



Independent
Evaluation
Office

United Nations Development Programme

INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION
**PLURINATIONAL STATE
OF BOLIVIA**



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responsiveness MANAGING FOR RESULTS relevance COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT
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FOREWORD

I am pleased to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in the Plurinational State of Bolivia. This is the first country-level evaluation conducted for Bolivia by the Independent Evaluation Office and covers UNDP programme interventions implemented between 2018 and 2021.

Bolivia faces significant challenges in terms of poverty, economic and gender inequalities, exclusion and discrimination. Recently, Bolivia has been affected by multiple crises: environmental, with droughts and massive fires; political, requiring a rerun of presidential elections in 2020; and health, with the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The evaluation found that UNDP Bolivia has expanded its programme significantly during the present cycle, strategically positioning itself in areas such as electoral support and health promotion. UNDP support and experience have enabled the Government of Bolivia to consolidate democratic institutions, overcome the 2019 political crisis with fresh elections in 2020, and promote a culture of peace. Likewise, UNDP has supported the implementation of national health programmes and the procurement and delivery of key medical equipment in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In some UNDP intervention areas, results have been affected by the various national crises. In some areas, such as poverty reduction and socioeconomic development and access to justice, UNDP has developed small and scattered interventions with limited results. In terms of the environment, despite the great challenges and climate vulnerability faced by the country, the portfolio decreased over the cycle. Without a separate strategic framework for the promotion of gender equality, it was challenging to achieve results with transformative potential.

As UNDP Bolivia prepares to develop a new country programme, it should focus on poverty reduction and socioeconomic development, particularly for women and youth, and leverage its neutral and strategic position to strengthen the sustainability of results achieved in this cycle. UNDP should expand its health portfolio and strengthen its programme offerings on the environment, natural resource management and climate change. Gender efforts should be strategic and address the social norms and deep-rooted inequalities that affect women's livelihoods and full enjoyment of their rights.

I would like to thank the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, the various national stakeholders, colleagues at the UNDP Bolivia country office and the UNDP Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean who graciously provided their time, information and support throughout this evaluation. I have every confidence that the findings, conclusions and recommendations provided herein will help to strengthen the formulation of the next UNDP country programme strategy, and achieve a more inclusive and sustainable development pathway for the people of Bolivia.



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CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	v
EVALUATION BRIEF	1
CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation	6
1.2 Evaluation methodology	7
1.3 Country context	8
1.4 UNDP programme under review	11
CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS	15
2.1 Outcome 1: Public management and inclusive services	16
2.2 Outcome 2: Integral development and plural economy	25
2.3 Outcome 3: Interculturality	30
2.4 Cross cutting areas of intervention	32
2.5 Overall programme implementation	35
2.6 Country programme performance ratings	40
CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE	43
3.1 Conclusions	44
3.2 Recommendations and management response	47
ANNEXES	57

FIGURES

Figure 1.	Human development and inequality in Bolivia 2010-2019	9
Figure 2.	Main thematic areas of the UNDP Bolivia country programme	12
Figure 3.	Budget and expenditure for overall CPD programme (2018-2021) by outcome	13
Figure 4.	Expenditure by fund category for overall CPD programme (2018-2021)	13
Figure 5.	Evolution of budget and expenditure for the area of public management and inclusive services	17
Figure 6.	Expenditure by fund category for public management and inclusive services (2018-2021)	17
Figure 7.	Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of integral development and plural economy	25
Figure 8.	Expenditure by fund category: integral development and plural economy (2018-2021)	26
Figure 9.	Evolution of budget and expenditure in the area of interculturality	30
Figure 10.	Expenditure by fund category for interculturality (2018-2021)	31
Figure 11.	Expenditure by Gender Marker and Outcome (2018-2021)	33
Figure 12.	Evolution of expenditure by Gender Marker (2018-2021)	33
Figure 13.	Gender project results using the GRES scale	34
Figure 14.	UNDP Bolivia annual programme budget and expenditure (2013-21)	39
Figure 15.	Breakdown of programme expenditure (2013-21)	40

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIOC	Indigenous, native and farmer peoples' autonomy
ASOBAN	Association of Private Banks of Bolivia
BDP	<i>Banco de Desarrollo Productivo</i>
CAF	Development Bank of Latin America
CCM	Country Coordination Mechanism
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPD	Country Programme Document
CSO	Civil society organization
DIM	Direct implementation modality
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	Gender-based violence
GCF	Green Climate Fund
GDP	Gross domestic product
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GEWE	Gender equity and women's empowerment
GHG	Greenhouse gas
Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GRES	Gender Results Effectiveness Scale
ICPE	Independent Country Programme Evaluation
IEO	Independent Evaluation Office
IFI	International financial institution
INE	National Statistical Institute
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LNOB	Leave no one behind
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MAPS	Mainstreaming, acceleration and policy support
MoH	Ministry of Health and Sport
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MSE	Micro and small enterprise
NDC	Nationally Determined Contribution
NIM	National implementation modality
OEP	Plurinational Electoral Body
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights

PAHO	Pan-American Health Organization
PDES	Economic and Social Development Plan
PNDIC	Support to the National Policy on Integrated City Development project
PPE	Personal protective equipment
RBLAC	Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SGP	Small Grants Programme
TDPS	<i>Titicaca-Desaguadero-Poopó-Salar de Copipasa</i>
ToC	Theory of change
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations Refugee Agency
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
WFP	World Food Programme

Evaluation Brief: Plurinational State of Bolivia

The Plurinational State of Bolivia is a country of high human development, with a lower-middle income economy, which has undergone important political, economic and social changes since the enactment of its 2009 Constitution. Despite a decade of socioeconomic progress, Bolivia still faces significant challenges in terms of reducing poverty and inequality. The country has promoted indigenous autonomy and gender equality, but still faces challenges to reduce exclusion and anti-discrimination. Despite its abundant natural wealth, Bolivia is highly vulnerable to emergencies, as evidenced by recent environmental crises including droughts and fires, the political crises of 2019 and 2020, and the health emergency due to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Country Programme Document for Bolivia 2018-2022 is aligned with the UNDP Strategic Plan 2018-2021 and national priorities set out in the Patriotic Agenda 2025 and the Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-2020. Its implementation has been articulated around three areas of intervention: 1) public management and inclusive services; 2) integral development and plural economy; and 3) interculturality.

Programme expenditure by thematic area, 2018–2021 (US\$ millions)



Country programme funding sources, 2018–2021



Findings and Conclusions

The evaluation shows how the response to recent crises in the country has driven the scale of the UNDP programme in this cycle. UNDP quickly and flexibly adjusted its workplan to respond to new priorities, but certain planned areas of work were affected. UNDP maintained a strong value proposition in the area of democratic governance, where its added value for the consolidation of democratic institutions and indigenous autonomy is recognized by counterparts and partners. However, UNDP support for access to justice needs to be significantly strengthened.

UNDP contributed to the development of national health capacity for the eradication of malaria and tuberculosis in the most affected areas. Experience in these programmes was instrumental to the response to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the achievement and sustainability of health outcomes have been challenged by recent reductions in resources allocated to community surveillance.

UNDP support for the reduction of poverty and inequality was valuable, but limited. While the COVID-19 response provided UNDP with valuable entry points to support women's employment and small and medium-sized enterprises, such initiatives require a more strategic approach to overcome structural challenges. Similarly, in the area of environment, the country's severe vulnerability to climate events requires renewed UNDP attention to overcome internal and external challenges that have affected the achievement of results during this cycle.

UNDP did not have a strategy to promote gender equality in Bolivia over this cycle, and would have benefitted from a better operational definition of the 'leave no one behind' principle. However, it has introduced valuable innovations and experimented with portfolio approaches and data to inform evidence-based programmes in vulnerable areas.

Recommendations

To strengthen UNDP work in Bolivia in support of national development priorities, the Independent Country Programme Evaluation made seven recommendations:

Recommendation 1. In the next programme cycle, UNDP should expand the poverty reduction and socioeconomic development focus of its offer to support the reconstruction of the economy towards the '*Vivir Bien*' (Living Well) objectives, and the reduction of inequalities, within the framework of the new PDES 2021-2025 and COVID-19 recovery. UNDP should strengthen its support for the promotion of decent employment, particularly for women and youth.

Recommendation 2. UNDP should continue its work on governance, focusing on strengthening the sustainability of the results achieved in the current programme cycle and reactivating its work on justice.

Recommendation 3. UNDP should build on the strengths gained and lessons learned from its implementation of tuberculosis and malaria programmes and the COVID-19 response, to expand its health programme beyond the Global Fund framework.

Recommendation 4. UNDP should reinforce its programme offer on the environment, natural resource management and climate change. Through enhanced access to vertical funds, and taking advantage of synergies with other signature solutions, UNDP should promote further interventions in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation to also secure the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

Recommendation 5. UNDP should take advantage of its national outreach to deepen its engagement with civil society for project delivery, while strengthening its advisory role with the Government. Partnerships with other United Nations agencies to enhance community resilience should be further explored.

Recommendation 6. To ensure future financial sustainability, UNDP should update its resource mobilization strategy in line with the new programme offer and ensure that each of the defined thematic areas of intervention has a dedicated component within the strategy.

Recommendation 7. UNDP should develop a gender strategy describing how it plans to address social norms and the deep roots of inequalities affecting women's livelihoods and full enjoyment of their rights.

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION



This chapter presents the purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation and the methodology applied and lays out the development context of the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

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, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP strategy in facilitating and leveraging national efforts for achieving development results. The purpose of an ICPE is twofold: strengthening accountability of UNDP to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board, and promoting learning. ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the overall provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.¹

This is the first country-level evaluation conducted by UNDP in the Plurinational State of Bolivia (hereafter referred to in its short form: Bolivia). This ICPE covers UNDP work implemented under the umbrella of the 2018-2022 Country Programme Document (CPD), up to December 2021. The scope of the ICPE includes the UNDP programme in its entirety, from all funding sources including UNDP regular resources, donors and the Government. The ICPE also considered interventions that started in the previous programme cycle and continued into the current one, as per the evaluation terms of reference (Annex 1).

The ICPE is guided by five main evaluation questions (Box 1). Among other areas of focus, the ICPE paid close attention to how the pandemic affected the planned CPD implementation and the extent to which the UNDP response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic contributed to the Government's relief and recovery efforts. The ICPE presents findings, conclusions and recommendations and will serve as an input to the development of the new CPD.

The primary audiences for the evaluation are the UNDP Bolivia country office, the Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean (RBLAC), the UNDP Executive Board and the Government of Bolivia. It is also expected to be used as an input by other United Nations agencies and development stakeholders in the country.

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 UNDP programme coherently responded to the country's sustainable development needs?
 3. To what extent has the programme achieved (or is likely to achieve) its intended objectives?
 4. To what extent has UNDP been able to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and support the country's preparedness, response and recovery process?
 5. What (internal and external) factors have contributed to, or hindered, UNDP performance and eventually, the sustainability of results?
-

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

1.2 Evaluation methodology

The ICPE was conducted according to the approved IEO process and methodology (see full evaluation framework in Annex 2) and adhered to United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards.² At the start of the evaluation, the team (with the UNDP country office) identified and validated the list of all the projects within the programme cycle which would form the basis for the analysis (complete project list in Annex 3). This was followed by a desk review of reference material, including country programme strategies, project and programme documents, monitoring reports, audits and evaluations (see Annex 4 for full list), and a stakeholder analysis. The evaluation sought balanced representation of different types of actors involved in the programme, including government officials, project implementing partners, beneficiary groups, United Nations agencies and other development partners from donors, civil society, private sector and academia.

The evaluation employed a rating system to assess the performance of the country programme using the five internationally agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability (OECD-DAC, 2020). The relevance and coherence of the programme was assessed in relation to key national development policies and strategies, changes in the national context and the interventions of other international actors in the country. UNDP capacity to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was also considered. The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was analysed through an assessment of progress towards expected outputs, and the extent to which these outputs contributed to the intended CPD outcomes. To better understand UNDP performance and the efficiency and sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE examined the specific factors that have influenced the programme, positively and negatively.

Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in consultation with the country office, the ICPE was conducted remotely. To offset some of the challenges of remote evaluations, IEO hired a team of national consultants to support the data collection and analysis process.

The evaluation relied on information collected from different sources, triangulated before the final analysis. These included:

- A review of UNDP documentation on projects and programmes in Bolivia, decentralized evaluations, research papers and other available country-related publications.³
- An in-depth evaluation questionnaire to collect evidence on reported results, completed by the UNDP country office and further discussed and validated during interviews.
- An analysis of the programme outcomes and theories of change (ToCs), and mapping of implemented projects against the goals set in the CPD.
- A total of 80 semi-structured virtual interviews with stakeholders (see Annex 5 for a complete list), to collect data, assess perceptions on the scope and effectiveness of programme interventions, determine factors affecting performance and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the UNDP programme. In this process, IEO ensured that the evaluation team and stakeholders were not put in harm's way by the pandemic.

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

³ Eight decentralized evaluations were conducted in the period under review. The quality assessment of the reports was: one satisfactory, one moderately satisfactory, three moderately unsatisfactory, one unsatisfactory and two pending assessment. Evaluation reports are available at <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/plans/detail/1460>.

In line with the UNDP gender mainstreaming strategy, the evaluation examined the level of gender mainstreaming across the country programme and operations using gender markers and the IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES).⁴ Where available, sex-disaggregated data were collected and assessed against programme outcomes.

The draft ICPE report was quality-assured through internal and external review processes before being submitted to the country office and RBLAC for comments and identification of factual errors. The revised report was then shared with the Government and other national partners for comment. A final stakeholder debriefing was held over videoconference, bringing together representatives of major programme stakeholders. The event offered an additional opportunity to discuss the results of the evaluation and ways forward for UNDP in the next cycle, including the management response presented by the UNDP country office.

Evaluation limitations

The high turnover of national officials, resulting from changes in government following the political crisis that affected Bolivia during this programme cycle, challenged the ability of the ICPE to gain fuller insights from actors with in-depth information on UNDP programmes. IEO tried to mitigate this situation through an extensive stakeholder mapping exercise, an extended interview period to facilitate participation, and a prioritization of actors with continuous involvement and knowledge of the full project cycle, such as donors. IEO attempts to reach out to members of the previous Cabinet who had worked with UNDP were only partially successful, forcing the triangulation of findings by other means.

Because of the number of COVID-19 cases in the country at the time of planning and conducting data collection, in-person visits to project sites were not possible. This limited access to some programme beneficiaries at community level affected the team's ability to capture insights and nuances that in-person visits would have provided. The evaluation team mitigated this by broadening the scope and depth of the secondary data review, intensifying efforts to identify beneficiaries willing and able to conduct interviews remotely, and extending the consultation period to accommodate mitigation measures.

1.3 Country context

The promulgation of the new Constitution in 2009 marked a fundamental social, economic and political milestone for Bolivia. It allowed the country to change from a centralised republican State to a Plurinational State, established under the principles of unity, equality, inclusion, dignity and social and gender equity for the pursuit of *Vivir Bien* (Living Well).⁵ The subsequent 'Patriotic Agenda' and the Economic and Social Development Plan 2016-20 (PDES) set the path for Bolivia's development reforms around 13 goals for achievement of the *Vivir Bien* framework, including the eradication of extreme poverty, universal basic services, economic diversification, integrated development, sovereignty over natural resources, and transparency in public administration.⁶ PDES 2016-20 highlighted the importance of all sectors for the country's economic development, including agriculture, energy and tourism as driving forces.

⁴ 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. It does not reflect the 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. The GRES classifies gender results into five categories: gender negative, gender blind, gender targeted, gender responsive and gender transformative.

⁵ *Vivir Bien* is a philosophy that values life, seeks the balance of individual and collective well-being, promoting respect and the harmonious coexistence of human beings with nature.

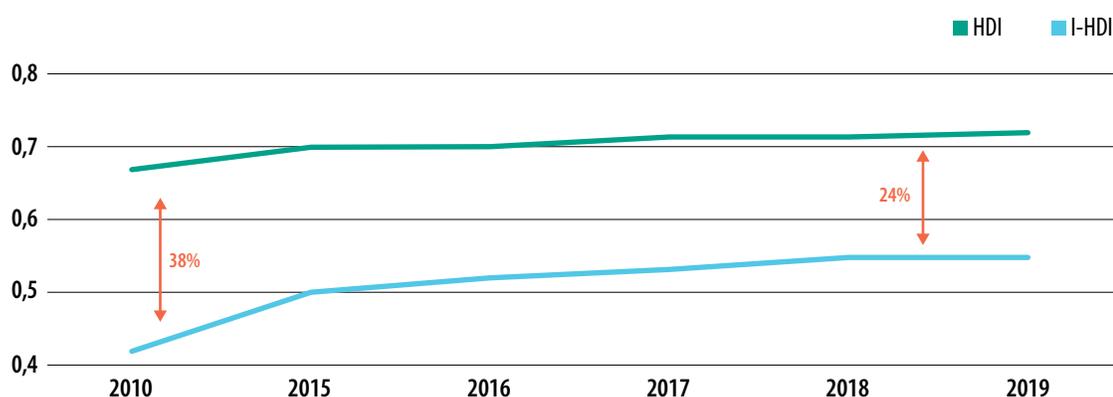
⁶ Approved in 2013, the Patriotic Agenda sets out 13 pillars of action to achieve a more inclusive and participatory state by 2025. See http://www.planificacion.gob.bo/uploads/AGENDA_PATRIOTICA2025_MPD.pdf.

The development of a sustainable production system (life systems) was also set as a priority, to ensure the “complementary rights of individuals, societies and Mother Earth” and to reduce environmental pollution in the context of a changing climate.

The Constitution recognises the ‘Autonomy of Indigenous, Native and Farmer Peoples’ (AIOC), guaranteeing these communities the right to self-determination within the unity of the State.⁷ Implementation of the AIOC process has made slow progress since 2009. By 2022, more than 30 native indigenous communities had opted in, but only five had been formally recognized as legal entities: Charagua Iyambae in Santa Cruz (2015), Uru Chipaya in Oruro (2016), Raqaypampa in Cochabamba (2017), Salinas de Garci Mendoza in Oruro (2019) and most recently Kereimba Iyaambae in Santa Cruz (2021).

A lower-middle income economy, naturally constrained in its access to trade by its landlocked nature, Bolivia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew cumulatively by 51.16 percent between 2010 and 2019, propelled by a favourable external environment with high commodity prices, prudent macroeconomic management and public investment in support of gas exports.⁸ In 2019, Bolivia reached high human development country status (with a Human Development Index value of 0.718), positioning it at 107 of 189 countries and territories (see figure 1).⁹ While still below the average for Latin America and the Caribbean (0.766), this reflected a decade of gains in terms of per capita income, life expectancy and education. Between 2009 and 2019, poverty fell from 51.3 percent to 37.2 percent of the population, and extreme poverty from 26.1 percent to 12.9 percent (using the national poverty line measure). This improvement was accompanied by decreasing inequality, with the GINI coefficient falling from 0.50 to 0.42 over the same period.¹⁰

FIGURE 1. Human development and inequality in Bolivia 2010–2019



Source: IEO. Data from UNDP Human Development Report

⁷ 48 percent of the population of Bolivia is considered indigenous (INE 2017). The Bolivian Constitution recognises the existence of four types of autonomy in the territorial organization of the State: departmental, municipal, regional and indigenous, native, farmer autonomy.
⁸ GDP, PPP (constant 2017 international \$) Source: The World Bank, 2022. <https://data.worldbank.org/country/bolivia>.
⁹ See <https://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/BOL.pdf>.
¹⁰ INE: <https://www.ine.gob.bo/index.php/estadisticas-economicas/encuestas-de-hogares/>.

Despite this notable progress, the country has continued to suffer from socioeconomic inequalities, mostly a reflection of income disparities, with great differences by geographic area, ethnic group and gender. Indigenous people account for about 48 percent of the population but 75 percent of multidimensionally poor people.¹¹ 70 percent of Bolivians live in cities, and rapid urbanization is straining transport systems and worsening air pollution, quality of life and access to public services, affecting vulnerable populations the most.¹² Lack of access to basic services significantly impacts people with disabilities, particularly in education where their enrolment rate is half that of the general population. Rural areas still have limited communications infrastructure and access to electricity. Gender differences also play an important role in inequality: while women live longer, they have fewer years of education (1.5 on average) and earn on average 39 percent less than men.¹³ Bolivia ranked 61 in the 2021 Global Gender Gap index, 19 lower than in 2020, with low scores in the economic participation and health sub-indexes,¹⁴ although it was well positioned in terms of political empowerment with 46.2 percent of members of parliament being women.¹⁵ The intersection of gender, education and poverty deepens women's vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV): the latest national statistics reported that 67 percent of married women had experienced physical violence at the hands of their partner at some point in their lives, rising to almost 77 percent of those with no education.¹⁶

The multidimensional issues and changes that have affected Bolivia's landscape since 2015, described below, have challenged, and partly reversed, the country's socioeconomic gains. As the Bolivian economic boom started to wane, the Government increased internal and external public debt to counteract the negative impact of reduced exports on the economy. While this promoted domestic demand and reduced the negative balance of payments, it also resulted in the reduction of international reserves and fiscal savings accumulated during the boom.¹⁷ With the outbreak of COVID-19, Bolivia's GDP fell by 8.8 percent and exports by 18.3 percent (between 2019 and 2020). This was reflected in an increase in poverty levels (to 39 percent) and extreme poverty (to 13.7 percent) in 2020. Unemployment rates reached their highest levels since 2011 (7.3 for men and 9.8 for women in 2020). However, according to the National Statistical Institute (INE), the country experienced rapid economic recovery in 2021, with GDP growth of 6.1 percent.¹⁸

The results of the 2016 constitutional referendum, which rejected the constitutional amendment to allow for more than one consecutive re-election as President of the State, and the subsequent constitutional ruling that made this possible,¹⁹ generated a dynamic of growing social tension and polarization in the country. In October 2019, dissatisfaction with the electoral process from part of civil society, which began with the interruption of the notification of preliminary results, led to a 20-day general strike, widespread social unrest throughout the country with multiple fatalities, the resignation of the President, and the subsequent appointment of an interim government. A new president was elected on 18 October 2020.

There is a pending agenda for structural reform in constitutional matters with, as its central axis, the institutional strengthening of the Plurinational Electoral Body (OEP), the justice system and the legislative branch of government. One of the consequences of a lack of institutional consolidation is the difficulty to effectively implement public policies and development strategies. Far-reaching reform of the justice system

¹¹ UNDP (2021) Global MPI: Unmasking disparities by ethnicity, caste and gender. <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2021-MPI>.

¹² See <https://sdgintegration.undp.org/countries/bolivia>.

¹³ UNDP (2020) Human Development Index, Information Note.

¹⁴ World Economic Forum (2021) Global Gender Gap Report.

¹⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union. <https://www.ipu.org/>.

¹⁶ UNDP (2020) Human Development Report.

¹⁷ The World Bank. Bolivia At-A-Glance.

¹⁸ INE. <https://www.ine.gob.bo/>.

¹⁹ Constitutional Ruling 0084/2017 of 28 November.

has been recommended to ensure independence, due process and the right of access to justice, and to avoid abusive use of the pre-trial detention system.²⁰ In March 2020, pre-trial detainees accounted for 65 percent of the total prison population, the second highest number in South America.²¹

On 13 March 2020, Bolivia had its first confirmed case of COVID-19, rising to around 890,000 confirmed cases (7.6 percent of the population) by the end of February 2022, and more than 21,400 deaths.²² La Paz and Santa Cruz, two of the country's largest cities, were especially hard hit. COVID-19 posed an additional strain on the Bolivian health system, which lacks infrastructure (13 beds per 10,000 people), staff and financing to meet the needs of the population. In 2019, health expenditure was 6.9 percent of GDP, below the regional average of 8 percent and with important subnational disparities in terms of the distribution of resources of the health system. Tuberculosis and vector-borne diseases such as malaria, dengue, chagas and yellow fever are highly prevalent in rural areas of Bolivia and remote zones of the Amazon region. With support from the international community, malaria incidence and tuberculosis mortality have decreased significantly in the last decade, but remain a threat to the health of the most vulnerable.

The diverse Bolivian ecosystem, with marked contrasts between the mountains of the Andean region, valleys of the sub-Andean region and plains covered by the Amazon rainforest in the north, has been variously affected by climate change. Impacts include temperature increases, excess rainfall, and droughts with important effects on agro-biodiversity and food security. In 2015, following a particularly intense *El Niño* phenomenon, the second largest lake in the country almost dried up, threatening the livelihoods of communities, related ecosystems and biodiversity. Wildfires have also intensified since 2000, with a special focus on forestry areas in 2019, due to the interaction between natural conditions such as extreme drought, and land clearing practices, creating significant losses to the Amazon Forest area and the Chiquitano dry forest.²³ In the latter alone, fires affected a total of 2.3 million hectares (ha.), equivalent to 6 percent of the territory of Santa Cruz. As of 2020, 18 percent of Bolivia's land was degraded.²⁴ The Government acknowledges the importance of the conservation of natural resources and protection against climate change, promoting the principles of equity, climate justice and common (yet differentiated) responsibilities, strengthening the means of implementation of adaptation actions and non-market-based mechanisms to scale and accelerate their national contributions. Its commitment was reflected in the ratification of the Paris Agreement in 2016, and in several laws, policies and programmes, such as the recent Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) for the period 2021-2030.

1.4 UNDP programme under review

The Standard Basic Agreement signed between the Government of Bolivia and UNDP on 31 October 1974 constitutes the legal basis for programme documents and technical cooperation projects supported by UNDP in various areas of development. The UNDP CPD for Bolivia for 2018-22 responds to the priorities agreed in the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2018-22.²⁵ These priorities are aligned with the Patriotic Agenda 2025, and focus on supporting the implementation of PDES for 2016-20.²⁶

²⁰ Interdisciplinary Group of Independent Experts (2021) GIEI-Bolivia, Final Report, 23 July 2021.

²¹ The World Prison Brief. <https://www.prisonstudies.org/>.

²² The number of citizens with at least one dose of the vaccine reached 6.9 million by February 2022 (around 59 percent of the total population). All COVID-19 data from World Health Organization, 3 March 2022. <https://covid19.who.int/>.

²³ Fires affected 6 percent (2.3 million ha.) of the territory of Santa Cruz. Flores-Valencia, M., Maillard, O. (2021) *Detección y cuantificación de los incendios forestales 2020: un análisis de la afectación en municipios, Tierras de Producción Forestal Permanente y áreas protegidas del departamento de Santa Cruz, Bolivia.*, Fundación para la Conservación del Bosque Chiquitano, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.

²⁴ UNDP (2020) Human Development Report.

²⁵ In Bolivia called the United Nations Complementarity Framework for Living Well in Bolivia (*Marco de Complementariedad de Naciones Unidas para el Vivir Bien en Bolivia*).

²⁶ See <http://vpc.planificacion.gob.bo/pdes/>.

The UNDP country programme is expected to contribute to four UNDAF outcomes and two UNDP strategic plan 2017-21 outcomes. The thematic areas of intervention are aligned to the PDES pillars, as illustrated in Figure 2. The total funding estimated for the CPD 2018-2022 was US\$ 62.7 million. The extent of the scope of public management and inclusive services outcome was emerging, with 56 percent of the planned resources allocated to that area.

FIGURE 2: Main thematic areas of the UNDP Bolivia country programme

CPD Outcome 1 Public management and inclusive services	CPD Outcome 2 Integral development and plural economy	CPD Outcome 3 Interculturality
UNDAF ²⁷ Outcomes 1 and 3	UNDAF Outcome 2	UNDAF Outcome 4
PDES pillars 1. Poverty eradication 3. Health, education and sports	PDES pillars 9. Environmental sovereignty with comprehensive development	PDES pillars 1. Poverty eradication
11. Sovereignty and transparency in the public sector		

In the **Public Management and Inclusive Services area** (Outcome 1), UNDP planned to support national policies that promote effective public services, working in three sectors: i) integrated development planning for poverty reduction and social progress; ii) access to justice, citizen security and crime reduction, by addressing structural weaknesses in the justice system; and iii) communicable diseases, with support to the Ministry of Health and Sport (MoH) with funds from the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund).

Within the **Integral Development and Plural Economy area** (Outcome 2), UNDP aimed to support institutions at central and subnational levels to apply the life systems concept in their planning processes. It also aimed to promote risk reduction and climate adaptation actions that would contribute to strengthening resilient and inclusive productive systems for food security, while respecting biodiversity and ecosystem conservation. UNDP was committed to supporting the operationalization of the first national disaster response system and implementing sustainable livelihoods projects for communities with high-exposure to natural or man-made disasters. Under this outcome, the UNDP Global Environment Facility (GEF) portfolio was expected to implement sustainable productive systems, while enhancing the governance of protected areas. At local level, the programme focused on indigenous communities in protected areas or buffer zones in the Amazonia and Chaco Boliviano regions, and women-led enterprises in northern La Paz and Pando, to improve their livelihoods.

In the **Interculturality area** (Outcome 3), UNDP planned to enhance the institutional and public management capacity of indigenous autonomous governments, in coordination with national institutions, to contribute to the effective exercise of the rights of native farmers and Afro-descendent people. Under

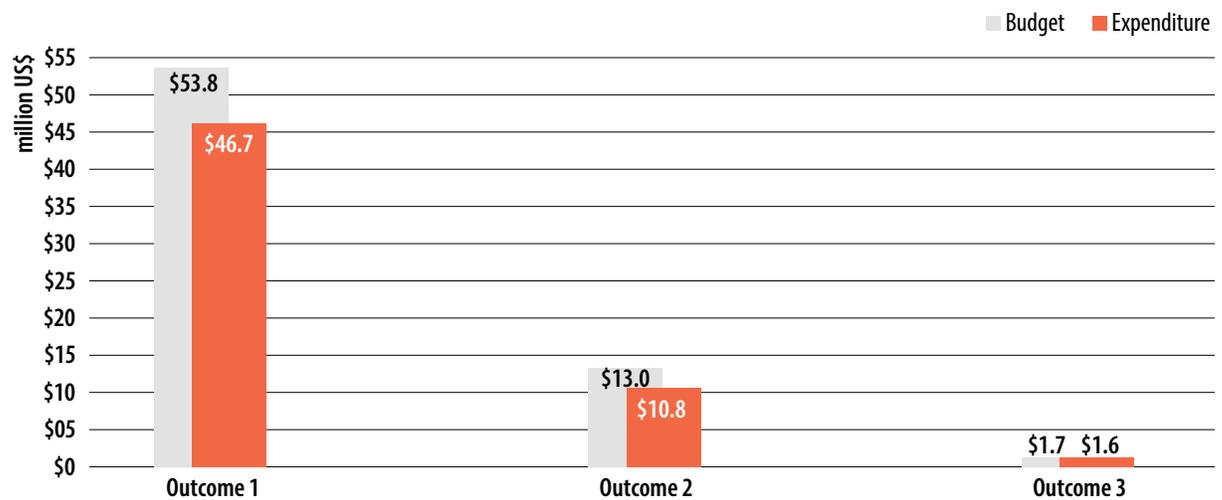
²⁷ UNDAF had: Outcome 1 on inclusive social development towards an integral human being; Outcome 2 on integral development and plural economy; Outcome 3 on public management and plural justice; and Outcome 4 on interculturality, decolonization and depatriarchalization.

this outcome, UNDP would also strengthen the management capacity of women elected to indigenous government institutions and working to empower women in their communities, to ensure that their voices are heard.

As of December 2021, UNDP mobilized \$68.5 million resources, mostly in support of Outcome 1 (78.5 percent of the total programme budget), largely from COVID-19, Global Fund and election resources. Approximately half of the UNDP programme in Bolivia has been funded by vertical trust funds, representing 53 percent (\$31.2 million) of expenditure from 2018 to 2021 (Figure 4).

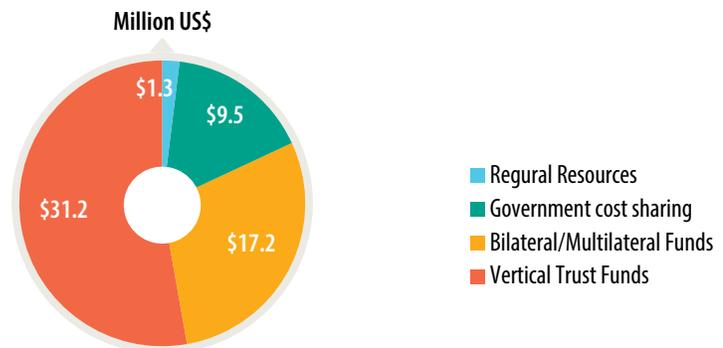
During the evaluation period, UNDP implemented 42 projects: 25 for public management and inclusive services (Outcome 1); 15 for integral development and the plural economy (Outcome 2); and two for interculturality (Outcome 3).²⁸ Most projects used the direct implementation modality (DIM).²⁹

FIGURE 3. Budget and expenditure for overall CPD programme (2018-2021) by outcome



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas. Data as of February 2022

FIGURE 4. Expenditure by fund category for overall CPD programme (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

²⁸ See Annex 3 for the complete list of projects.

²⁹ In the current CPD cycle, 34 out of 42 projects (81 percent) were DIM, representing 77 percent of the total CPD expenditure.

CHAPTER 2

FINDINGS



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

2.1 Outcome 1: Public management and inclusive services

CPD Outcome 1. State institutions have designed and implemented efficient and effective policies that promote non-violent coexistence with equitable access to quality justice, citizen security and sectoral public services, with permanent dialogue and the effective participation of a more empowered civil society.

Related outputs:

OUTPUT 1.1. Selected public institutions have shown innovation and have designed evidence-based policies to further poverty reduction and protect recent social achievements.

OUTPUT 1.2. State entities have identified strategies to strengthen their planning processes based on more integral development approaches.

OUTPUT 1.3. New management models are implemented in the justice system to improve the quality and efficiency of its services.

OUTPUT 1.4. Competent institutions have reduced the impact of criminal phenomena.

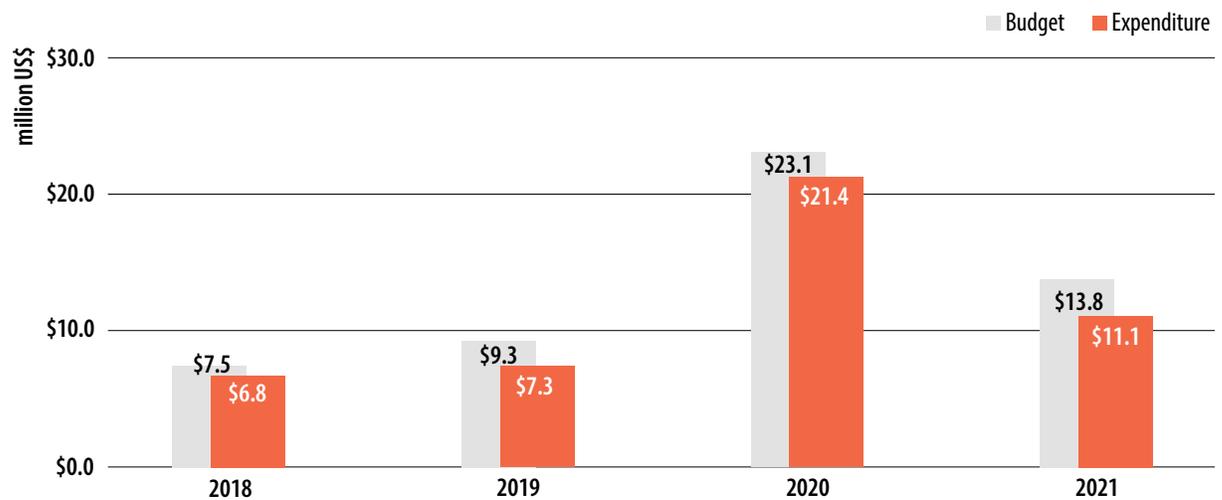
OUTPUT 1.5. Increased capacity of the national (health) programmes and their stakeholders to take effective prevention, diagnosis and treatment actions for malaria and tuberculosis.

OUTPUT 1.6. National programme stakeholders implement a comprehensive and timely information system in conformity with national policies and in the framework of the National Health Information System.

During this programme cycle, UNDP implemented 25 projects under this outcome, with a budget of \$53.7 million (against an estimate of \$35.3 at the beginning of the cycle), and expenditure of \$46.7 million (79 percent of UNDP total expenditure).³⁰ The increase in budget associated with this outcome, particularly significant in 2020, was due to the mobilization of resources to respond to emergencies in the country, in particular, support to the OEP to improve the credibility of the electoral process (\$7.9 million) and the COVID-19 crisis response (\$9.6 million). The Global Fund has been the main source of funding for this outcome (\$22.1 million, 47 percent of total expenditure), followed by MoH (20 percent), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency and the European Commission (both with 5 percent).

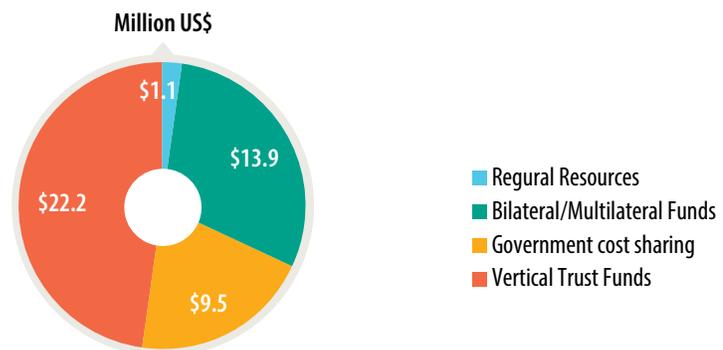
³⁰ The financial resources correspond to the period: 2018 to 31 December 2021. Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS.

FIGURE 5. Evolution of budget and expenditure for the area of public management and inclusive services



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS

FIGURE 6. Expenditure by fund category for public management and inclusive services (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS

Finding 1. Peace and democratic governance. UNDP has significantly contributed to the re-establishment of legitimacy of democratic institutions after the political crisis of October 2019. UNDP support to the 2020 national elections, the 2021 subnational elections and the peace talks contributed majorly to overcoming the crisis, leading to the peaceful election of new authorities. Ensuring the sustainability and credibility gained at the institutional level remains a challenge, however.

UNDP supported the pacification of the country and the restoration of democratic institutions following the political crisis in 2019, strengthening the capacity of electoral authorities and promoting a culture of peace. The crisis was generated after the results of the October 2019 general elections, which led to the resignation of the highest State authorities including the then President and Vice-President, as well as most members of the OEP and the Departmental Electoral Tribunals. In an environment of acute political and social polarization, with reduced space for peacebuilding dialogue, UNDP managed to position itself

as a neutral actor, working alongside the United Nations Secretary General's Personal Envoy and other United Nations agencies. Interviewees representing national political actors on all sides and international cooperation agencies in Bolivia acknowledged this impartial positioning of UNDP.

Substantial UNDP support to electoral institutions throughout the electoral process contributed to the country's successful conduct of general and subnational elections with a high degree of credibility, overcoming the political deadlock generated by the crisis and partially restoring the credibility of the OEP. UNDP incurred a high degree of exposure and risk during this project, given the initially short timeframe for the elections, the lack of donors and the magnitude of procurement required. However, UNDP decided to support the process as part of peace agreements in 2019, and the risk was evaluated within the United Nations system as part of the peacebuilding initiative and in close discussion with Secretary General's Personal Envoy. UNDP support included the purchase of equipment, the training of various actors across the country (delegates, election officials and electoral judges), the implementation of sociopolitical dialogues as a conflict prevention strategy, and advice on safety and integrity measures in response to the pandemic. Without that advice and procurement support, it is unlikely that the 2020 general elections and 2021 subnational elections would have taken place. Interviewees highlighted UNDP added value in terms of the mobilization of international experts in the aforementioned intervention areas. Also, as the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the electoral calendar three times, UNDP assistance was vital for the implementation of biosecurity protocols at polling stations for judges, delegates and voters.

UNDP contributed to the peaceful election processes through dialogues and peacebuilding roundtables in all departments, bringing together representatives and leaders of political parties, civil society, citizen platforms, indigenous communities and others to share information on the electoral process, biosecurity measures, gender inequality, intercultural democracy, and the functioning of special constituencies. UNDP reported over 200 dialogue activities, including 20 held exclusively with indigenous peoples and 15 with women, engaging around 10,000 participants, with more than 25,000 views of recordings online. According to available records, 38 percent of participants were women and 12 percent youth.

Together with UN Women, UNDP supported the fulfilment of the constitutional mandate on gender parity and alternation, supporting the Electoral Body to control the lists of candidates of political parties. The result strengthened democratic parity in the country, with women reaching 52 percent of representation in the Legislative Assembly after the 2020 elections. Interviewees appreciated UNDP support to the OEP with tried and tested conflict-resolution methodologies, as well as the provision of international expertise, but noted that communication could have been faster and clearer. The medium and long-term sustainability of institutional strengthening, and of the credibility gained by the project, was a source of concern for various interviewees, before learning of the recent extension of the project to the inter-election period. The need to continue working in this area is evident, given the volatility of the current environment and the numerous pending tasks of the OEP. The resignation of some OEP members, the fact that it has not been established as a public authority, and growing suspicion about the transparency of the chain of custody, have recently undermined the strength and credibility of the institution.

Finding 2. Evidence-based development planning. Through multiple interventions, UNDP supported the strengthening of public sector capacity, to improve the design and management of evidence-based and integrated socioeconomic public policies at national and local levels. Evidence of innovations set out in the CPD is limited, however, and the sustainability of results was hampered by a change in authorities due to the political crisis.

Through two projects funded by UNDP and the Development Bank of Latin America [CAF] (to a total of \$400,000), UNDP supported the strengthening of national analytical capacity for the design and monitoring of public policies in the framework of the PDES 2016-20. Among other activities, UNDP provided technical assistance for analysis of the impact of fiscal policies on poverty and inequality, and introduced the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) approach to the Ministry of Planning, INE and Policy Analysis Unit, although evidence of use is limited. Only the departmental Government of Tarija used MPI to inform its COVID-19 response, targeting female heads of household. UNDP also promoted a mechanism for monitoring the PDES indicators and results chain, to support the adjustment and consolidation of the programme at national and subnational levels (with territorial plans in six departments) and its long-term development strategy. Stakeholders highlighted that the project strengthened the results framework and indicator set, but implementation was affected by the departure of authorities following the 2019 crisis.

The 'SDG territorialization' project, with multiple bilateral funders, aimed to support the territorial implementation in pilot municipalities of integrated, multi-level and multi-sectoral planning in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While not without challenges, UNDP was able to reconcile the international mandate with Bolivia's approach, centred on the national development plan. UNDP boosted the use of SDG indicators at subnational level and managed to generate gender-sensitive, multidimensional poverty indicators through the collection of primary data, which are scarce in the country, in Tarija and Oruro. To date, this has helped to elaborate the Tarija development agenda. The municipality generated a survey to measure multidimensional poverty, based on the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) methodology, where six deprivations were identified. On this basis, and through the development of a ToC, three key actions were prioritised.

UNDP participated in the 'Support to the National Policy on Integrated City Development' (PNDIC) project, under the leadership of UN-Habitat. UNDP had two roles in support of this initiative, exploring the role of cities in the socioeconomic development of the country. On the one hand, it made a technical contribution to the design of PNDIC, with products such as the MPI for cities. On the other, UN-Habitat requested UNDP operational support for the administration of activities, for which United Nations agreements were signed. This included support for the operationalization of participatory spaces to support PNDIC formulation, implementation and monitoring, and the implementation of phase two of the PNDIC communication strategy. The joint initiative struggled from the outset, as political and health crises in the country prevented the leadership or management of the activities pertaining to these agreements, meaning that resources were not fully implemented. UNDP returned the remaining resources and closed the agreements with UN-Habitat.

This portfolio of interventions was not sufficient, effective or sustainable enough to meet the first two outputs of this outcome. Evidence of public institution innovations as a result of the projects, or their effectiveness in promoting poverty reduction and the protection of social gains, is limited. The political-institutional context, with the rotation of authorities at national and subnational levels, has also limited the ownership and use of the tools. According to interviewees, the promotion of multidimensional wellbeing measurement systems such as the MPI for informed decision-making was problematic, possibly because of limited ownership of comprehensive frameworks such as Agenda 2030, and limited capacity to generate indicators for planning. The existence of several, unlinked sectoral and territorial information systems, combined with the turnover of public officials and project partners, has undermined the effectiveness of capacity-building efforts.

Finding 3. Socioeconomic development. UNDP attention to vulnerable communities in the *Qhapaq Ñan* region was valuable, supporting tourism development and the promotion of interregional cooperation. The project impact was highly affected by the outbreak of COVID-19.

Working in cooperation with UNDP offices in Peru and Ecuador, UNDP Bolivia promoted South-South cooperation to strengthen community tourism ventures associated with the six routes of the *Qhapaq Ñan*. This cooperation aimed to build on the cultural wealth of communities in the area with valued interactions and exchange of experiences among actors from different countries.³¹

The project started in 2016, and remained highly relevant with a focus on ‘leaving no one behind’ (LNOB) as it mostly worked with rural indigenous populations with low educational attainment and high levels of poverty, whose livelihoods depend largely on low-return agricultural production. In this regard, the project sought to enhance productive economic development and diversify livelihoods, with opportunities for sustainability over time, moving away from assistance interventions. The project added value by capitalizing on existing initiatives and supporting their success, and by promoting social capital among various actors, including the private sector, through spaces for dialogue and consensus-building.

Applying guidelines established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNDP supported participatory processes for the safeguarding and enhancement of four examples of intangible cultural heritage, and the preservation of four sections of the *Qhapaq Ñan*, through training and technical assistance aimed at promoting tourism ventures in the communities. UNDP also contributed to the legal recognition of 10 community enterprises, two led by women and involving a total of 181 people, of whom 71 were women and 110 were men. UNDP assistance to the development of institutional capacity for tourism management and the provision of income opportunities, particularly for women, were valued. The empowerment of women for management has enabled women to occupy the highest authority of two of the three Trail Committees. Unfortunately, the outbreak of COVID-19 badly affected the tourism sector, limiting the impact of interventions to improve the socioeconomic conditions of communities. The sustainability of the project is linked to the reactivation of the tangible and intangible capital generated to date, ranging from route preservation or maintenance of tourist signage to community enterprises and networks for the coordination and promotion of tourism.

Finding 4. Increased capacity for the elaboration and approval of public policies. UNDP provided valuable technical support to enhance the capacity of national stakeholders to pass draft legislation and improved understanding of the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature. The results and sustainability of UNDP initiatives in this area have been strongly affected by the political crisis.

UNDP support to consolidate the relationship between the executive and legislative branches of government aimed to strengthen coordination between the two. Coordination issues are often the result of a lack of understanding of the powers and responsibilities of the National Assembly, as well as a lack of technical knowledge of the various bills, regulations and initiatives that the Executive sends to the Legislature for approval. The need for technical training and advice for the Legislative Branch is greatly relevant, for a better understanding not only of the relationship, obligations and attributions of each public power, but also of the complexity of the process for designing and executing public policies to address the development challenges of the Plurinational State of Bolivia from a legislative perspective.

³¹ UNDP worked in ten communities of Bolivia: San Pedro, Andamarca and Casa Chuta on the Desaguadero-Viacha route; Chirapaca, Ispaya Big Quirowate and Santiago de Okola in Puerto Acosta-Pucarani; and Takesi, Qaaqapi and Chojllita in Palca-Yanacachi. Georeferenced information of the Qhapaq Ñan Andean road system can be found here: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1459/>.

UNDP support to the National Assembly and Vice-Presidency of the Plurinational State (the constitutional head of the legislative branch) responded to significant national needs for clarity and institutional consolidation. This was brought about by the approval of the new Constitution in 2009, the high turnover rate of Assembly members since, and the disruption brought about by the political crisis of 2019/2020. The provision of technical training and advice to the legislative branch to improve understanding of the roles and responsibilities, obligations and attributions of each public power, as well as the complexity of designing and executing public policies that address the development challenges of the country, was highly relevant.

The project allowed UNDP to continue positioning itself as a driver to strengthen national capacity and as a provider of policy advice, though the effectiveness and sustainability of the results achieved through small-scale UNDP support were significantly affected by the 2019/2020 political crisis. The evaluation found little record of training, or evidence of its results on the practical exercise of legislator functions. The limited evidence, and the inadequacy of the results framework, did not allow for robust identification of project impact. The challenges that gave rise to the work in this area are still very much present, and can be incorporated into the next programming period.

Finding 5. Justice system. UNDP support to the consolidation, modernization and inclusion of vulnerable groups in the justice system did not materialize as planned, due to the political crisis in the country and the lack of agreements with key stakeholders, leaving this crucial area for Bolivia unaddressed.

Continuing support from the previous cycle, UNDP provided national stakeholders with detailed analysis of the context and a broad set of solutions to transform the national justice system and facilitate access to justice, including the modernization of regulations, the digitalization of justice management and actions to reduce GBV and promote the respect of human rights and social inclusion. However, the UNDP analysis failed to identify the severity and complexity of the structural crisis in the Bolivian judiciary, which existed long before the approval of the 2009 Constitution.³² This includes the lack of independence of the judiciary, the lack of consensus among the other branches of government on the paths that judicial reform should follow, and the lack of engagement of the National Assembly and OEP, since judicial reform is a constitutional issue that should involve popular consultation.

UNDP projects attained some results before the outbreak of the 2019 political crisis, including the finalization of studies on precautionary measures and preventive detention, particularly for vulnerable women, in support of the Attorney General's Office, the Supreme Court of Justice and the Ombudsman's Office. These identified the cause of delays and procedural bottlenecks, as well as flaws in processes and audience management. UNDP support to the preparation of the National Summit on Plural Justice also informed the formulation of the Criminal Procedural Code. Despite these efforts, UNDP was unable to mobilize additional international funding for justice projects, because changes to the judicial branch and Prosecutor's Office made the reform path unclear. The structural problems mentioned in previous paragraphs generated dissonance in the actions of the counterparts involved and the executive branch of the Government decided to develop justice sector reform in a unilateral manner, with no engagement of other national stakeholders and without the support of UNDP.

The next programming period opens a new set of opportunities for UNDP to generate the support required for the various stages of the reform process in this sector.

³² A full analysis of the need for judicial reform in Bolivia from a historical perspective can be found in Orías R. (2015), *Reforma judicial en Bolivia: Elementos para el diagnóstico y desafíos*. FES/ILDIS: La Paz, Bolivia.

Finding 6. Health: Tuberculosis. UNDP contributed to strengthening the national tuberculosis programme and achieved significant results in terms of reducing detection times. Through efficient planning and rapid adaptive management in this area of work, UNDP was an important enabler for United Nations support to the COVID-19 response, facilitating the provision of equipment to strengthen national diagnostic capacity and the hiring of experts.

UNDP has been the Principal Recipient for the Global Fund in Bolivia since 2006.³³ Since 2013, UNDP has directly supported the Global Fund's Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), which made it possible to strengthen the coordination of national health sector bodies and monitor the implementation of health projects implemented by UNDP. During this programme cycle, UNDP has implemented two projects, 'Bolivia Free of Tuberculosis' and the ongoing 'Strengthening Tuberculosis Control Actions in Bolivia', which are part of the National Strategy to Fight Tuberculosis and aimed to improve the detection and diagnosis, timely treatment and follow-up of tuberculosis cases, particularly in highly-affected urban areas. Stakeholders have recognised these interventions as a key reinforcement to national capacity at the departmental level in terms of infrastructure, equipment and technical staff training.

UNDP contributed to strengthening the diagnostic network through the installation and commissioning of 10 laboratories at departmental level, three of them with biosafety level II equipment, and related training on molecular biology diagnostics and biosafety. Importantly, the provision of 13 GeneXpert systems made it possible to reduce diagnostic times by over 100 days, compared to previous technology. In 2021, 6,500 cases of susceptible tuberculosis and 110 cases of drug-resistant tuberculosis were detected and treated with nutritional supplements and specific medical treatment, meeting the target of 86 percent diagnosis of detected cases. The Global Fund rated the implementation of the equipment installation as 'exceeding expectations'.

In terms of sustainability, UNDP Global Fund projects have promoted the transition towards the procurement of some medicines and supplies by MoH, and the strengthening of the health information system. SIN-TB software is being implemented within the national health information system, and 137 computers were allocated to 64 health networks to consolidate information from the 82 municipalities most at risk.

Good and efficient planning practices, including around the management of non-perishable project stocks, the use of Long-Term Agreements with service providers, and the development of management systems and in-house information technology solutions, allowed UNDP to provide prompt support to the Emergency Operations Centre response to the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, taking advantage of the flexible project resources channelled to this end. Within two months of the first detected cases of COVID-19 in the country (March 2020), 10 GeneXpert systems were delivered and used in the diagnosis of the disease (see also finding 8).

The COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected the performance of the tuberculosis programme during this cycle. Not only did it divert programme resources to the COVID-19 emergency response, but it also generated a supply-side disruption of health services, with large numbers of frontline health professionals affected. In Bolivia, 11.92 percent of the total number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 up to April 2021 corresponded to health sector personnel, with a case fatality rate of 1.97 percent.³⁴ In line with the experience of other countries, this was reflected in a deterioration of national tuberculosis monitoring indicators.³⁵

³³ The UNDP health unit recently evolved into the "health and development" cluster as part of a resource-based efficiency strategy.

³⁴ World Health Organization, *Impact of COVID-19 on human resources for health and policy response: the case of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Synthesis of findings in five Latin American countries*. Geneva, 2021.

³⁵ At a global level, new tuberculosis diagnoses diminished by 18 percent in 2020, declining back to the level of 2012. World Health Organization, *Global tuberculosis report 2021*. Geneva; 2021

Finding 7. Malaria. UNDP contributions to the reduction of malaria in endemic areas is widely acknowledged, after a decade of support to the national programme. The programme is currently facing the triple challenge of reviving national preventive capacity through community surveillance, reversing the rise in cases of 2019-2020, and ensuring the sustainability of results within a difficult sociopolitical context.

During this programme cycle, two UNDP Global Fund projects, 'Bolivia Free of Malaria' and 'Bolivia Free of Malaria – Transition', strengthened MoH detection capacity through rapid tests carried out by 185 volunteer collaborators in 19 municipalities, which account for 96 percent of detected cases nationwide. 36,000 rapid diagnostic tests and mosquito nets to protect more than 370,000 people have reportedly been delivered, with the aim of benefiting the general population including pregnant women, people involved in the late summer harvest, and communities living in the Brazil nut harvesting area.

Since 2019, however, malaria indicators have seen a setback, fed by multiple causes. In addition to the impact of the October 2019 unrest and the outbreak of COVID-19 and related restrictions, changes in ministerial policies resulted in a reduction of resources for case monitoring, which UNDP could only partly mitigate, and the dismantling of community surveillance in the context of the 2019 election campaign. All of this contributed to a three-fold increase in positive cases since 2017, to over 12,000 by 2020. UNDP responded to these challenges in two ways: first by maintaining a technical profile focused on addressing health needs, which enhanced its credibility *vis-a-vis* the main stakeholders (Government and civil society) within the CCM framework; and second by continuing to strengthen local technical capacity, which had been highly affected by staff turnover and presented weaknesses in relation to statistical capacity.

UNDP has worked at different levels with other United Nations agencies in the health sector, including the Pan-American/ World Health Organizations (PAHO/WHO). United Nations partners value the local presence, procurement capacity and overall robust experience in programme implementation of UNDP. However, joint initiatives are limited, with room for greater integration with agencies with an explicit health mandate such as WHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), on key aspects to achieve the SDGs such as capacity-development, and strengthening the health system and its resilience. UNDP has started to address the challenge of incorporating an environmental lens into its interventions by exploring ways to reduce the ecological footprint of health interventions.

Finding 8. Mitigation of and recovery from the effects of COVID-19. UNDP interventions to support Bolivia in mitigating the effects of, and recovering from, the COVID-19 pandemic have been timely and relevant. UNDP strengthened national response capacity through the provision of equipment and socioeconomic analysis of the impact of the pandemic. The effectiveness of certain socioeconomic recovery initiatives was limited, given the country's structural development problems and the political context.

UNDP worked closely with the Government of Bolivia, United Nations agencies and other international and national actors to mitigate and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 health outbreak and subsequent socioeconomic crisis, along three axes: through the acquisition of material and equipment for emergency medical response, through the elaboration of analytical studies and through the promotion of socioeconomic recovery.

UNDP efficiently contributed to strengthening direct COVID-19 response capacity through the purchase and distribution of equipment (such as re-agents, laboratory supplies, personal protective equipment [PPE] and diagnostic tools) and the training of health personnel. Through the 'Strengthening the response capacity of the Plurinational State of Bolivia for the COVID-19 emergency' project, a \$9.5 million World Bank loan to the Government, UNDP served as a supplier to MoH, procuring goods for the emergency response and the timely diagnosis of COVID-19 cases by the national laboratory network. Excessive global demand for supplies during

the most critical months of the pandemic limited the availability of some items included in the Agreement, and complicated transport logistics. In response to the emergency, UNDP should have carried out a more thorough risk assessment to allow more realistic delivery estimates to be shared with stakeholders.

This line of action was reinforced with three interventions within the framework of the 'Private sector contribution to the response to COVID-19' project, with funds from the Association of Private Banks of Bolivia (ASOBAN), the Bolivian stock market and the Coca-Cola Foundation, to increase the country's diagnostic and treatment capacity. Oxygen tanks and other equipment were delivered to Guayaramerín, in the department of Beni, and 13 additional reference laboratories were equipped with PPE and diagnostic tests, benefitting 90,000 people and increasing the national capacity to run PCR tests from 180 to 2,304 per day. Through different funding sources, UNDP developed a mobile phone application, REactiva MyPE, that helped to provide PPE and training on biosecurity protocols to health workers, as well as to almost 11,000 agricultural production units, micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and organizations providing social services.³⁶

UNDP also supported the COVID-19 response through the delivery of analytical products and financing platforms. Working in collaboration with all United Nations agencies, UNDP rapidly led the publication of the 'Socioeconomic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bolivia' report, published in August 2020. Analysis using the Municipal Risk Index and the Multidimensional Vulnerability Index allowed the national Government, subnational governments and municipalities to define strategies for prevention and the improvement of COVID-19 care. With funds from the Rapid Response Facility, UNDP also developed a Sustainable Development Impact Assessment System for socioeconomic recovery, with the aim of measuring the impact of the resources provided to MSEs, implemented by the *Banco de Desarrollo Productivo* (BCP), and promoted the Co-Labora crowdfunding platform for MSEs affected by COVID-19, which includes situations of high socioeconomic and climate vulnerability. However, according to interviews and available information, this is still work in progress, with limited results so far. In this context, there is no evidence of a broad roll-out to civil society of the analysis and primary data gathered.

UNDP has focused on mitigating the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 on the employment and labour income of women through two post-disaster socioeconomic recovery projects. It promoted the capacity-development of self-employed women in the informal economy to access formal financing, through a project funded by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund, led by the International Labour Organization and implemented jointly with UN Women. After initial delays linked to the political context and elections, the project conducted research with 85 women from La Paz, El Alto, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz, revealing the tangible and intangible limitations to access formal financing. The project aimed to establish multi-stakeholder dialogue mechanisms with them, but encountered difficulties in achieving the high levels of trust needed to work with women's associations. Although the project was intended to mitigate the short-term economic effects of COVID-19, its results were set for 2022 and therefore not possible to assess at the time of this evaluation. One weakness noted in terms of the design is the use of a traditional active employment approach, focused on training and supply-demand match, which disregards the need for structural reform of the formal and informal sectors.³⁷ The effectiveness of another initiative, targeting women of working age who have been laid off from formal employment or are in the midst of a layoff as a result of the pandemic, funded by the Rapid Financing Facility, was also hampered by long-standing problems around informality and the lack of quality jobs in Bolivia.

³⁶ Through the platform <https://reactivamype.pnud.bo>, developed in collaboration with the Swiss cooperation in Bolivia.

³⁷ There is considerable evidence in the empirical literature for Bolivia, a summary can be found here: <https://www.inesad.edu.bo/2018/07/09/cuales-son-los-principales-problemas-del-clima-de-negocios-en-bolivia/>.

2.2 Outcome 2: Integral development and plural economy

CPD Outcome 2. Strengthened productive systems that are sustainable, resilient, inclusive and equitable, that guarantee food and nutritional security and sovereignty, based on decent work, technological development, and strengthening of a plural economy, conserving and improving the functions of Mother Earth: water, soil, forests, and biodiversity, in the context of the living systems.

Related outputs:

OUTPUT 2.1. Risk reduction and climate adaptation actions are part of the planning and investment decisions of national and subnational governments.

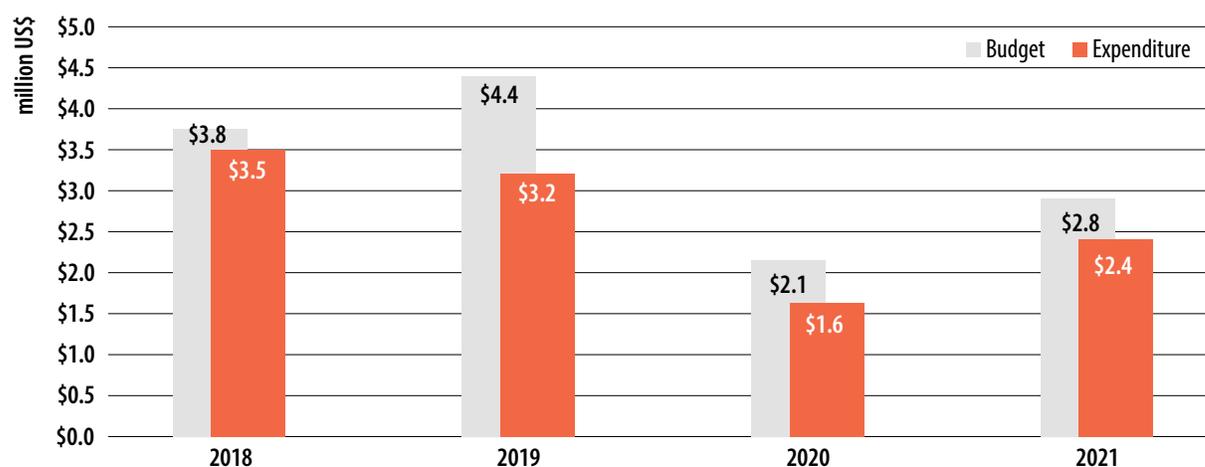
OUTPUT 2.2. Sustainable livelihoods implemented by selected local communities (within the office portfolio) living in fragile ecosystems.

OUTPUT 2.3. The national comprehensive first-response system (to emergencies and disasters) is fully operational.

OUTPUT 2.4. Bolivia complies with its climate change convention reporting obligations.

A total of 15 projects were implemented under this outcome, with a budget of \$13 million and expenditure of \$10.7 million.³⁸ Execution in this area saw a downward trend during this cycle, accentuated by the impact of the political crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic (See Figure 7). Vertical trust funds remained the primary source of funding through GEF with approximately 84 percent of expenditure (\$9 million), followed by UNDP (6 percent of expenditure) and the Government of Switzerland (5 percent of expenditure) (See Figure 8).

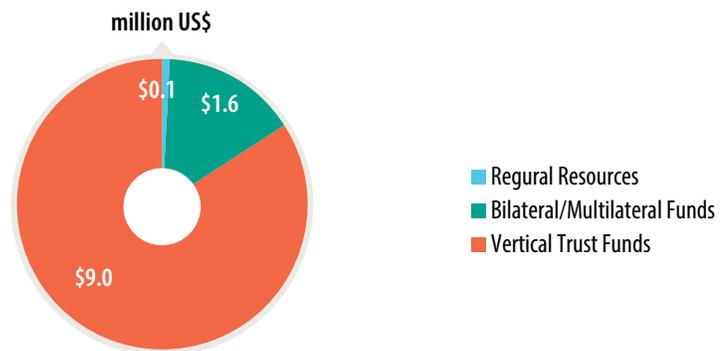
FIGURE 7. Evolution of budget and expenditure for the area of integral development and plural economy



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

³⁸ The financial resources correspond to the period: 2018 to 31 December 2021. Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS.

FIGURE 8. Expenditure by fund category for the area of integral development and plural economy (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

Finding 9. Livelihoods and productive landscapes. UNDP promoted sustainable ecosystem management in the Amazon region and around protected areas, working with indigenous communities to respond to local needs and support life systems. Through the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) and the ‘Biodiversity Conservation’ project in the Amboro-Madidi corridor, UNDP contributed to improving livelihoods and supported attitudinal change *vis-à-vis* the benefits of conservation efforts. However, design weaknesses and high staff turnover significantly affected the delivery and effectiveness of the UNDP flagship programme in the Amazon region.

SGP supported livelihoods improvement in 143 rural and indigenous communities in five national protected areas in the eco-regions of El Chaco, Chiquitania and Pantanal, through capacity-development and activities to promote sustainable production for rural livelihoods. Working through civil society organizations (CSOs), and empowering them to address local needs, SGP implemented 72 initiatives, reaching 4,573 direct beneficiaries (44 percent women). There is documentary and testimonial evidence of the good operational performance and high impact of SGP on communities living within national parks and their buffer zones. A total landscape area of 48,185 ha. has been managed, of which, 48,060 ha. of forest have been preserved and/or restored to improve connectivity and 125 ha. of land managed with different sustainable agro-ecological management practices. In the El Palmar Integrated Management Protected Area in Chuquisaca, for example, SGP support for the sustainable use of *janchicoco* (a palm species endemic to the dry inter-Andean valleys) promoted the profitable production of biscuits for school meals in the region. Photovoltaic systems were also installed, improving access to energy for electrification and water pumping to 825 families (719 men and 445 women) in 42 communities. SGP also transformed people’s perceptions of protected areas, from a barrier to local development to a space that promotes improvements in rural livelihoods through grassroots research, management plans and the sustainable use of natural resources. Various stakeholders commented that the new SGP targeting scheme, which includes public calls for proposals, was agile, efficient and transparent.

UNDP supported biodiversity conservation through sustainable forest management in the central and northern zone of the Amboro-Madidi Corridor, through institutional support, community capacity-building and the promotion of economic incentives. Of the 25 communities trained in sustainable management, 18 have continued to monitor the status of the forest. At least 20 permanent monitoring plots were established, and more than 70,000 ha. of forest was put under forest management plans. The Marimonos Water Reserve

was created in Palos Blancos municipality, with 934 ha. under management. Through the provision of equipment, capacity-building and a network to facilitate interaction between markets and buyers, 11 productive enterprises increased their revenues, positively impacting their communities.

UNDP also promoted the sustainable management of forest ecosystems in the northern part of the Bolivian Amazon region, working in close cooperation with national stakeholders and indigenous communities,³⁹ to maximize the sustainability of non-timber forest product collection (especially Brazil nut, rubber and acai) and subsistence forest use, while promoting sustainable agroforestry and silvopastoral systems in non-forest areas.⁴⁰ More than 300 indigenous families were engaged to identify productive initiatives for the profitable and sustainable use of forest resources. Twelve field schools trained local communities (80 percent women) in seedling and horticulture production, achieving the planting of 3,900 seedlings of fruit species in 152 ha. of agroforestry systems in areas with degraded forest and soil.

However, the 2021 midterm evaluation of the project acknowledged a low delivery rate (32 percent), mainly due to design weakness (e.g. proposal of management elements that not apply in AIOCs, a weak baseline, underestimation of internal threats) and high turnover of project staff and partners. The authorities and technical staff of the Plurinational Authority of Mother Earth, which is implementing the project, has changed three times due to the political crisis. Work on the development and application of management plans has not been completed, and several studies and technical assistance interventions are reportedly pending. Given the size of this project, and its limited results, even if the project is under national implementation modality (NIM) and the responsibility for results depends on the leadership and capacity of the UNDP implementing partner, it detracts from the overall picture of UNDP contribution and performance at programme level in this area of work. At the time of this ICPE, UNDP had committed to address the numerous recommendations of the midterm evaluation conducted in 2021, and aimed to get the project back on track in its final year (2022).

Finding 10. Water management. UNDP contributed to the generation of learning for integrated water resource management in the Titicaca-Desaguadero-Poopó-Salar of Coipasa (TDPS) transboundary system, between Bolivia and Peru. Established watershed monitoring units, and wide partnerships with national and local actors, promoted the sustainability of monitoring and management plans.

UNDP has successfully promoted the conservation and sustainable use of water resources in the TDPS transboundary system between Bolivia and Peru, responding to an urgent need, given the progressive deterioration of TDPS biodiversity and water resources despite an over 20 year-old binational management scheme. Several partnerships were established with different actors, including the Katari Basin Management Unit of the Ministry of Environment and Water, the National Meteorology and Hydrology Service, the Apolobamba protected area, and relevant autonomous departmental and municipal governments. These alliances promoted participatory implementation, contributing to improved data collection and analysis which will inform the 2022 Strategic Action Programme of the TDPS system and the Binational Comprehensive Master Plan, which the project is in process of achieving.

In close cooperation with municipalities, and building on local knowledge of ancestral technologies, the GEF-funded project developed five pilot sites in which stakeholders generated learning to protect biodiversity and ensure the sustainable use and management of TDPS resources. Local communities near

³⁹ Departments of Pando and of Beni, where indigenous peoples of several different ethnic groups reside (Esse-Ejja-Tacana-Cavineño, Tacaña-Cavineño, Cavineño and Chácobo-Pacahuara).

⁴⁰ Data collected by the project at family and community level could be valuably used in future socioeconomic interventions.

the Katari River and in Huatajata on the shores of Lake Titicaca, for example, learnt innovative techniques to reduce pollution through the bioremediation of water. They also developed an allometric formula to monitor the development of the *Totora* plant and the fixation of inorganic carbon in the water.

With UNDP support, the Lake Titicaca permanent observatory has been monitoring water quality and meteorological conditions, producing hydroclimatic updates and hydrological models. Monitoring activities have also engaged local governments and communities. As a sustainability mechanism, project beneficiaries formed watershed management organizations or monitoring units in six municipalities of the Suches river basin.⁴¹ Two municipalities and 17 communities in the Jacha Mauri micro-basin implemented 10 integrated management and conservation measures for watersheds and water, based on ancestral technologies for sediment control. The municipality of Charaña, the only one which contributed resources to the project, now has a socioenvironmental analysis, management plan and monitoring programme in place and succeeded in revitalising 55.34 ha. of *bofedales* (high-altitude wetlands) to protect biodiversity and ensure their sustainable management and use.

Finding 11. Responses to extreme weather events and natural disasters. UNDP supported capacity-development in emergency response and strengthened the resilience of communities affected by disasters in a timely and participatory manner.

In the current programme cycle, UNDP has continued to support capacity-building for emergency response and standard-setting at national and subnational levels, contributing to the roll-out of the National Integrated Emergency and Disaster First Response System within the National First Response Strategy,⁴² and two departmental First Response Strategies for Cochabamba and Santa Cruz.

In a timely response to the forest fires experienced by Bolivia in recent years, UNDP supported the Chiquitania and Chaco post-fire recovery plan, with the implementation of community-led early recovery laboratories to strengthen territorial and community resilience, while introducing innovative and scalable solutions. In a large partnership, with UNDP core resources and funding from the Korean Embassy, *Fundación Puedes Creer* of the *Banco Mercantil Santa Cruz*, municipalities and the beneficiary communities themselves, UNDP successfully implemented 11 laboratories, contributing to the development of sustainable and resilient production systems in 23 vulnerable indigenous communities. The project benefited 851 families by regenerating fire-affected ecosystems, restoring livelihoods and improving access to renewable energy for continued access to water. Indigenous communities worked with universities, non-governmental organizations and foundations to improve harvesting practices, manage and store forest genetic material and restore agro-food systems, among others.

UNDP support to strengthen the resilience of the livestock farming community to the effects of recurrent droughts in the Department of Beni did not materialize as planned. The initial target of 120 water-wells conceived to support livestock production and food security in the area was reduced to 80 due to equipment costs, and only 20 were realized, mostly because of resource constraints (including limited resources initially committed by the municipalities), but also to the political and COVID-19 crises, technical problems and the rainy season delaying implementation. While the wells guaranteed access to water for human and animal consumption for 12 indigenous communities, which was particularly important in the times of COVID-19, the impact on livestock production and food security in the department is unclear. The project partner, the Federation of Livestock Breeders of Beni, committed to continue drilling two wells per month for the next three years, which will bring it closer to meeting the original goal.

⁴¹ Pelechuco, Charazani, Moco Moco, Humanata, Escoma y Puerto Acosta.

⁴² Supported by UNDP, through a \$2 million project implemented in 2014-18.

In Oruro, UNDP worked with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) to strengthen resilience and find solutions with a multidimensional approach for the transformation of local livelihoods. A seasonal livelihoods consultation was held with direct beneficiaries, resulting in productivity and gender analyses to respond to the needs prioritized by the population. An ancestral solutions guide was developed to address climate change and ease access to funding. The comprehensive and participatory analysis with communities made it possible to prioritize actions to accelerate the development of renewable energies and new technologies, and the improvement and recovery of livelihoods. The project also developed a five-year geospatial analysis covering a 20-year period of changes in land use, vegetation cover and water availability, and developed and applied an MPI for rural areas to support local-level planning of disaster risk reduction interventions. Unfortunately, the investment plans designed by the project, with resources from central, departmental and municipal levels, were affected by budgetary changes following COVID-19, and no actions have been identified to replicate or scale it up.

Finding 12. Generating knowledge on biodiversity and climate change. UNDP supported the country to report on its international commitments on climate change and biological diversity. Beyond delays caused by the political crisis, the systematic generation and integration of data in the planning and investment decisions of national and subnational governments remains limited.

UNDP technical assistance in the area of climate change reporting allowed the Government of Bolivia to keep its commitment to report on progress to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and to Target 1 of Pillar 10 of PDES 2016-2020. The Third National Communication of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the UNFCCC provides valuable updates to the greenhouse gas (GHG) inventories previously submitted, although the national political crisis delayed the finalization of this report (in October 2020) by over three years from the first validation workshop. In 2020/21, within the framework of the 'Climate Promise' project, UNDP revamped its support to the first Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), which had been agreed in October 2015. UNDP contributed to the preparation of the final version of the updated NDC, which estimates the expected GHG emission reductions for the period 2021-2030 in the framework of the Paris Agreement,⁴³ and sets concrete targets for the energy, forestry, water and agriculture sectors. The NDC identifies deforestation as the main source of GHG emissions, accounting for 71 percent of the total. It also commits to develop a National Adaptation Plan and National Mitigation Strategy.

In the area of biodiversity, the Sixth National Biodiversity Report, finalized in 2019 with UNDP support, took stock of progress against the national targets determined in line with the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, and made a significant contribution to the design of the National Strategy 2019-2030.

Despite important UNDP efforts in the elaboration of technical documents in this area, the data and information generated do not yet feed into decision-making processes. In the absence of an electronic platform, insufficient capacity due to high turnover and limited political will, data are not systematically used to inform policies and plans to promote low-emission and climate-resilient trajectories for economic diversification and green growth.

⁴³ Within the framework of the Mitigation Mechanism, a global reduction of 961 million tCO₂eq is proposed for 2030, of which 357 million tCO₂eq will be achieved through national efforts and 604 million tCO₂eq with international cooperation.

2.3 Outcome 3: Interculturality

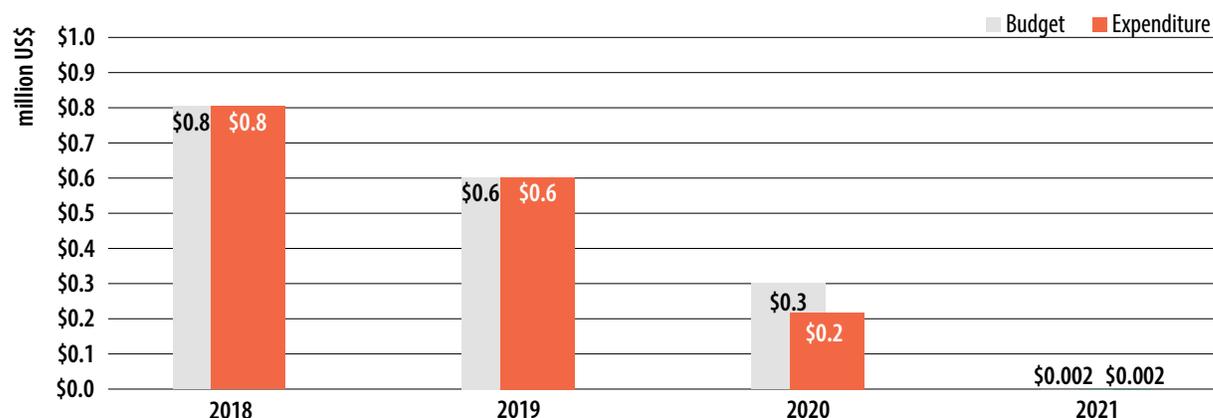
CPD Outcome 3. Contributions to the effective exercise of the individual and collective rights of indigenous native farmers and Afro-descendent peoples and nations, consistent with their own institutions, knowledge, norms and procedures, in the framework of the intercultural democracy for living well.

Related output:

OUTPUT 3.1. Indigenous autonomous governments have built institutional and public management capacity and increased their coordination with national institutions to exercise their right to self-determination.

Two projects were implemented under this outcome, both under DIM, with a budget of \$1.7 million and expenditure of \$1.6 million over this cycle.⁴⁴ In addition to a Swedish-funded project to strengthen indigenous autonomy and intercultural democracy, UNDP provided \$200,000 to develop the institutional capacity of the Supreme Electoral Court to accompany democracy processes in AIOCs and promote gender parity. The financial evolution of the Outcome reflects the life cycle of the main project and its closure, in the absence of new initiatives linked to this area of intervention.

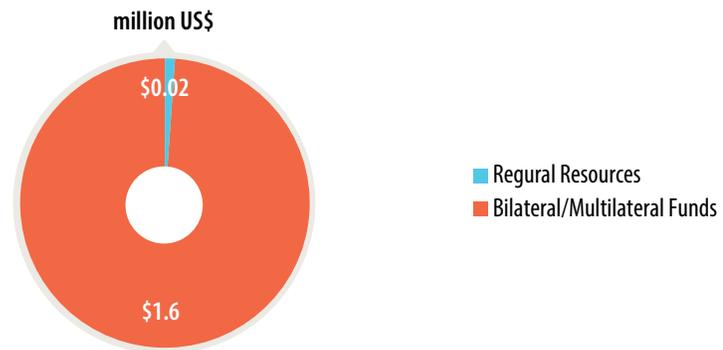
FIGURE 9. Evolution of budget and expenditure for the area of interculturality



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS

⁴⁴ The financial resources correspond to the period: 2018 to 31 December 2021. Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS.

FIGURE 10. Expenditure by fund category for interculturality (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

Finding 13. Intercultural democracy and AIOC. Despite economic and political constraints to the scope of work in this area, UNDP contributed to strengthening intercultural democracy by supporting the capacity and functioning of fully-fledged entities that represent indigenous, native and farmer peoples, in line with the 2009 Constitution. Members of these communities were able to exercise their individual and collective rights, as ancestral knowledge, rules and procedures were respected within the *Vivir Bien* framework. However, the sustainability of results is not yet ensured, and achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment (GEWE) remains a challenge.

AIOC representatives widely appreciated UNDP institutional development support, which led to an increase in individual and organizational skills, particularly around public management, through the introduction of Community Territorial Management Plans, Institutional Strategic Plans and Annual Operational Plans. UNDP support reportedly also led to better resolution of internal conflicts and allowed for the development and implementation of a high number of infrastructure and development projects, which delivered significant benefits to local communities. In the Raqaypampa AIOC these included the development of a sewerage system, mentioned by many interviewees as the most significant change, the expansion of the electricity grid to 13 of 49 communities, and the training of women and youth to support business opportunities around sustainable agricultural practices and food production and reduce migration towards urban centres. In Charagua, UNDP technical assistance promoted the consolidation of project ideas into solid proposals that received external funding in one case (of four).

A second goal to develop AIOC external relationships and intercultural dialogue with State bodies has been more of a challenge, as it depended on ideological affinities with governing parties. As project beneficiaries pointed out, the different branches of government have yet to open up to the voices and aspirations of AIOCs, with limited will and scope on the part of the State to streamline bureaucratic processes in different areas (education, budget, etc.). This weakness also affects relationships with the National Assembly, including in areas of utmost importance such as the harmonization of community justice and conventional justice, or the need for funding to support community justice.

UNDP raised awareness in AIOC communities of the importance of women’s participation in decision-making at family or societal level. At institutional level, the project contributed to the equal representation of women in most decision-making spaces, and the inclusion of dedicated budget lines in annual operational plans for the development of policies for the implementation of women’s productive initiatives. Lessons from the interventions highlighted by interviewees confirmed the sensitivity of women’s empowerment

issues within indigenous communities, which requires the support of specialists due to entrenched cultural norms, and the need to deepen the focus on the capacity-building, participation and involvement of women and young people.

In collaboration with the Association of Women Councilors and Mayors of Bolivia, UNDP supported the Supreme Electoral Court mandate with roundtables on the multiple violations of women's rights that hamper their representation in various legislative and political settings. UNDP also provided technical advice to adjust laws and regulations on gender parity issues, strengthening the regulatory and oversight role of the Court. UNDP technical assistance has not, however, resulted in new regulations or the improvement of laws which fall under the ambit of the legislature. There is still a need to address issues such as electoral financing, ensuring parity of representation in political parties and harassment and violence against women in the performance of political party functions.

Overall, UNDP work in support of intercultural democracy was challenged by a complex sociopolitical and cultural context that remained reluctant to fully recognise indigenous peoples' rights, at the level of civil society and of the State. As UNDP support was valuably respectful of local knowledge and norms, progress on planned results significantly depended on the initial development conditions of each AIOC, the economic diversity and extension of the territory, and the attitude of the communities to women's empowerment through work. Economic conditions, which had deteriorated due to the political, economic and health crises, interfered with the achievement of results, especially those related to the exchange of experiences and the promotion of South-South learning and cooperation, due to the budget constraints imposed on the economy.

2.4 Cross-cutting areas of intervention

Finding 14. Gender mainstreaming. The UNDP country programme was not informed by a strategic vision and understanding of key entry points to address inequality and promote women's empowerment. However, in their design and implementation, UNDP projects have reflected the differential needs of men and women. Dedicated initiatives promoted women political rights and socioeconomic empowerment, but with limited results so far.

The CPD design lacked a gender perspective in the approach to its outcomes and outputs, and did not have a strategic document to guide the planning or the advice of gender specialists. Despite the country office recognition of the need for a gender mainstreaming strategy to offset the fragmentation of UNDP work in this area, UNDP did not progress in further identifying programme entry points.⁴⁵ The lack of strategic focus notwithstanding, UNDP notably implemented some initiatives to promote GEWE. These included some gender-responsive initiatives (such as the support to women's employment after the outbreak of COVID-19, or the contribution to the regional *Atenea* initiative which resulted in a national assessment study entitled 'Bolivian Women on the Road: From Parity to Parity Democracy'), and some potentially gender-transformative initiatives (such as the support to the Supreme Electoral Court to eliminate political GBV or the India-funded, UNDP 'LabHubs Economy of Care' initiative to contribute to reducing gaps in access to decent jobs for women through an early childhood care centre).⁴⁶

⁴⁵ UNDP Bolivia. Review of the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in UNDP Bolivia's Programme Portfolio.

⁴⁶ IEO did not evaluate the project's effectiveness, which was in its initial stages of implementation at the time of the ICPE.

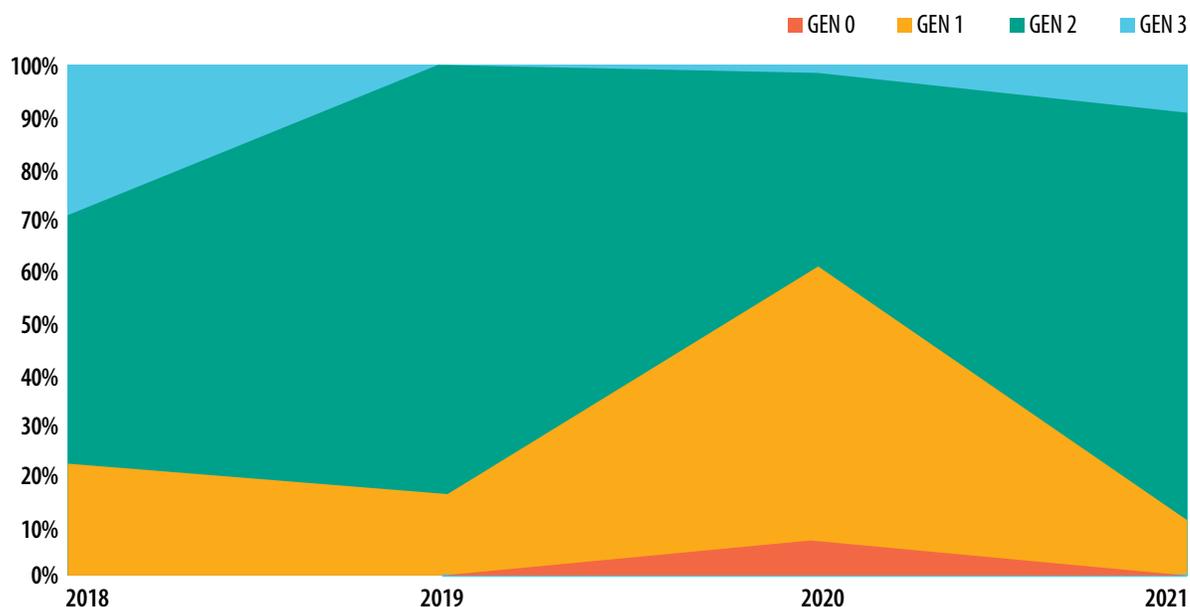
Overall, UNDP projects have increasingly considered gender issues in their design and implementation. According to the Gender Marker system, approximately 58 percent of programme expenditure (\$34.2 million) was assigned to outputs that had gender equality as a significant objective (GEN2), and another 8 percent (\$4.8 million) to outputs that had gender equality as the main objective (GEN3).⁴⁷ GEN3 project outputs, however, were included only under Outcome 1. About a third of outputs were expected to contribute to gender equality in a limited way (GEN1), or not at all (GEN0).

FIGURE 11. Expenditure by Gender Marker and outcome (2018-2021)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

FIGURE 12. Evolution of expenditure by Gender Marker (2018-2021)

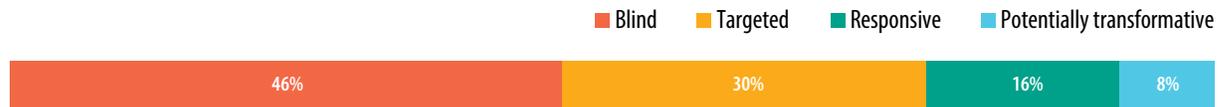


Source: UNDP PowerBI/Atlas

⁴⁷ See section 1.2 for a description of the Gender Marker system.

Analysis of project implementation on the GRES scale confirmed that almost half (46 percent) of UNDP projects were gender-targeted or -responsive, and 8 percent were categorized as potentially gender-transformative. No project was classified as gender-negative, but the fact that 46 percent of projects were classified as gender-blind is of concern, although some are procurement-related, for the risk of unintentionally contributing negatively to existing gender inequalities.

FIGURE 13. Gender project results using the GRES scale



Source: IEO

In the current programme cycle, UNDP achieved gender parity in its own staff (51 percent female: 49 percent male), including at senior level and among service contract holders.⁴⁸ However, the 2020 Global Staff Survey highlighted problems of workload balance and distribution among female staff.⁴⁹ The country office has recently applied for the Gender Equality Seal, which is expected to transform the workplace and reinforce gender mainstreaming.

Finding 15. Human rights and Leaving No One Behind. UNDP has taken a variety of initiatives to reduce inequality in line with Agenda 2030, particularly in its extensive work with indigenous peoples, but has yet to consolidate its own LNOB approach. While most projects identify their contribution to strengthening human rights in their design, often working directly with vulnerable groups, progress in key intervention areas such as access to justice, or the work with youth, was limited.

When it comes to human rights and LNOB, the UNDP programme presents an agenda of great importance for Bolivia, clearly identifying the major challenges to achieving equality. Several UNDP projects have explicit objectives or activities aimed at strengthening human rights for all, but to date no major result has been achieved in key areas of intervention, such as access to justice, because of the challenging political context. The ‘Supporting dialogue and human rights for peacebuilding in Bolivia’ project, led by the Office of the Resident Coordinator and implemented in collaboration with UN Women and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), experienced difficulties, and required a refocus and six-month extension to fully implement its activities.

Several UNDP interventions across the portfolios focused on LNOB. These included local-level support to indigenous communities through a bottom-up approach that several stakeholders highlighted as very positive, and the introduction of a community-based entrepreneurship methodology for people with disabilities in Sacaba and Tiquipaya. However, these initiatives and experiences have not yet been consolidated into a strategic approach tailored to Bolivia’s contexts and needs, especially for youth, whose economic empowerment and access to employment was identified by the Mainstreaming, Acceleration and Policy Support (MAPS) mission as an accelerator of Agenda 2030 in the country, for Afro-descendent peoples, as highlighted in the CPD, and for other groups likely to be left behind.

⁴⁸ Data from UNDP Bolivia Gender Executive Snapshot.

⁴⁹ The majority of women (53 percent) responded unfavourably to questions on workload manageability (vs. 10 percent of men). 39 percent of women considered that the workload was not fairly distributed in the office (vs. 30 percent of men).

Finding 16. Innovation. In a work environment characterized by many interviewees as “very open to change”, UNDP promoted innovations at local level through the Accelerator Lab, participation in the global Deep Demonstration pilot initiative, and the application of systems and participatory approaches to project design. All of these initiatives are in early stages of development and are yet to show results. The intense efforts required at design phase may pose challenges for future applications.

In the current programme cycle, UNDP promoted various innovation initiatives in line with the UNDP 2018-21 and 2022-2025 strategic plans, which committed to strategic innovation and digitization as enablers of development impact. The country office laid the methodological foundations for incorporating innovation into the design and implementation of projects, to address complex development challenges from a systems perspective, leveraging linkages across interventions to achieve broader goals. Early evidence of the application of new working methodologies came through the ‘Strengthening effective governance for the new political cycle in Bolivia’ project, which defined its outputs and outcomes through a process of co-creation under the leadership of end-users and the use of “sensemaking”.⁵⁰ The project, in its inception phase at the time of the evaluation, is based on a multidimensional ToC, involves experimentation and incorporates a conflict-sensitive action approach.

Through the Accelerator Lab, the country office has been able to incorporate a three-pronged approach to project design consisting of solution-mapping, the exploration of data and stakeholder ecosystems, testing and experimentation. In the framework of the ‘Territorialization of the SDGs’ project, the Lab piloted the ‘*Barrios Digitales*’ (Digital Neighbourhoods) initiative in a neighbourhood of La Paz to enhance social cohesion through participatory and data-driven approaches, developing the basic digital skills of youth and low-income women with otherwise limited access to technology. In El Alto, in alliance with the waste management company TREBOL, the Lab’s ‘Urban Big Data’ initiative enabled the collection of key GPS data on routes, to enable implementation of machine learning solutions for the optimization of this public service. The ‘Deep demonstrations’ pilot, promoted through the UNDP Innovation Facility and with funds from Switzerland, Sweden and the City of Madrid, tested a new portfolio approach for future application by the Municipality of La Paz.

The general perception of innovation efforts was positive, though the results of the different initiatives were still incipient, and interviews and documents acknowledged the challenges that innovation projects with portfolio approaches pose, in terms of the significant design efforts required, due to the participatory and iterative methodology. This makes resources and demonstrated results imperative, while the UNDP bureaucratic context can limit motivation for innovation and experimentation. Articulating these efforts and fostering internal communication will be key to optimizing the delivery of “traditional” results with innovation.

2.5 Overall programme implementation

Finding 17. Strategic positioning. National institutions and international partners consider UNDP a strategic and neutral partner in the country, although recognition of its effectiveness and added value is uneven across its programme areas. While most UNDP work in the last programme cycle was driven by the need to respond to multiple emergencies, its programme offer in the areas of poverty reduction, socioeconomic resilience and natural resource management had limited scope and coherence.

⁵⁰ Understood as a process of extracting ideas, inducing collective learning and creating meaning from individual and collective experience.

Stakeholders from the Government and international development community recognize UNDP as a credible, trustworthy and neutral partner, transparent in the development of projects, and able to provide international technical assistance through its global network. Interviews and documents acknowledged the value added by UNDP in terms of innovative approaches and tools (e.g. the peace dialogue format or the Municipal Risk Index to monitor the health crisis), international expertise and promotion of South-South learning (as in the case of the elections and *Qhapaq Ñan* projects), as well as efficient and transparent procurement (as in health projects).

UNDP performance in supporting the regular conduct of elections, peace talks and dialogue among key actors, and mitigating the effects of COVID-19, reinforced the positive image of the office among stakeholders. This is particularly notable given high level of political polarization and mistrust of the role of international organizations since the 2019 conflict, which led to a freeze of donor programmes. UNDP is also recognized for its work on health, with a clear focus and effective delivery of results. This made it possible to expand UNDP work in this area beyond the implementation of Global Fund projects, to include areas of high relevance such as the fight against Chagas disease.

However, the perception of (national and international) counterparts of the results achieved by UNDP and their added value from a programme perspective, as well as its contribution to UNDAF, is not always favourable. In the latest partner satisfaction surveys, UNDP Bolivia has systematically been rated below average for the region and globally.⁵¹

Beyond projects arising from (health, political and environmental) emergencies, UNDP has not presented a strong and coherent programme offer in Bolivia, with a number of fragmented and unrelated projects. The Outcome 1 portfolio appears particularly dispersed, including interventions for early childhood care associated with the promotion of decent employment for women, the promotion of heritage and community tourism, procurement management and strengthening of health programmes, and support to the analytical capacity of national actors. Outcome 2 was better aligned to the CPD, but resources were too limited for the scale of need of the fragile ecosystems in Bolivia, and it would have benefitted from a stronger programme offer and resource mobilization efforts.

Finding 18. Partnerships. UNDP has been able to generate and nurture strategic alliances with central and subnational governments, as well as international cooperation actors. Significant progress has been made with regard to partnerships with the private sector, while challenges remain for collaboration with civil society.

UNDP has been able to generate and articulate strategic alliances with various stakeholders, creating a broad and diverse network around common actions. Interviewees acknowledged the openness of UNDP to joint work, and its capacity to lead large-scale projects and work in emergency and/ or complex situations with a range of actors, in-country and across the world. Noteworthy are the strategic alliances with CAF in support of PDES 2016-20, and with BCP for the development of sustainable development indicators and innovative financial products, which enabled BCP accreditation with the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in 2021, opening important financing possibilities for the country in the coming years.

UNDP initiated valuable partnerships with the private sector, particularly to raise funds for the COVID-19 response (e.g. with the Coca Cola Foundation and the Bolivian Stock Exchange), but also for promotion of the SDGs, notably through the first Development Services Agreement signed with ASOBAN. Also, within the partnership with the Global Compact, UNDP led the consolidation of a national sustainable finance

⁵¹ UNDP Partnership Surveys 2015, 2017 and 2020.

roundtable and is promoting a roadmap for the promotion of sustainable finance. However, some UNDP projects (e.g. on improving women's employment after the outbreak of COVID-19) could have benefited from stronger alliances with business associations to improve their impact.

UNDP worked with a number of United Nations agencies across different areas of intervention. Relevant partnerships include coordination with PAHO for the COVID-19 pandemic response and the National Malaria Programme, the participation of UN Women in strengthening OEP capacity for the electoral project, collaboration with PAHO, OHCHR and UN Women in the peace process, or the formulation of a methodology to measure multidimensional poverty in the poorest municipalities of Oruro in collaboration with WFP and FAO. However, several members of other United Nations agencies pointed out the need to work in a more collaborative, integrated and expeditious manner in areas such as social protection and resilience, drawing on the capacity of each agency, as well as to improve coordination with agencies on strategic and operational issues of common interest.

Although some projects have been implemented with a key role for CSOs,⁵² interviewees noted that synergy has been limited in the programmatic relationship with civil society actors, with UNDP too closely involved in operational activities that would have been better managed by CSOs who work directly with the community. Spaces for social dialogue have been fostered, making it possible to prioritize actions directly with beneficiary associations, e.g. the Tuberculosis programme. Other areas of intervention, e.g. economy of care, have not yet benefited from greater coordination with civil society.

Finding 19. Programme design and theories of change. UNDP proposed five ToCs at the time of CPD design, to cover a set of priority results aligned to UNDAF. Beyond certain limitations in their design, the main weakness was the lack of ownership by UNDP staff of ToCs as effective planning and management instruments.

UNDP developed ToCs for each of the five CPD thematic areas of action within the different outcomes: public policy, justice and health (as part of Outcome 1 related to public management and inclusive services); integral development and plural economy; and interculturality. The ToC identified problem and solution trees, expected outcomes and results-oriented pathways, and identified UNDP added value, target groups, partners, risks and assumptions, as a basis to structure the project portfolio. The development of ToCs was highly consultative, engaging mainly public sector actors but also other United Nations agencies and key partners.

The soundness and value of the ToCs was challenged, however, by efforts to satisfy various stakeholders and mandates, in addition to seeking to fit and reconcile ongoing projects. This resulted in weak UNDP staff ownership of the ToCs as effective planning instruments that respond to their strategic vision and actions. User perceptions of the practical utility of ToCs varied. Some UNDP staff saw it as a guide for project development and instrument for dialogue between area coordinators, while others perceived it as a bureaucratic tool, not sufficiently flexible to specific demands, or with broad indicators derived from the UNDAF limiting the visualization of the CPD scope. In no case have ToCs been adapted to reflect changes in the context or support management decisions. The evaluation analysis of the ToCs (see Annex 7) noted deficiencies associated with the coherence, comprehensiveness and precision of their elements, namely:

- a. Problem trees are perceived more as a brainstorming approach than as a logical causal and systemic structure, with roots, trunk and branches presenting circular, insufficient and disorganized arguments.

⁵² E.g. SGP, the 'Forest fire recovery laboratories' project or the 'Sustainable management of Amazonian forest ecosystems by indigenous and local communities' project.

- b. Solution trees are not fully aligned to their respective problem trees, reflected in the misidentification of outcomes and outputs.
- c. Assumptions and risks are reasonable and clear in some cases, but insufficient and overoptimistic in others. This reflects limitations in the current (and prospective) analysis of the economic, sociopolitical, institutional and environmental framework. In addition, in some cases there are no mitigation strategies for the identified risks.

Finding 20. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E). CPD indicators and targets do not allow for the proper tracking of project contributions to the results and impacts of the programme. However, since mid-2021, UNDP has strengthened its M&E and knowledge management capacity, with a dedicated officer.

The UNDP M&E system is not of sufficient quality to confidently understand the changes expected at programme level, and some of the outcome-level information in the CPD is not clearly verifiable. Challenges with the M&E system start from the definition of performance indicators in the CPD. At outcome level, the decision to use UNDAF indicators as a reference does not allow an understanding of the UNDP contribution to the institutional and behavioural change of beneficiaries. There is too wide a gap between stated output indicators (e.g. number of policy analyses used) and stated outcome indicators (e.g. extreme poverty rate) to be able to connect the contribution. In some cases, outdated baseline data (e.g. over three years old) hindered the assessment of results for this programme cycle.

At output level, indicators were not always fully consistent with the outputs to be achieved, hampering the measurement of progress. This is reflected in Results Oriented Annual Reports, which provide qualitative information focused largely on project-level activities, with very few quantitative indicators to track output achievements against targets. Information from project-level M&E reports is only marginally reconcilable with the results, indicators and targets in the CPD. The latest UNDP audit of the Bolivia country office also highlighted some of these shortcomings, including deficiencies in project design and weaknesses in project monitoring and risk management. The quality assessment of decentralised evaluations conducted by the office also reflects this weakness with most of them rated in the unsatisfactory range. Since May 2021 UNDP has strengthened its monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management capacity with a dedicated officer and by establishing new standard operating procedure in a rapid follow up of audit recommendations.

Finding 21. Finance. Despite a challenging context, UNDP managed to mobilize significant resources to address democratic consolidation efforts and the recovery needs of the country. The health portfolio, with its strong procurement component to address COVID-19, tuberculosis and malaria, was a determining factor in the budget and expenditure increase during this cycle. Sustainability will require continued funding from vertical funds and further exploration of partnerships with public and private institutions.

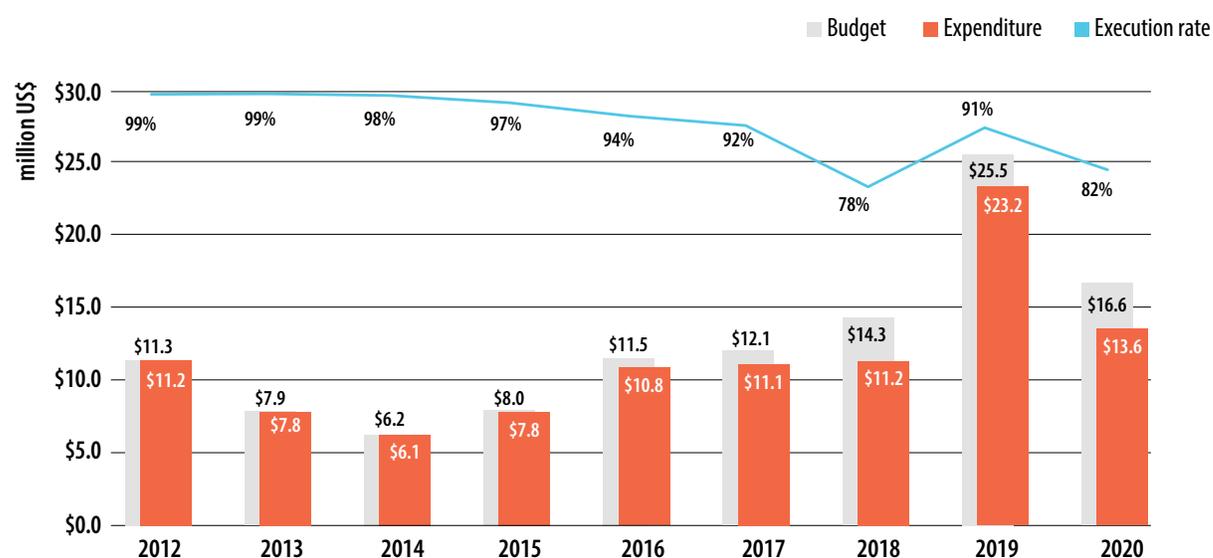
Despite an unfavourable macroeconomic situation, political instability and difficulty in mobilizing domestic resources, over the first four years of this programme cycle (2018-2021) the total UNDP budget amounted to \$68.5 million, exceeding the five-year target of the CPD by 9 percent. Figure 14 shows that programme expenditure experienced an upward trend, fuelled by the UNDP ability to channel funds in response to the country's electoral and pandemic crises, with a total increase in expenditure of 35 percent compared to the previous cycle.⁵³ In both 2020 and 2021, the country office clearly achieved and exceeded its annual target set in the Integrated Work Plan and agreed upon with RBLAC to contribute to regional goals.

⁵³ A 35.1 percent increase from expenditure of \$43.7 million (CPD 2013-2017) to \$59.1 million (CPD 2018-2021). In 2020, expenditure reached a high of \$23.2 million with three projects accounting for half of it: Global Fund (20 percent), COVID-19 Response (18 percent), and OPE strengthening (13 percent).

The UNDP Resource Mobilization Strategy (2018-2022) was successful in diversifying the resource base and developing new strategic alliances, although the programme remains highly dependent on vertical funds. During this programme cycle, UNDP Bolivia received funds from international financial institutions (IFIs) (World Bank), bilateral donors (Sweden, Switzerland, Canada, United Kingdom and the European Union), multilateral donors (Global Fund and GEF), as well as the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peacebuilding Fund. UNDP also built alliances with the private sector and foundations, including ASOBAN, the Bolivian Stock Exchange and the Coca Cola Foundation, enabling funds for the acquisition of goods in support of the Government’s COVID-19 emergency response. While the strategy clearly identified the urban agenda and interculturality as areas of focus, it lacked clear definition of priorities in the areas of environment and livelihoods promotion, which may have contributed to the limited mobilization of resources in these areas outside of the crisis response.

The programme execution rate remained high over the programme cycle, but below the levels of previous programme cycle, which is understandable due to the scale of the programme implemented and the crises during the cycle. Execution declined to 78 percent in 2019, when political conflicts after the national elections and institutional changes delayed planned activities. Key drivers of the high execution rate were: (i) the country office capacity to adapt and respond promptly to the country’s political, health and environmental crises; (ii) the establishment of a weekly staff discussion space on “delivery” to identify bottlenecks and corrective measures; (iii) the decentralization of operations to accelerate processes; and (iv) the implementation of a revised organizational structure to respond to programme needs.

FIGURE 14. UNDP Bolivia annual programme budget and expenditure (2013-21)



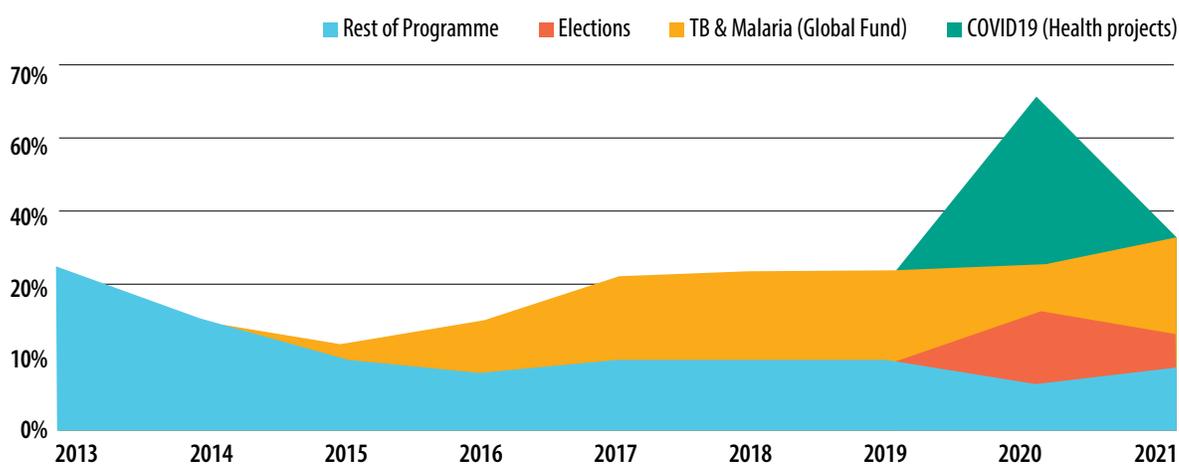
Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS

Disaggregated by outcome, the data show a less optimistic picture of UNDP institutional sustainability. UNDP mobilized 152 percent of planned financial resources for the public management and inclusive services area (Outcome 1), as a result of UNDP support to elections and the COVID-19 response. On the other hand, UNDP only managed to mobilize 61 percent of expected funds for the integral development and plural economy area (Outcome 2), a sign of the difficulties experienced in implementing and accessing vertical green funds during the cycle. Likewise, UNDP only managed to mobilize 29 percent of expected

resources for Outcome 3 on Interculturality. The identification of AIOC investment priorities for public management was not achieved, highlighting the challenge of promoting this area of work in the country, despite the constitutional mandate.

Implementation of the health portfolio, with strong procurement components to address the needs of the COVID-19 response and tuberculosis and malaria programmes, accounted for almost all of the growth in programme expenditure between 2015 and 2021. The Global Fund vertical trust fund was the main donor to the UNDP programme in Bolivia for the current CPD cycle, contributing \$22.2 million (38 percent of total expenditure and 47 percent of Outcome 1 expenditure). Overall, programme expenditure was mostly funded by vertical trust funds (53 percent), followed by bilateral/ multilateral funds (29 percent) and Government cost-sharing in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (16 percent).⁵⁴ Non-health related expenditure has remained fairly constant since 2015. Only one new line of work stands out in 2020, with the funds mobilised in response to the political crisis for the ‘Electoral Strengthening’ project (See figure 15 below).

FIGURE 15. Breakdown of programme expenditure (2013-21)



Source: UNDP PowerBI/ATLAS

2.6 Country programme performance ratings

The following table provides an overview of the performance of the country programme, using the five internationally-agreed evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, and a set of parameters for each. A four-point rating scale is used, with 4 being the highest and 1 the lowest.⁵⁵ This rating table should be read keeping in mind the findings presented in the previous sections, which provide more detailed justification for the ratings.

⁵⁴ During the 2018-2021 CPD cycle, 2 percent of programme expenditure was funded by Regular Resources.

⁵⁵ 4 = Satisfactory/ Achieved, 3 = Moderately satisfactory/ Mostly achieved, 2 = Moderately unsatisfactory/ Partially achieved, 1 = Unsatisfactory/ Not achieved.

Finding 22. Ratings. Overall, the UNDP programme in Bolivia demonstrated moderately satisfactory progress towards country programme output targets, and produced positive results of varied scope, scale and importance. UNDP has made relevant contributions to the country programme outcomes in alignment with national priorities and in response to crises and emergencies, although overall programme coherence was limited. The country context has affected the sustainability of interventions, limiting national ownership and capacity-development. Results were also hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key criteria and parameters	Overall rating	Remarks/ justification
1. Relevance	3	The UNDP programme addressed the country's development priorities as reflected in PDES 2016-20. The programme also contributed to the UNDP strategic plan. It adapted to the highly volatile and changing environment and responded to the emergency needs arising from the political crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the scope of work was limited in certain areas of intervention, such as for youth, and in relation to the full offer available from donors (e.g. the GEF portfolio).
1.A. Adherence to national development priorities	3	
1.B. Alignment with United Nations/ UNDP goals	3	
1.C. Relevance of programme logic	3	
2. Coherence	2	The UNDP programme showed limited internal coherence beyond its support to crisis responses, affecting some partners' perceptions of UNDP added value and results. The changing context was an important factor in the way the programme evolved, but the thematic diversity of multiple small projects in certain areas did not facilitate the integrated delivery of results. In terms of complementarity with other external actors, UNDP initiated important collaborations with the private sector, but partnerships with CSOs were weak. Several United Nations agencies highlighted the need to promote more coordinated work.
2.A. Internal programme coherence	2	
2.B. External programme coherence	3	
3. Efficiency	2	UNDP promptly adapted and responded to the political crisis and COVID-19. The timeliness of the interventions was key in helping to meet established project objectives. Several interventions saw some of their risks materialize, however, and mitigation measures applied in response were not always effective, resulting in the return of funds not executed. Interventions such as the GEF project in the Amazon have performed poorly, with delays and internal and operational issues. Resource mobilization other than for initiatives linked to crisis responses was limited, and there were some limitations in forging programme partnerships as in the case of Justice.
3.A. Timeliness	3	
3.B. Management efficiency	2	

Key criteria and parameters	Overall rating	Remarks/ justification
4. Effectiveness	3	UNDP demonstrated the achievement of results in multiple interventions. Of strategic importance to the country was the holding of national and subnational elections, which restored democratic institutions. UNDP also delivered laboratories, equipment, and supplies through health projects. UNDP did extensive and relevant work with indigenous communities, but did not have an explicit programme-wide approach to target the populations most at risk of being left behind, particularly limiting the number of interventions targeting youth empowerment. The lack of a comprehensive approach to GEWE affected results, which have been mostly gender-blind or -targeted. Multiple projects were affected by the materialization of risks, mainly contextual, derived from the political crisis and change of authorities or by the difficulties of operating in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In some cases, this forced the readjustment of project objectives, and in others the return of allocated budgets (e.g., return of resources for the COVID response to MoH).
4.A. Achieving stated outputs and outcomes	3	
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	3	
4.C. Prioritizing GEWE	2	
4.D. Programming processes adhered to sustainable development principles	3	
5. Sustainability	2	Despite UNDP efforts to emphasize national ownership of its programme, during this programme cycle the country context has made it extremely difficult to ensure the sustainability of interventions. The high turnover of national counterparts and political polarization are risk factors that have impacted on projects. In terms of financing for development, in both 2020 and 2021, the country office clearly achieved and exceeded its annual target set with RBLAC. The mobilization of resources in response to COVID-19 enabled new partnerships with the private sector and IFIs such as the World Bank. However, it is yet to be confirmed whether there will be continuity to accompany recovery actions. In some areas, such as those connecting with the GEF portfolio, there is room for improvement in the tools to support the country in accessing new funds.
5.A. Sustainable capacity	2	
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 Bolivia, as well as the recommendations and management response.

3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1. The response to the political crisis and COVID-19 health emergency drove the scale of the UNDP 2018-22 programming cycle, affecting results in other planned areas of work. UNDP promptly and flexibly adjusted its workplan to respond to emerging priorities and support national and subnational stakeholders overcome the crises faced by country.

The political crisis of 2019-20 and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the UNDP programme, affecting the implementation of activities and achievement of planned results across different areas of work. Numerous projects reported significant disruptions to their original plans, significantly challenging their ability to achieve results in a timely and effective manner. Political polarization, high turnover of national counterpart staff, restrictions on movement for health reasons, or the reallocation of funds and resources to address the pandemic all affected programme implementation and the achievement of results.

The reputation of UNDP as a credible and neutral partner allowed it to work in partnership with national and international actors for the response to the political crisis, despite the challenging social environment, and led to the successful and peaceful completion of elections, overcoming a long stalemate and guaranteeing institutional stability. UNDP procurement capacity in the health sector, work experience with departments at subnational level, and mobilization of resources from the private sector, allowed it to respond promptly to requests for medical supplies and equipment to strengthen national diagnostic capacity. UNDP partnerships to channel private sector funds were key to support the scale of the response.

Conclusion 2. UNDP maintains a strong value proposition in the area of democratic governance, where its added value in the consolidation of democratic institutions and the autonomy of indigenous, aboriginal and farmer peoples was acknowledged. UNDP support to access justice must be significantly reinforced to produce the desired results.

UNDP maintains important positioning as a neutral partner in support of democratic governance, particularly in times of crisis. Its support to election logistics, as well as the promotion of dialogue with political leaders and civil society representatives, were key to overcome the political crisis and promote a culture of peace. UNDP played a leading role in strengthening democratic governance and intercultural democracy in line with the 2009 Constitution, promoting the full exercise of individual and collective rights and respect for the *Vivir Bien* framework in four AIOCs, although mechanisms for the full empowerment of AIOCs are yet to be fully created. UNDP support to central institutions and the reform of the justice sector, while recognized as important, yielded limited results, and would benefit from more sustained strategic support, in coordination with other actors.

Conclusion 3. UNDP is recognised as one of the main contributors to the progressive development of national health capacity for the eradication of malaria and tuberculosis in the most affected areas. UNDP support to local stakeholders was important for sustainability, but challenged by recent reductions in the resources allocated to community monitoring.

UNDP is widely recognised as one of the main contributors to strengthening the national malaria and tuberculosis health programmes in the country, working in the most-affected communities to ensure that at-risk groups are not left behind. Notwithstanding the many challenges, UNDP procurement of equipment, installation of laboratories, and training on diagnostics all resulted in a significant reduction of detection times in the tuberculosis programme. Efficient programme planning and rapid adaptive management were important enablers for the United Nations support to the COVID-19 response. Continued efforts to support local capacity will be needed, to maintain the sustainability of the results and avoid setbacks.

Conclusion 4. UNDP support to poverty and inequality reduction was valuable yet limited. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic provided UNDP with valuable entry points to support women’s employment and small-medium enterprises, which will require a more strategic approach to overcome structural challenges.

UNDP engagement in the areas of poverty and inequality reduction was limited to a number of separate interventions at policy and programme levels. Small-scale support to the design and measurement of socioeconomic public policies, while valuable, had a modest impact. The integration of the SDGs into local plans was the basis for work on the urban agenda, which featured prominently in the UNDP resource mobilization strategy but was significantly affected by crises. There is limited evidence of innovations by public institutions as a result of the projects.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic provided UNDP with additional entry points to promote socioeconomic development through support to women’s employment and MSEs. These valuable initiatives have, however, faced constraints in execution because of long-term structural problems around informality and the lack of quality jobs, which would require a more strategic approach and policy reforms to be overcome.

Conclusion 5. UNDP has worked alongside local communities, promoting their empowerment in line with the *Vivir Bien* framework. UNDP local-level support, in partnership with departmental governments and municipalities, was relevant, creating sustainable mechanisms for cooperation. Internal and external challenges affected the achievement of some results, however, requiring renewed attention in light of the country’s severe vulnerability to climate events.

The UNDP programme promoted interventions that benefitted communities in vulnerable areas of the country, particularly within the GEF-funded portfolio in support of integral development and the plural economy. UNDP contributed to livelihood improvements, promoted natural resource conservation through small grants, strengthened the resilience of communities affected by fires, and supported integrated water resource management, by building on ancestral knowledge and working with local monitoring committees.

Despite GEF financial support, the size of the UNDP portfolio has declined during the programme cycle, in spite of the country’s extreme vulnerability to climate change. Beyond the political crisis and high staff turnover in national counterparts, the achievement of planned results was also affected by design issues, weakening UNDP positioning in this area. Cooperation with CSOs was mainly on natural resource management and resilience projects, and stakeholders pointed out some missed opportunities to achieve efficiency gains while enhancing their capacity.

Conclusion 6: UNDP ensured the participation of women and groups most likely to be left behind in their interventions, with some dedicated initiatives to actively promote women’s socioeconomic empowerment that have yet to produce significant results. UNDP does not have an overall strategy to promote gender equality, and its approach to LNOB would benefit from better operational definition.

UNDP has not developed an integrated, holistic gender strategy to effectively address the root causes of inequalities in the country. Despite its intention for most programme resources to be allocated to results with a significant gender impact, the majority of UNDP interventions focused on ensuring women's participation in project activities. While UNDP work in the area of gender equality has expanded over the years, partly within the COVID-19 response framework, support remains limited, considering the gender gap and the challenges faced by women to fully enjoy their rights.

Beyond indigenous peoples, and limited activities benefitting people with disabilities, the consideration of other groups at risk of being left behind, such as youth, is mostly missing from UNDP programming.

Conclusion 7. UNDP has introduced valuable innovations over the programme cycle, experimenting with portfolio approaches and the use of data to inform evidence-based programmes in vulnerable areas. However, it did not succeed in making the most of programme management tools. The ownership and scale-up of introduced approaches will require further integration into the UNDP M&E cycle and staff capacity-building.

Through the Accelerator Lab, the Deep Demonstration project and other internal exercises, UNDP has conducted important experiments with participatory approaches to programme design. The promotion of innovative methodologies reinforced project design and planning capacity among UNDP staff and partners, despite still being in early stages.

Lessons learnt from the UNDP use of theory of change as a planning tool showed the need for strong internal communication and change management to ensure full ownership by project and programme managers. Inadequate risk planning, and challenges with the M&E function, affected project management efficiency and internal programme coherence, with an impact on sustainability.

3.2 Recommendations and management response

RECOMMENDATION 1.



In the next programme cycle, UNDP should expand the poverty reduction and socioeconomic development focus of its offer to support the reconstruction of the economy towards the ‘Vivir Bien’ (Living Well) objectives, and the reduction of inequalities, within the framework of the new PDES 2021-2025 and COVID-19 recovery. UNDP should strengthen its support for the promotion of decent employment, particularly for women and youth.

Given the widening inequality gap exacerbated by COVID-19, the UNDP should strengthen its focus on the socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and support reconstruction efforts with interventions that aim to reduce economic, social and gender inequalities in line with the new national priorities of PDES 2021-2025. Building on the experience of innovative portfolio planning approaches trialled in the current programme cycle, and the work on multidimensional poverty measurement at national and subnational levels, UNDP projects should systematically address the root causes of poverty as experienced by the most marginalized, including discriminatory practices and social norms. Within the portfolio approach, the effectiveness and sustainability of both upstream and downstream interventions for poverty reduction will be enhanced by continuing to strengthen the capacity of the national statistical system, as recommended by the 2019 MAPS mission. Innovation work initiated in this cycle, such as that related to urban agendas, should be scaled up, and/ or synergies with other UNDP areas of intervention identified.

Management response: Fully accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office will continue to work on this area, noting that the scope of UNDP technical assistance to central and local government agencies will significantly depend on political will and institutional openness to receive such support. All PDES priorities, the statistical system, and the strategies to reduce inequalities are contingent on the census.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
1.1 Develop baselines for the formulation of public policies based on administrative records of government agencies related to poverty and socioeconomic development priorities in the People and Prosperity/Planet areas of the new CPD, pending census data.	May to December 2022	Programme Unit and thematic units	The new CPD 2023-2027 and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2023-2027 is under collective construction.	Initiated

◀ Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

<p>1.2 Develop a national strategy to strengthen institutional capacities for M&E of policies, programmes and projects at national and local levels based on evidence (INFOSPIE, PDES and national statistical systems) with a focus on poverty and employment.</p>	<p>May 2022 to June 2023</p>	<p>Programme Unit and thematic units</p>	<p>Under the effective governance portfolio approach, it is expected to work with all levels of government to strengthen their capacity to generate evidence, that it is also being considered in the construction of the new CPD 2023-2027.</p>	<p>Initiated</p>
<p>1.3 Develop a joint work plan with the International Labour Organization to support decent work and transition to formality type of initiatives from a multidimensional perspective (with focus on reducing inequalities and vulnerabilities), increasing productivity, intensive use of ICTs, and targeted at youth and women.</p>	<p>June 2022 to December 2023</p>	<p>Programme Unit and thematic units</p>	<p>The new CPD 2023-2027 and UNSDCF 2023-2027 is under collective construction.</p>	<p>Initiated</p>

RECOMMENDATION 2.



UNDP should continue its work on governance, focusing on strengthening the sustainability of the results achieved in the current programme cycle and reactivating its work on justice.

Effective governance will remain at the heart of the challenges to be overcome in the next programme cycle. While remaining open to emerging priorities, UNDP should work to promote the full effectiveness and sustainability of activities initiated during the current programme period, including: support to the electoral (OEP) and legislative branches of the State; promoting human rights and access to justice, particularly for vulnerable groups; and full cooperation between the State and AIOCs. This area of work can benefit from, and be enhanced by, incorporating elements of the three enablers identified in the new UNDP strategic plan 2022-2025 - digitalization, innovation and finance for development - and by fostering synergies such as those with UN Women to promote gender equality and justice.

Management response: Partially accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office is committed to continuing the shaping up of a strong effective governance portfolio, including continuing delivering strong technical electoral assistance work as part of the United Nations Peacebuilding Initiative in the country.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
2.1 Strengthen capacities of the electoral body with emphasis on institutionalization of multistakeholder dialogue mechanisms, gender parity and political violence against women, electoral jurisprudence, electoral operations, and status of indigenous autonomies.	June 2021 to December 2023	Programme Unit and thematic units	UNDP has been a key actor to deliver electoral assistance in Bolivia since 2020 and such initiative stands strong with support from Sweden, Spain and the European Union.	Ongoing

◀ Recommendation 2 (cont'd)

2.2 In coordination with UN Women, lead work to consolidate democratic parity mechanisms in electoral processes at the central and local levels.	June 2021 to December 2023	Programme Unit and thematic units	UNDP continues to support the strengthening of the electoral body with resources from Sweden and Spain. It is expected to expand this support with resources from the European Union.	Ongoing
2.3 Strengthen capacities of the Legislative Body (ALP) and its committees to foster dialogue and consensus building initiatives across party lines in key policy areas (justice reform, environmental agenda, among others).	June 2022 to December 2023	Programme Unit and thematic units	MoU signed with the Presidency of the Senate.	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 3.



UNDP should build on the strengths gained and lessons learned from its implementation of tuberculosis and malaria programmes and the COVID-19 response, to expand its health programme beyond the Global Fund framework.

UNDP should continue to explore and foster collaborative work with other United Nations agencies with a health mandate in the country (WHO/PAHO, UNICEF and UNFPA) to expand the scope of interventions, reaching out to new rights-holders and prioritizing LNOB. Leveraging its convening power and ability to work across sectors, the UNDP portfolio in this area should address the social and environmental determinants of health and health inequality in an integrated fashion, as well as how a stronger governance system could reinforce national health outcomes. UNDP should consider its procurement service as an entry point to scale up initiatives that add value to development projects for the country.

Management response: Fully accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office will continue to seek and leverage programming opportunities to expand its health and development portfolio building on lessons learned and existing strategic partnerships (e.g. emerging from Global Fund led initiatives) in-country, regionally and globally.

◀ Recommendation 3 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
3.1 Seek opportunities to leverage UNDP health and development work through new strategic partnerships that expand the programming scope.	June 2021 to December 2022	Programme Unit – Health and Development	CUIDA Chagas Project under management with UNITAID-FIOTEC resources.	Ongoing
3.2 Streamline gender equality issues across the health and development and the socioeconomic development portfolios.	April 2022 to June 2023	Programme Unit – Health and Development and Socioeconomic Development	The office has begun its transition to an integrated portfolio approach. The new CPD 2023-2027 and the Gender Equality Strategy is being developed.	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 4.



UNDP should reinforce its programme offer on the environment, natural resource management and climate change. Through enhanced access to vertical funds, and taking advantage of synergies with other signature solutions, UNDP should promote further interventions in the area of climate change adaptation and mitigation to also secure the livelihoods of vulnerable communities.

UNDP should reinforce its position on environmental issues, building on the comparative advantage of its field presence and its leading role in sustainable development issues at large. UNDP should increase its support to facilitate access to vertical funds by national authorities or organizations, while strengthening its project management capacities for effective results presentation to counterparts and partners. UNDP must continue to strengthen the integrated management and governance of forests and water resources, both as adaptation/ mitigation measures against climate change and because of their importance in securing the livelihoods of communities most at risk of being left behind. It should encourage the scale-up of successful SGP initiatives and consider entering new areas such as the promotion of renewable energy.

Management response: Fully accepted



A roadmap proposal to mobilize access to resources from vertical funds (e.g. GEF-8, GCF, NAMA Facility) is under joint development with the Bolivian Government.

◀ Recommendation 4 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
4.1 Development of a concept note/roadmap for a comprehensive landscape proposal through A portfolio approach for GEF-8 STAR funds.	April to December 2022	Representation, Programme Unit and thematic units	Discussions ongoing with line ministry and GEF focal point.	Ongoing
4.2 Strategic partnership with the Productive Development Bank (BDP) focused on reduction of deforestation and the increase of agricultural and agroforestry productivity to develop a joint proposal to GCF.	February 2022 to June 2023	Programme Unit and thematic units	BDP awaits accreditation status with GCF.	Ongoing
4.3 Proposal on energy transition (public lighting sub-sector at the local level) led by the Government with UNDP support to access NAMA Facility.	January to December 2022	Programme Unit and thematic units	Proposal seeking government endorsement for submission to NAMA Facility.	Ongoing
4.4 Development of a rationale to access the second phase of the Climate Promise initiative in support of NDC implementation.	June 2022	Programme Unit and thematic units	Government endorsement submitted to the UNDP Climate Promise team (NCE - BPPS/ GPN).	Ongoing

RECOMMENDATION 5.



UNDP should take advantage of its national outreach to deepen its engagement with civil society for project delivery, while strengthening its advisory role with the Government. Partnerships with other United Nations agencies to enhance community resilience should be further explored.

Given the volatile country context, an updated partnership approach would help to improve positioning visà-vis external actors and maximise the added value of alliance building. UNDP should scale up more continuous local-level work with municipalities and civil society to overcome the high turnover of civil servants at national level, optimize the use of its own resources and foster sustainability. UNDP can also replicate the progress made with national banking actors to engage other trade and productive sectors in the sustainable development agenda in Bolivia. At the level of the United Nations country team, UNDP should leverage synergy and combine assets with other United Nations agencies in the country to expand partnerships for strategic and impact-oriented purposes. These could include UNICEF on social protection, WFP on resilience, or UNESCO on South-South cooperation.

Management response: Partially accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office has diversified its partnerships with civil society and private sector to address COVID-19 impacts through its programmatic response, as well as for socioeconomic recovery. It has also launched an ambitious initiative for an integrated platform (ACTUA 2025) to deliver United Nations joint support through synergies at the local level.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
5.1 Revamped efforts to work with United Nations system agencies, funds, and programmes, within the framework of the new UNSDCF to leverage partnerships at the local level and with civil society (including the private sector).	April 2022 to June 2023	Representation, Programme Unit and thematic units	The UNSDCF 2023-2027 is under collective construction. ACTUA2025 platform to be formally launched.	Ongoing

◀ Recommendation 5 (cont'd)

<p>5.2 Consolidate partnerships with academia (mainly universities) to promote SDG achievement type of content through creative entry points (challenges, productive development ecosystem, public management, nature-based solutions).</p>	<p>February to December 2022</p>	<p>Programme Unit and thematic units</p>	<p>MoU with principal public and private Universities in the Country (La Paz, El Alto, Santa Cruz and Chuquisaca).</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>5.3 Invest additional efforts to promote the sustainable development impact investment ecosystem with financial and private sector stakeholders (e.g. through the Sustainable Finance roundtable).</p>	<p>June 2020 to December 2023</p>	<p>Programme Unit and thematic units</p>	<p>Institutional framework in place, design of a Road Map for the Sustainable Finance Roundtable and ongoing technical assistance.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

RECOMMENDATION 6.



To ensure future financial sustainability, UNDP should update its resource mobilization strategy in line with the new programme offer and ensure that each of the defined thematic areas of intervention has a dedicated component within the strategy.

The great financial weight of the emergency response and health projects in this cycle should not divert UNDP from mobilizing resources to support its development work in other areas. UNDP needs a clear resource mobilization strategy, aligned to its vision and added value in the country, including for accessing environmental vertical funds. It should continue to nurture its relationships with IFIs and the private sector. Articulating the strategy around the added value that UNDP can bring to Bolivia in each of the six signature solutions of the new strategic plan will facilitate clarity and access to donors.

Management response: Fully accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office will update its resource mobilization strategy to identify opportunities with new programming and funding opportunities with partners and donors. A cycle of project idea proposals has been initiated to diversify the pipeline.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
6.1 In line with the new CPD, UNDP Bolivia will update its resource mobilization strategy to include traditional and nontraditional partners (e.g. private sector, IFIs) tailored to country context and which systematically addresses the country's development priorities and the programming realities.	May 2022 to January 2023	Programme Unit and thematic units	The new CPD 2023-2027 and UNSDCF 2023-2027 is under development. There will be participatory consultation processes with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society as well as the Government.	Initiated

RECOMMENDATION 7.



UNDP should develop a gender strategy describing how it plans to address social norms and the deep roots of inequalities affecting women's livelihoods and full enjoyment of their rights.

UNDP should take the opportunity presented by the Gender Seal process to develop a holistic gender strategy to ensure that all of its interventions contribute to the achievement of defined gender objectives in a coherent way. UNDP can learn from potentially transformative initiatives already underway. It should maximise the benefits and synergies of joint work with UN Women in areas such as governance and justice, and with UNFPA around health and youth. UNDP programme and project designs should move beyond ensuring and measuring the participation of women in initiatives, and continue to promote the potentially gender-transformative work initiated during this cycle such as access to sustainable livelihoods for indigenous women, political and social rights in the framework of AIOCs, or care initiatives.

Management response: Fully accepted



UNDP Bolivia country office gender equality strategy is under development, in alignment with UNDP new global strategy, country office new CPD and the UNDP Gender Seal certification process, which is ongoing. Also, UNDP Bolivia works closely with UN Women to inform/ strengthen its gender portfolio.

Key action(s)	Time frame	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking*	
			Comments	Status
7.1 Elaboration of the UNDP Bolivia Gender Equality Strategy as part of the new CPD with transformative actions based on the CPD ToC and the analysis of the current project portfolio.	October 2021 to December 2022	Representation, Programme Unit and thematic units	The new CPD 2023-2027 and the Gender Equality Strategy is under construction.	Ongoing
7.2 Application to the UNDP Gender Seal for the country office.	June 2021 to June 2023	Representation, Programme Unit and thematic units	Self-evaluation of the country office carried out and with an action plan to address the recommendations towards the gender gold seal.	Ongoing
7.3 Identification of joint initiatives with UN Women to advance gender equality key initiatives for the country office and for programming more generally.	June 2022 to June 2023	Representation, Programme Unit and thematic units	UNDP Bolivia and UN Women jointly implemented a multipartner trust fund with a focus on women's economic empowerment in 2021-2022. UNDP also shares information with United Nations agencies and key partners on care issues.	Ongoing

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/13381>

Annex 1. Evaluation terms of reference

Annex 2. Evaluation framework

Annex 3. Projects reviewed

Annex 4. Documents consulted

Annex 5. People consulted

Annex 6. Status of CPD outcome and output indicators matrix

Annex 7. Theories of change of the programme



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