with the country's SDG priorities.

UNDP support across all thematic initiatives has maintained a strong focus on inclusivity, including capacity-building for marginalized communities, and women in particular. Across the entire portfolio, UNDP has focused on the economic empowerment of women and marginalized groups, helping institutions to provide assistance for entrepreneurship and the development of livelihoods, and the inclusion of women in peace and security operations. Of particular relevance was the UNDP support to integrate gender into MSMEDA work, leading to the achievement of the Gender Seal for the agency. Whether MSMEDA maintains this strategic gender direction will need to be monitored. UNDP support for institutions to reach out to and support marginalized communities and the most vulnerable groups has been relevant and efficient overall, though rather scattered. While UNDP can only make progress on such issues in partnership with

government entities, it is important that they remain on the country office agenda, as they are fundamental to the overriding UNDP goal to 'leave no one behind' and pivotal to the country's SDG priorities.

**Conclusion 6.** UNDP partners well with the Government, while its partnerships with the United Nations system and other external development partners are limited and not sufficiently strategic.

UNDP has been valued as a government partner for its stable support and responsiveness to arising needs and priorities. United Nations agencies and development partners also see UNDP as an important actor, able to address capacity gaps and needs across different sectors, with good networking and outreach capabilities. The stable support to institutional capacity across different sectors, production of the national HDR and response to COVID-19 have solidified UNDP positioning and relevance as a major actor in supporting national development and SDG priorities. However, despite the wide range of partnerships established in the area of development, more consistent alignment with the thematic interventions of United Nations agencies is required in order to better articulate UNDP capacity with the comparative advantages of its sister agencies, to harmonize efforts, enhance cumulative impact and maximize donor opportunities. This is particularly necessary in the area of women's empowerment. The UNDP CPD will benefit from ongoing consultations with 30 ministries and national institutions on the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2023–2027), offering an opportunity to better align and coordinate with the Government and other key players. UNDP partnerships with CSOs have been limited in the areas of governance and inclusive growth, but more evident in environment initiatives. The private sector has been an active partner of UNDP and has been especially quick to pick up energy innovations.



## 3.2 Recommendations and management response

### RECOMMENDATION 1.



UNDP should strengthen its potential added value and deepen its development contributions, capitalizing on its knowledge, expertise and international networks as direct inputs to strengthening the Government's potential to fulfil its priorities. This also applies to projects designed to provide administrative and procurement services.

UNDP should use the opportunities presented in the design of the new CPD, as well as ongoing and potential pipeline projects with the Government, to review its internal organization and human capital to provide deeper country-specific and international knowledge and expertise, beyond administrative and procurement services, across the areas of governance, inclusive growth, environment and climate change. In this process, UNDP should consult closely with the Government and other development partners to find niche areas where UNDP can really add value and make deeper investments to bring about transformative change. Besides the environment and climate change outcome areas, possible openings exist in the areas of: public service provision (including interoperability and e-services); further support to public finance management; inclusive growth; and the wider economic growth–environment nexus, areas where UNDP is also generally well-positioned globally. UNDP should also consider supporting the Government of Egypt in the production of governorate-level HDRs as an important resource for data, baselines and transformative programming in the country.

UNDP should build on its best practices and lessons learned from support to the Government for the development of the new city of Al Alamein, to continue support to such initiatives by the Government over the next period. Joining government efforts within the *Hayya Karima* programme, for instance, could mark the continuation of such efforts.

### Management response: Accepted



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1 At design stage and at project milestones, reinforce projects with deliberate cross-pillar and integrated and system approaches, including from AccLab	31/12/2022	M&E, Policy and Partnerships, AccLab		Initiated
1.2 Curated adapted development solutions and South-South exchanges from UNDP Global Policy Network and Accelerator Networks	31/12/2022	M&E, Policy and Partnerships		Initiated

## RECOMMENDATION 2.



**UNDP should expand its support to the strategic strengthening of digitalization and e-governance reforms.**

Building on the good results of UNDP support to digitalization and e-services, which have been utilized in particular during the COVID-19 crisis, UNDP should continue working with the Government and private sector to strengthen internal interoperability mechanisms, build stronger government capacity, and develop specific e-services which have been identified as crucial to overcome accessibility problems (such as the restrictions due to COVID-19). UNDP work on e-service solutions, based on support to stronger interoperability across agencies, should be underpinned by initiatives to help government and private sector entities to develop long-term strategies and financial plans addressing digitalization and e-governance needs and priorities to enable equitable access to public services.

**Management response: Accepted**



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
2.1 Reinforce country office focus and capacity through a dedicated portfolio gathering concerned project, exposure to best practice, trainings	31/12/2022	Inclusive Growth		Initiated
2.2 Seek and adapt digital transitions solution from UNDP Global Policy Network	31/12/2022	Inclusive Growth		Initiated

### RECOMMENDATION 3.



**UNDP should continue to support inclusive entrepreneurship and job creation initiatives, with a strong focus on building an enabling environment to address structural challenges, and integrate sustainability mechanisms.**

UNDP should continue to support the efforts of partner government entities and the private sector to promote and support inclusive job creation, entrepreneurship and innovation measures and interventions. In particular, UNDP should capitalize on the positive foundations created through its support to MSMEDA to expand youth employment opportunities, at subnational level in particular, including the promotion of a more conducive enabling environment to overcome structural challenges for youth employment and economic empowerment. Support to MSMEs is crucial, and new ideas to expand financial support for entrepreneurship and innovation should be tested, including ways to better utilize remittances or other private sources to stimulate jobs, and support to more excluded and marginalized local populations to ensure that no one is left behind.

**Management response: Accepted**



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
3.1 Produce relevant knowledge and strengthen partner forums for concrete policy discussion sectors governance and enabling environments	31/12/2022	Inclusive Growth, Policy and Partnerships		Initiated
3.2 Support MSMEDA sector policy role to enable (with other institutions) a more conducive environment for MSMEs	31/12/2022	Inclusive Growth, Policy and Partnerships		Initiated

#### RECOMMENDATION 4.



**UNDP should build on results and lessons from the implementation of initiatives in support of women's empowerment, gender and equity as a basis for the country office strategy to fully integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into its portfolio.**

UNDP should build on cross-sector and cross-portfolio synergies with transformative potential for women to provide more integrated support to government efforts across UNDP thematic areas. UNDP should further capitalize on its regional and global experience and lessons learned in gender and environment and WPS.

UNDP should capitalize on the gains achieved thus far in terms of GEWE and use the momentum from the publication of the HDR to continue advocating for and ensuring that gender and equity are mainstreamed across all outcome areas and related support to government institutions, to design and deliver effective interventions with transformative GEWE potential. This requires a more concerted effort during project formulation and review, in consultation with the Government. Specific efforts should be made to enable and deepen interconnectivity between the social inclusion, inclusive growth and environment and climate change pillars, considering the multidimensional nature of gender issues and their impact potential. In addition, continued attention by the country office to invest in meaningful partnerships with other United Nations agencies and development partners is needed to raise public awareness on social inclusion and support for marginalized communities, taking into account the factors shaping social norms and behavioural aspects of change. UNDP should prepare a progress report on the Gender Seal recommendations and prepare for the next Gender Seal certification.

#### Management response: **Accepted**



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
4.1 Mainstream GEWE in all country programme outcomes, ensuring that at least 50 percent of programme expenditure directly contributes to gender equality results (GEN2 and GEN3)	31/12/2022	Social Inclusion, Inclusive Growth, Environment		Initiated
4.2 Embed synergy review (including GEWE) at project milestone pre-appraisal and during annual review	31/12/2022	M&E, Social Inclusion		

## RECOMMENDATION 5.



UNDP should consider creating stronger intersectoral synergy between economic development and segments of its support to environmental and climate change management, to enhance the potential of investment in green growth and the green economy. Interventions in support of the circular economy and innovation should be supported, to expand the Government's efforts to diversify the economy, and position UNDP as a leader in this field, building on its regional and global knowledge.

A large part of the UNDP environment/climate change and economic development portfolios promotes entrepreneurship and innovation activities and models. However, there is little internal cross-sector synergy or joint thinking on how specific sector interventions could mutually benefit each other, creating stronger leverage and transformational potential. UNDP should invest in internal consideration of a more holistic approach to enhancing green growth and the green economy, with a focus on carbon footprint reduction and climate change, to create a set of cross-portfolio interventions. Such a portfolio would bring more in-depth and operational synergies around green growth and climate change, and potential for larger scope and outreach, with interventions tackling different areas of the circular economy and climate change, combining individual and larger policy-level support. For example, environment and climate change interventions, involving many community stakeholders and local government, could benefit from proper consideration of the social aspects and governance models from other UNDP projects (as is happening within the GCF coastal protection initiative). Similarly, economic development initiatives supported by UNDP need to be filtered for environmental and climate change implications and opportunities.

### Management response: Accepted



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
5.1 Re-conduct portfolio sensemaking or similar cross-theme review processes	31/12/2022	AccLab, Policy and Partnerships		
5.2 Embed synergy review at project milestone pre-appraisal and during annual review	31/12/2022	M&E		

## RECOMMENDATION 6.



**UNDP needs to increase the emphasis on sustainability and the uptake of its environment and climate change interventions, so that community benefits from its market-based approaches are sustained over time, with clear exit strategies. This includes building government absorptive capacity (where gaps exist), providing multi-pronged policy and institutional support (as needed), and fostering strong engagement with all stakeholder groups.**

UNDP-supported initiatives related to the environment and climate change have generally been relevant, targeted and successful, but the degree of sustainability has varied, with the most successful examples of sustainability and uptake where simple technologies are taken up by the private sector and communities, and clear net benefits (reduced time or costs, or increased job / business opportunities) apparent within a period of one to two years. Initiatives involving NRM are more complicated institutionally and more difficult to frame with clear benefits to support sustainability. Market transformation (changing the nature of a sector, revenue flows, associated policies, and how it self-manages and grows) has been a success factor in energy initiatives, in particular, and is now starting to become apparent in protected area management. It is also evident that the early engagement of end-users and beneficiaries in project design (clarifying expectations) and implementation (clarifying roles) has been a key factor in the uptake and sustainability of initiatives.

There are certainly lessons in these project successes, as well as from those projects that have been constrained or less successful. However, they need to be consolidated (from individual project files) and analysed to better inform future project design. In many instances, business cases can be made for the actions, innovations and longer-term changes associated with projects, to clarify who benefits, the nature of benefits, the required investments, and the timeframes associated with these. These business cases would then help to promote the uptake and replication of new initiatives, as well as to inform the design of new projects to improve sustainability. Experiences with the market transformation approach, while in the collective memory of UNDP staff, are not evident to other individuals (current and future staff of UNDP, Government, private sector, etc.). The various ROARS, Project Implementation Reviews and project evaluation reports could be scanned for lessons, and these could then be analysed, brainstormed and clarified to inform future project design, as well as policy development in Egypt related to energy, NRM, protected areas, climate change adaptation and waste management. Specific topics that could be examined in this collective file include: policy changes/conflicts; partnership arrangements; institutional structures and processes; financial inducements; payback periods; innovations; technology constraints; performance indicators that truly reflect change and benefits; and public awareness. These topics could then inform the development of business cases for initiatives that have potential for scale-up.

**Management response: Accepted**



◀ Recommendation 6 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
6.1 Build capacity for system approaches in relevant institutions	31/12/2022	AccLab, Policy and Partnerships		Initiated
6.2 Build long-term thematic alliances, non-financial and financial partnerships to sustain transformations beyond main project cycle	31/12/2022	Policy and Partnerships		No due date

**RECOMMENDATION 7.**



**UNDP should reassess and reinforce its results-based management approach and strengthen its M&E capacity. Coherence and cross-thematic synergy should be entrenched in programme design and implementation.**

Challenges have been noted in the ways in which UNDP and national partners address RBM approaches, and in particular M&E. The new cycle of CPD development should be used to build strong RBM foundations through clarity of intervention logic, realistic indicators and strong synergies to leverage the potential of cross-sector engagement. The new CPD should be used as a foundation to reinforce existing RBM systems, processes and M&E culture through: 1) establishing a more standardized approach across the country programme in defining the intervention logic, indicators and cross-sector engagement for each project, with clear linkages to outcome-level results; 2) conducting a review of M&E processes to ensure optimization and clarity in monitoring lines of responsibility and duties within the office and with partners (considering the MPED and MoIC roles to follow up and coordinate development results in the country); and 3) conducting a rapid assessment of M&E competencies across teams (both in the country office and among national partners) to identify knowledge and skills gaps and provide capacity-building opportunities to ensure that UNDP has an empowered M&E unit with the required skills and capacity.

In the new country programme, the country office should include approaches and tools for entrenching coherence and intra- and cross-theme synergies between the different areas of the programme, beyond project level. These approaches should ensure that thematic areas are reinforcing each area's pathways of change and facilitate implementation with consistent programme design and M&E. Similarly, it will be important to review external coherence to harmonize efforts, maximize synergy and effectively combine and complement collaboration with international and national partners to increase the UNDP added value and contribution to development priorities in Egypt.

**Management response: Accepted**





Recommendation 7 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
7.1 Strengthen M&E capacity in programme and project teams	31/12/2022	M&E		Initiated
7.2 Re-conduct portfolio sensemaking or similar cross-theme review processes	31/12/2022	AccLab, Policy and Partnerships		

RECOMMENDATION 8.



**UNDP should invest in existing and expanded partnerships with civil society, development partners and the private sector. .**

UNDP should invest strongly in maintaining existing and building new partnerships with CSOs across thematic areas of focus. In particular, investments in partnership-building with organizations implementing local social, economic and environmental activities would be important. Such partnerships could be built around the implementation of local activities, outreach to vulnerable groups and the collection of data on local contexts across the regions, with the potential for expansion into various advocacy and policy engagement issues. Furthermore, UNDP should invest efforts to further build relationships and joint partnerships with other United Nations agencies and development partners around SDG acceleration and wider human development issues. The joint 'SDG Fund' project and publication of the HDR may serve as good bases for such partnership-building around the themes that emerged as relevant in the HDR, in particular. Finally, UNDP should explore further avenues for partnership with the private sector to accelerate the achievement of envisaged results across its portfolio, and especially under the inclusive growth and environment and NRM areas.

**Management response: Accepted**



Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status (Initiated, completed or no due date)
8.1 Issue renewed Partnership and Communication Action Plan with sections explicitly addressing partnerships, pathways adapted to civil society and the private sector, while also setting more ambitious targets for the number of new non-financial partnerships	31/12/2022	Policy and Partnerships		Initiated

◀ Recommendation 8 (cont'd)

8.2 Describe in country programme concrete rationale and selected areas for partnering with specific partner groups, including United Nations agencies, for example through joint programmes	31/12/2022	Policy and Partnerships		Initiated
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\* 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/13385>.

- Annex 1.** Terms of reference
- Annex 2.** Evaluation framework
- Annex 3.** People consulted
- Annex 4.** Documents consulted
- Annex 5.** List of projects for review
- Annex 6.** Summary of CPD indicators and status as reported by country office
- Annex 7.** Country at a Glance
- Annex 8.** Detailed ICPE rating scores







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