

## INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION BURUNDI



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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT effectiveness COORDINATION efficiency PARTNERSHIP sustainability NARESULTS responsivenes COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT responsiveness COORDINATINATION SUSTAINABILITY RESPONSIVENCES COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIVENCES HUMANAGING FOR RESULTS responsivenes HUMANAGING FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENES HIP SUSTAINABILITY MANAGING FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENES COORDINATION AND DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIVENESS EFFECTIVENESS (OORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY NATIONAL OWNERSHIP REPRESENTED FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS PARTNERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY NATIONAL OWNERSHIP REPRESENTED FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY NATIONAL OWNERSHIP REPRESENTED FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS COORDINATION AND MANAGING FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS COORDINATION AND MANAGING FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT RESPONSIVENESS EFFECTIVENESS COORDINATION AND MANAGING FOR RESULTS RESPONSIVENESS HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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### INDEPENDENT COUNTRY PROGRAMME EVALUATION: Burundi

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) would like to thank all those who contributed to this evaluation.

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The IEO would not have been able to complete the evaluation without the support of:

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**Other stakeholders and partners:** representatives of the Government of Burundi, UN agencies, civil society, non-governmental organizations and bilateral and multilateral development partners

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## **FOREWORD**

I am pleased to present the Independent Country Programme Evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Burundi. UNDP's partnership with Burundi began in 1975. This is the first country-level evaluation carried out by UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office (IEO). This evaluation covers the work of UNDP in the country from 2019 through the end of 2022.

Burundi has faced many challenges throughout its history, including numerous crises and internal conflicts that have weakened its capacity to develop. Burundi went through a profound and lasting political and security crisis in 2015, which disrupted the development progress that had been achieved over a decade and led to the implementation of international sanctions by the country's main development partners. Adding to this burden, Burundi has been ranked among the 20 countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This exacerbates an already fragile environmental situation marked by land degradation and deforestation accelerated by increased population growth and the dependence of the country's economy on its natural capital. The recovery of the Burundian economy from the 2015 crisis has been affected by the closing of borders during the COVID-19 pandemic and by the interruption of trade resulting from the war in Ukraine.

The programme of UNDP Burundi covered by this evaluation was developed in response to this national context. It focuses on three key areas: inclusive growth and local development, governance and social cohesion, and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. This evaluation report emphasizes the important role played by UNDP, through its relevant and continuous support to national authorities in advancing national development priorities before, during, and after the 2015 crisis, and in a difficult context for development financing. The evaluation highlights UNDP's important contributions supporting development planning and service delivery to vulnerable populations in the areas of justice, administrative services, access to livelihoods, and for community management of risks from natural disasters.

Recent developments in Burundi have included the lifting of international sanctions in 2022 and the gradual resumption of cooperation with key development partners. As UNDP prepares for its new country programme cycle and strives to deepen its development support, the organization is uniquely placed to support national authorities in the scaling up of development interventions and the adoption of structural reforms needed to entrench progress in sustainable development pathways.

I would like to thank the Government of Burundi, national stakeholders, colleagues from the UNDP Country Office in Burundi, as well as the UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa, for enabling the evaluation team to successfully carry out its work. I trust that the evaluation recommendations, all of which have been agreed to by the Independent Evaluation Office, will help to strengthen the formulation of the next country programme strategy and enhance UNDP's contribution to inclusive and sustainable development in Burundi.

Alan Fox Acting Director

**UNDP Independent Evaluation Office** 

FOREWORD

## **CONTENTS**

ACK	NOWLEDGMENTS	
FOREWORD ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY		i
		iv
		1
CHAPTER 1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION		2
1.1	Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation	5
1.2	Evaluation Methodology	<u>.</u>
1.3	Country context	7
1.4	UNDP Programmes in Burundi	10
CHAPTER 2. FINDINGS		13
2.1	Inclusive growth and local development	14
2.2	Improving access to quality administrative, health and judicial services	21
2.3	Building resilience to crises and shocks to safeguard development gains	35
2.4	Cross-cutting issues	42
2.5	Country programme performance rating	49
CHAPTER 3. CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE		52
3.1	Conclusions	53
3.2	Recommendations and Management Response	55
ANNEXES		60
ВО	(ES, FIGURES AND TABLES	
Box 1. Evaluation questions		
Figure 1. Programme expenditure and execution rate by outcome, 2019-2022		12
Figure 2. Evolution of programme budget and expenditure (2019-2022)		12
Figure 3. Funding source of programmatic expenditures (2019-2022)		12
Figure 4. Budget and expenditure: Outcome 1, 2019-2022		14
Figure 5. Budget and expenditure: Outcome 2, 2019-2022		22
Figure 6. Expenditure of Global Fund grants to Burundi 2003-2022		24
Figure 7. Budget and expenditure: Outcome 3, 2019-2022		35
Figure 8. Expenditures by gender marker 2019-2022 (excl. Global fund)		42
Figure 9. Gender marker programmatic expenditure 2014-2022		42
Table 1. Country programme performance ratings		50

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

**CC** Climate Change

**CPD** Country Programme Document

**CSOs** Civil Society Organizations

**DRR** Disaster Risk Reduction

**GRES** Gender results evaluation scale

**GUP** One Stop Shop for provincial administrative service

HIV/AIDS Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

**IEO** Independent Evaluation Office

**IGA** Income-Generating Activities

ICPE Independent Country Programme Evaluation

**LLIN** Long Lasting Insecticidal Nets

MPCEA Micro credit for economically active poor

NDC Nationally Determined Contributions

**PADDEL** Support programme for decentralization and local development

PCDC Community plan for communal development

**RBA** Regional Bureau for Africa

**SDGs** Sustainable Development Goals

**TB** Tuberculosis

**UN** United Nations

**UNDP** United Nations Development Programme

**VSLA** Village Savings Loans Associations

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducted an Independent Country Programme Evaluation (ICPE) of UNDP in Burundi in 2022. The evaluation covers the programming period of 2019-2023. This is the first country level evaluation carried out by the IEO in Burundi. The purpose of the evaluation was to strengthen accountability to national stakeholders and the UNDP Executive Board, promote organizational learning and inform the development of the next UNDP country programme.

Burundi is a landlocked, least developed country. It ranks at the bottom of the Human Development Index and recorded the lowest GDP per capita in the world in 2020. The poverty rate measured by the share of the population living on less than US\$1.90 was estimated at approximately 87 percent by 2021. Burundi has had a difficult history marked by numerous crises and internal conflicts that have weakened its capacity to develop. Since independence in 1962, the country has experienced cycles of violence, notably two violent episodes in 1972 and during the country's civil war between 1993 and 2006, resulting in thousands of deaths and population movements. In 2015, Burundi went through a profound and lasting political and security crisis, which disrupted development progress that had been achieved over a decade and led to the implementation of international sanctions by its main development partners that lasted until 2022. Due to internal and regional instability, Burundi is a country characterized by departures, hosting of refugees, and of returnees from neighbouring countries following the appeasement of various crises. In 2022, there were more than 300,000 Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries, and the country hosted more than 80,000 refugees. More than 200,000 people were repatriated in Burundi since 2017.

Burundi is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Extreme weather events have caused loss of livelihoods and further displacement. In 2022, 89 percent of the 75,000 IDPs in the country were displaced due to environmental events. The effects of climate change are exacerbating an already fragile environmental situation marked by land degradation and deforestation accelerated by the reliance of the country's economy on its natural capital, and increased population growth.

The current UNDP country programme in Burundi (2019-2023) is guided by the United Development Assistance Framework for the same period, aligned with objectives of the National Development Plan 2018-2027. UNDP focused on three outcomes: inclusive growth and local development; access to quality administrative, health and judicial services; and building resilience to crises and shocks to safeguard development gains. Between 2019 and 2022, total programme expenditure amounted to US\$181.2 million, with approximately 60 percent of expenditures driven by health services through the management of the country's Global Fund Grant by UNDP.

## **Findings and conclusions**

UNDP is recognized as an important partner of the Burundian authorities both through the relevance of its support to national priorities and their continuity before, during, and after the 2015 political crisis, and in a difficult context for development financing. The implementation of the country programme continued to be marked by the stigma of the deep crisis experienced by Burundi since 2015. During this period, UNDP continued its support to national development objectives with national institutions, although under a reduced scope driven by the country context, and provided critical support to targeted institutions with

a view to improving service delivery to citizens through the various areas of the country programme, including access to justice, administrative services and local development. This has consolidated UNDP's positioning, leadership, and relationship of trust with national authorities, which is recognized by all partners, and has played an important role in maintaining a dialogue with development partners in a context of gradual revitalization of development cooperation.

In the **area of inclusive growth and local development**, UNDP supported national authorities to strengthen local development initiatives by providing livelihood options to rural populations through both individual and collective access to financial and non-financial productive assets. The evaluation found that the combination of such support boosted local economies, notably through the introduction of productive assets for agricultural transformation. At the same time, the evaluation found that the interventions lacked emphasis on follow up actions to support beneficiaries and implementing partners to strengthen the ownership and sustainability of results beyond the delivery of support, notably in ensuring the success of income generating activities promoted.

UNDP also contributed to the implementation of the country's decentralization policies. In this area, UNDP supported the planning capacities of municipalities through capacity building and citizen participation in the design of communal community development plans, which enabled the identification of interventions adapted to the needs of populations and communities for both municipalities and other actors active in municipalities. The process enabled targeted municipalities to obtain financial transfers from the state as well as set up community consultation frameworks to support inclusive development, including representation from vulnerable groups. However, the evaluation noted slow progress in the overall drive for decentralization, notably in ensuring the effective transfer of resources from the state to municipalities and weak resource mobilization capacities that have affected the implementation and ownership of community development plans.

In the area of access to quality administrative, health and judiciary services, UNDP played an important role in facilitating continuous financing from the Global Fund to advance the fight against diseases with epidemic potential in Burundi, including scaling up efforts to combat malaria, the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in the country. Despite a challenging operating environment, support through the management of two consecutive grants contributed to improving access to prevention and treatment services and strengthening the national response to the fight against Malaria, Tuberculosis, and HIV in Burundi. However, various bottlenecks related to structural challenges in the health system, the overall operating environment and internal challenges related to administrative workload and gaps in communication between key stakeholders have limited programmatic and financial performance of Global Fund grants.

Advancing on Rule of Law objectives set in the wake of the withdrawal of peacekeeping operations in 2014 was challenging, but UNDP continued to support both the demand for and supply of access to justice through legal awareness activities and access to legal aid, and by supporting judicial authorities' reach towards litigants in rural areas of the country. Legal aid support was expanded through community level mediation initiatives, which have been effective in supporting the diversion of civil cases to the courts and contributing to social cohesion at community level. UNDP also engaged in administrative reforms by strengthening the delivery of administrative documents outside of the capital to strengthen citizens' access to rights. This was a useful addition to more traditional access to justice support. The support to access land certificates at municipal level was found to reduce the backlog of cases in local courts and administrative authorities. Land issues constitute the bulk of cases crowding courts.

In the **area of resilience to crises and shocks**, UNDP supported national and decentralized risk management and prevention systems to establish and strengthen community level early warning systems, which enabled updating of the country's national contingency plan and targeted provincial and communal contingency plans. Those plans reflect new socio-economic risks and their impact, for instance, on food and nutrition security, However, the evaluation found that the various platforms at national, provincial and communal levels did not yet have the capacities to adopt preventive measures, which depend in part on the effective establishment and management of early warning mechanisms, which, despite support from various projects, were not operationalized at the time of this evaluation. UNDP also provided various responses to the stabilization needs of disaster victims through territorial rehabilitation activities, access to livelihoods, and sustainable housing solutions. While at an early stage, UNDP has strengthened its positioning in the area of energy transition, promoting the development of off-grid solar energy solutions to reduce pressure on national resources of high relevance to favor access of vulnerable populations and the need to enhance productive capacities at local level.

The country programme had a particular ambition to integrate gender issues into all country programme outputs, not all of which have concretely materialized in the implementation of interventions. However, the programme demonstrates particular attention to addressing vulnerabilities by targeting internally displaced persons, returnees, Batwa and persons with disabilities, and to some extent intersectionality, in the targeting of beneficiaries and in the disaggregation of programme performance indicators. While efforts still need to be consolidated to sustainably change the situation, interventions have demonstrated attention to the differentiated needs of the most vulnerable communities and put into practice the goal of leaving no one behind.

## Recommendations

**Recommendation 1:** Assert UNDP's catalytic role, within the broader context of resuming cooperation by the country's main development partner, by directing its support towards strengthening institutional capacities and repositioning its downstream support towards the piloting of replicable solutions.

**Recommendation 2:** Anchor UNDP downstream interventions into an area-based approach with a view to strengthen synergies across its different programmes and maximize its contribution to rural development given the limited resources available.

**Recommendation 3:** Continue data collection and monitoring and evaluation efforts with national partners and strengthen the qualitative dimension of the results framework to better inform on the experience of service users and beneficiaries, with a view of promoting adaptation of interventions.

**Recommendation 4:** Actively mobilize relevant stakeholders of the health sector and the Global Fund to develop and establish a roadmap for the gradual transition of grant management, clarifying criteria and conditions against pre-determined performance milestones.

**Recommendation 5:** Support digitalization by giving priority to the functioning of public administration, administrative services, national coordination capacities of the digitalization effort, and integrating leave no one behind.

# CHAPTER 1 BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the aim, objectives and scope of the evaluation and the methodology used. It presents Burundi's development context and the UNDP country programme.

## 1.1 Purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation

The Independent Evaluation Office (IEO) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) conducts Independent Country Program Evaluations (ICPEs) to collect and demonstrate evaluative evidence of UNDP's contributions to development results at the country level, as well as the effectiveness of UNDP's strategy in facilitating and mobilizing national efforts to achieve development results. The ICPEs also aim to identify factors affecting UNDP's performance. ICPEs are independent evaluations carried out within the framework of the general provisions contained in the UNDP Evaluation Policy.<sup>1</sup>

This ICPE covers the current UNDP programme in Burundi for the period 2019-2023, although some of the projects reviewed may have been initiated before this period. It assessed the three outcome areas described in the country programme document (CPD). The ICPE was conducted in 2022, the penultimate year of UNDP's current 2019-2023 programme cycle, with a view to contributing to the preparation of UNDP's new programme, which will start in 2024. In accordance with the Terms of Reference (Annex 1), the scope of the ICPE includes all UNDP activities in the country regardless of their source of funding, and therefore includes those funded by UNDP regular resources, bilateral donors and the Government. The ICPE also covers all projects and activities from the previous programming cycle that have continued or ended in the current cycle (See Annex 2 for the list of projects).

## 1.2 Evaluation Methodology

The ICPE was guided by four main evaluation questions (See Box 1). An evaluation matrix (See Annex 2), structured around the evaluation criteria of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD/DAC), questions, sub-questions, indicators and specifying the data sources to be used, was designed to guide the evaluation process. This matrix was used to organize the available evidence by evaluation question and to assign a performance score to the Country Office for

each indicator in the matrix. It helped the evaluation team draw well-supported conclusions and recommendations.

The effectiveness of the UNDP country programme was analysed through an assessment of progress towards expected outputs and the extent to which those outputs contributed to the expected results of the CPD. To better understand UNDP performance and the sustainability of results in the country, the ICPE examined the specific factors that influenced – positively or negatively – the performance of the country programme. The capacity of UNDP to adapt to the changing context and respond to national development needs and priorities was examined.

## **BOX 1.** Evaluation questions

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

See <a href="http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml">http://web.undp.org/evaluation/policy.shtml</a>

The evaluation methodology adhered to the norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group.<sup>2</sup> The evaluation also incorporated a gender-sensitive evaluation approach to data collection and analysis. Gender data was used to analyse gender-sensitive programme expenditures and to assess the country office commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment. Sex-disaggregated data were assessed against programme results, where available. The IEO Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES) was used to assess the quality and level of achievement of outcomes based on the different expected outcomes of the programme. GRES classifies gender outcomes into five categories: negative, insensitive, targeted, sensitive and transformative.<sup>3</sup>

The evaluation collected, analysed and triangulated qualitative and quantitative data from primary and secondary sources to ensure the validity of its findings, conclusions and recommendations. The evaluation was based on the following sources and methods:

- A review of UNDP strategic and programme documents, project and monitoring documents, evaluation reports/documents/publications, research papers and other<sup>4</sup> country-related publications was conducted. The main documents consulted by the evaluation team are listed in Annex 5.
- An analysis of UNDP's programme portfolio, which was extended to programmes from the previous programming cycle (2014-2018), to help identify and understand the evolution of projects implemented and UNDP strategic directions contained in the CPD.
- As part of a mission to Bujumbura from 3 July to 15 July 2022, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 153 individuals involved in UNDP programmes, including government representatives (50 percent), UN system staff, including UNDP (20 percent), civil society organizations (20 percent) and development partners (10 percent). Women accounted for approximately one-third (29 percent) of stakeholders interviewed across all groups. Interviews were used to collect data and assess stakeholders' perceptions of the reach and effectiveness of programme interventions; determine factors affecting performance; and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the UNDP programme. The full list of interviewees is available in Appendix 4.
- A 10-day field visit was conducted from 22 August to 2 September 2022 in the provinces of Rumonge,
  Makamba, Rutana, and Ruyigi, undertaken to assess the results of the selected initiatives and conduct
  focus groups with 85 direct beneficiaries of UNDP interventions. This field visit made it possible to
  include the local authorities of these regions in the sample of stakeholders interviewed for this evaluation and to carry out *in situ* observations and to consult the final beneficiaries of the interventions
  carried out at community level. The target provinces for the field visits were selected taking into
  account the concentration of UNDP interventions and the representation of its different portfolios
  of interventions implemented at the local level.
- A preliminary findings workshop was held in November 2022 to validate the assessment team's initial observations with Country Office staff and gather any additional information.

The draft ICPE report underwent a quality assurance procedure including an external peer review and an internal review by the IEO evaluators. The report was then submitted to the Country Office and UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa to identify factual errors and was also shared with the Government and other national partners.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Visit the UN Evaluation Group website: <a href="http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914">http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914</a>.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> https://erc.undp.org/pdf/GRES\_English.pdf

Sixteen decentralised evaluations were carried out during the reporting period. Project and programme documentation was collected through the compilation of the UNDP database and supplemented by the Country Office.

**Evaluation limitations.** Burundi has experienced a difficult socio-economic and political context since the 2015 political crisis, marked by international sanctions and characterized by diplomatic isolation, although signs of openings have emerged since 2021. One of the consequences of the context for the conduct of this country programme evaluation was an overall lack of data and empirical studies on the different sectors of UNDP implementation during the current period, which would have made it possible to estimate more comprehensively the sectoral progress and contribution of UNDP. Most of the documentary resources and studies available predate the 2015 crisis. Conducting of the evaluation interviews was contingent on the willingness and availability of stakeholders to participate in them, despite the support and facilitation of the Country Office. Those constraints were generally mitigated by adapting the data collection schedule, and in particular the schedule of subsequent field visits outside Bujumbura. Despite concerted efforts, gender parity could not be respected in the stakeholder consultations of this evaluation. Two-thirds of the people met were men. This was particularly true for the meetings organized with the administration. Although outside its direct control, the evaluation team nevertheless intensified its efforts to expand the participation of women's associations in its consultations and the conduct of focus groups specifically targeting women's groups in organized field visits. Those efforts increased women's participation in evaluation consultations by almost 20 percent.

## 1.3 Country context

Burundi is a landlocked country in East Africa and a low-income economy of the United Nations least developed country category. Of the country's estimated population of 11.9 million in 2020,<sup>5</sup> 45.3 percent were under 15 years of age. Burundi had the lowest GDP per capita (US\$239) in the world in 2020.<sup>6</sup> It ranked 187th out of 189 countries in the 2021 Human Development Index (HDI), with an HDI of 0.426, which decreases<sup>7</sup> by almost 30 percent when inequalities have been accounted for. The poverty rate measured by the share of the population living on less than US\$1.90 was expected to reach approximately 87 percent by 2021.<sup>8</sup> Access to basic services such as sanitation has not improved over the last two decades (45.8 percent in 2003 compared to 45.7 percent in 2020).<sup>9</sup> The employment rate decreased from 83.3 percent to 76.8 percent between 2000 and 2020.<sup>10</sup> Eighty percent of the labour force works in the agricultural sector, making up approximately half of the country's total GDP.<sup>11</sup> Burundi records low performance on global measures of human capital and has the highest rate of chronic malnutrition in the world (56 percent) and a high fertility rate (5.5 children per woman).<sup>12</sup> Although enrollment in primary education has improved, primary completion has remained low. Only 4.6 percent of Burundians aged 25 and above are estimated to have had any secondary education.<sup>13</sup>

Burundi has had a painful history marked by numerous crises and internal conflicts that have weakened its capacity to develop. The country has experienced cycles of violence since independence in 1962, triggered by ethnic and political tensions. Those tensions led to two violent episodes described as genocide in 1972 and during the country's civil war between 1993 and 2006,<sup>14</sup> resulting in thousands of deaths,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> World Development Indicators, 2022: the estimate for 2020 was 11,890,781 people in Burundi

<sup>6</sup> World Bank data: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?most\_recent\_value\_desc=false

HDI Report 2020

<sup>8</sup> https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview#1

World Development Indicators, 2020, from the IEO data mart

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview#1

World Bank 2019, Country partnership framework for the republic of Burundi for the period FY19-FY23

World Bank, Human Capital Index country note

The qualification of the events of 1993 as genocide will be established in 1996 by the report (5/1996/682) of the United Nations International Commission of Inquiry established by Security Council Resolution 1012. In 2021, Burundi's Truth and Reconciliation Commission describes the events of 1972 as genocide.

displaced persons and refugees. To end the civil war, political parties signed the Arusha Agreement in 2000, which after a transitional period led to the adoption of a new constitution in 2005 that allowed the country to experience its longest period of stability since independence.

In 2014, the decision of the incumbent President to run for a third term in 2015, despite the constitutional provisions set out in the Arusha Agreement, plunged the country into a serious political and security crisis with a new cycle of violence, marked by a coup attempt in May 2015.<sup>15</sup> In its 2016 final report, a United Nations Independent Commission of Inquiry stated that more than 1,000 people had been killed, thousands had suffered torture and unlawful detention, and there were hundreds of reported disappearances. The Commission also acknowledged that no one could really quantify the violations that were perpetuated and ongoing when it presented its report.<sup>16</sup> In 2017, UNHCR estimated that more than 400,000 Burundians had left their country as a result of the crisis.<sup>17</sup>

Multiple allegations of human rights violations perpetrated by security forces have contributed to the country's isolation on the international stage with the imposition of budgetary sanctions against the Government of Burundi by the country's main development partners. The political crisis continued until 2020, marked by the conduct of presidential, legislative, and municipal elections and the sudden death of the incumbent president. The election of a new president in 2020 helped calm the internal situation and resume diplomatic dialogue. International sanctions were gradually lifted in 2021 and 2022. However, the situation in the country remains fragile marked by various security incidents and the human rights situation remains worrying.<sup>18</sup>

The political crisis of 2015 had a significant effect on the socio-economic situation of the country and plunged it into a stage of economic recession and humanitarian crisis.<sup>19</sup> The country's economy has experienced a sharp contraction, with GDP growth falling from an average of 5 percent between 2004 and 2014 to -3.9 percent in 2015<sup>20</sup> due to the closure of businesses, the disruption of value chains, and the reduction of agricultural productivity, tourism and foreign investments. Development aid, which represented nearly 9 percent of GDP in 2014, represented only 2.4 percent of GDP in 2016. Budget deficits averaged 6.5 percent of GDP per year between 2015 and 2019, before being contained through progress in domestic revenue mobilization and cuts in social spending. While the country experienced a modest recovery in growth in 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, followed by the effects of the war in Ukraine in 2022, further weakened the country's economic recovery. Deterioration in the country's terms of trade and supply challenges caused an increase in inflation and slowed progress in addressing the country's fiscal deficit.

While the political situation has experienced some stability since the events of 2015, in 2021 Burundi was ranked 43 out of 54 countries on the Mo Ibrahim Governance Index, which places the country below the continental average for Africa and slightly above the regional average. Since 2012, the index shows an increase in human development indicators and foundations of economic opportunity, but also a deterioration in indicators under the categories of security and rule of law, and concerning participation, rights, and inclusion; creating a reduction in the overall average of the country on the index between 2012 and 2021.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>15 &</sup>lt;u>https://africacenter.org/fr/spotlight/le-burundi-la-crise-oubliee-brule-toujours/</u>

A/HRC/33/37, Report of the United Nations Independent Investigation on Burundi (UNIIB) established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-24/1

UNHCR, "Regional Update - Burundi Situation, June 2017"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (A/HRC/48/68)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Human Rights Council, Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (A/HRC/39/63)

World Bank. (2021). Burundi. Retrieved from https://data.worldbank.org/country/burundi

lbrahim Index of Governance in Africa (IIAG) <a href="https://iiag.online/fr/locations/bi..html">https://iiag.online/fr/locations/bi..html</a> - The country scores 40.4 out of 100.0 in Global Governance and ranks 43rd out of 54 in Africa. The country scores below the continental average (48.9) and above the regional average in the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (39.1).

Burundi is dealing with challenges related to recurrent population movements due to internal conflicts and regional instability. The country is characterized as a land of departure, a host of refugees, and of returnees from neighbouring countries following the appeasement of various crises. According to UNHCR: in 2022, 322,900 Burundians were refugees or seeking asylum in neighboring countries; more than 200,000 people have been repatriated since 2017; and the country hosted 88,265 refugees and asylum seekers.<sup>22</sup> Recent population movements have overlapped with older ones, all consequences of the violent events that the country has experienced, especially in 1993-1994. Burundi currently is experiencing a return movement of the refugees who fled in 2015, as well as internal displacement due to natural disasters.

Burundi was ranked among the 20 countries in the world most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, placing the country in 163rd position out of 181 countries in 2021.<sup>23</sup> Burundi has experienced an increase in extreme weather events, including floods, landslides and droughts,<sup>24</sup> causing displacement and loss of livelihoods, with the majority of the population dependent on agricultural livelihoods. In 2022, the country had an estimated 75,000 internally displaced people, 89 percent of whom were displaced due to environmental events.<sup>25</sup> The effects of climate change are exacerbating an already fragile environmental situation marked by land degradation and deforestation accelerated by increased population growth (estimated 3.1 percent growth rate<sup>26</sup>) and the dependence of the country's economy on its natural capital. It is estimated that Burundi lost one-third of its forests between 1990 and 2005, and that the country had only 6.6 percent of its forest areas in 2017, and that 38 percent of the land was considered very degraded in 2014.27 The combustion of firewood remains the main source of energy, 28 and although access to electricity has improved significantly, only 11 percent of the population had access to electricity in 2019.<sup>29</sup> With a density ratio of 442 people per 2 km, Burundi is one of the most densely populated countries in the world.<sup>30</sup> The cumulative effects of economic structure, population growth, population movements, environmental degradation, and climate change make access and management of land a major development issue and a driver of conflict in Burundi.31

Burundi presents a mixed situation in terms of gender equality and women's empowerment. In 2022, on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Disparity Index, Burundi ranked 26th out of 156 countries in the world and 4th for Sub-Saharan African countries,<sup>32</sup> but in 2021 it occupied 127th place on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index.<sup>33</sup> The constitution ensures a good level of women's participation in political institutions. On the other hand, especially in rural areas, the status of women remains marked by cultural exclusion in decision-making within the household, inequality with regard to inheritance and property rights, and confinement to household and/or low-paying tasks.<sup>34</sup> Gender-based violence remains

Burundi Situation: Population of concern to UNHCR as of 30 November 2022

Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative Country Index 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> https://landportal.org/fr/node/100712

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>25</sup> IOM Burundi, Matrix for travel, October 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> World Bank 2019, Country partnership framework for the republic of Burundi for the period FY19-FY23

World Bank, 2017- Burundi Country Environmental Analysis: Understanding the Environment within the Dynamics of a Complex World—Linkages to Fragility, Conflict, and Climate Change

https://www.irena.org/IRENADocuments/Statistical\_Profiles/Africa/Burundi\_Africa\_RE\_SP.pdf

https://ourworldindata.org/energy/country/burundi

<sup>30</sup> https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/burundi/overview

A 2012 estimate indicated that rights to 15-20% of all parcels of land were in dispute and accounted for approximately 72% of all cases before the courts.

https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\_GGGR\_2022.pdf

<sup>33</sup> UNDP 2021 Human development report https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/specific-country-data#/countries/BDI

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>34</sup> Following the May 2020 elections, women hold 40% of seats in the National Assembly, and 45% in the Senate.

a challenge, with 22.1 percent of women aged 15 to 49 reporting experiencing physical and/or sexual violence by partners. Burundian women also suffer from limited access to land, while agricultural activities are their main source of livelihood.<sup>35</sup>

## 1.4 UNDP Programmes in Burundi

The partnership between UNDP and Burundi officially began in 1975 with the signing of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, which provides the legal basis for the relationship between the Government and UNDP. UNDP and the United Nations system have played an important role in supporting the country's peacebuilding efforts. Since the 2000s, UNDP programmes have been implemented in the context of the mandates given by the UN Security Council to successive peacekeeping operations between 2004 and 2014 to support the implementation of the Arusha Accords.

Between 2004 and 2007, the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB), composed of civilian and military personnel, was deployed to support the implementation of agreements, including compliance with cease-fire agreements, support disarmament efforts, and the protection of civilians. The Government of Burundi requested that the country be placed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission (PLC) in 2006 and has remained on the Commission's agenda ever since.<sup>36</sup> At the conclusion of ONUB's mandate in 2007, the Security Council established the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)<sup>37</sup> to support the implementation of agreements between the new Burundian government elected in 2005 and the last armed group that did not take part in the previous peace agreements, and the advancement of key reforms aimed at consolidating peace efforts, including support for the rule of law, good governance, security sector reforms and reintegration of ex-combatants.

With the end of BINUB's mandate in 2011, the Security Council authorized the reduced continuation of peacekeeping operations through the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB)<sup>38</sup> to assist the Government in strengthening the independence, capacities and legal frameworks of key national institutions, in particular the judiciary and parliament; promoting dialogue among national actors; combating impunity and protecting human rights. BNUB's mandate ended in December 2014 with the transfer of its responsibilities to the UN Country Team.

The UNDP country programme 2014-2016, extended until 2018 following the extension of the UNDAF 2012-2016<sup>39</sup> and Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers II (PRSP II), was adopted in line with BNUB's mandate, with a focus on strengthening the capacities of national institutions, the fight against impunity, judicial and security reforms, transitional justice, and economic transformation. The main priority areas of that country programme were focused on upstream support for the development of national policies and strategies, the continuation and implementation of structural reforms in the justice sector, security, public administration, the strengthening of national capacities for disaster risk management, community peace and resilience. Despite some advances, upstream programmatic support for the implementation of reforms

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>35</sup> <u>https://data.unwomen.org/country/burundi</u>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>36</sup> PBF 2021, Portfolio evaluation of PBF in Burundi 2018-2021. Burundi is one of the top two recipients of PBF support and the second largest recipient, with a total approved budget of US\$86,171,480 between 2006 and 2021.

<sup>37</sup> Resolution 1719 of the Council of Security

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>38</sup> Resolution 1959 of the Council of security

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> The UNDAF 2012-2016 was composed of 3 priority areas: (i) Strengthening the rule of law, consolidating good governance and promoting gender equality; (ii) Transformation of the Burundian economy for sustained growth and job creation; (iii) Improved access rates and quality of basis and strengthening of the social protection floor.

and the development of pro-poor policies was tested by the onset of the political crisis in 2015, which brought to a halt some areas of work, particularly for governance, rule of law and peacebuilding, and the protection of human rights.<sup>40</sup>

The UNDAF 2019-2023<sup>41</sup> and the UNDP programme for the same period were developed in alignment with the National Development Programme 2018-2027 (NDP) developed and adopted by the Government. The main objective of the NDP 2018-2027, which provides a socio-economic diagnosis of the country, is to structurally transform the Burundian economy, for robust, sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth, creating decent jobs for all and leading to improved social well-being. The NDP sets three major priorities: (i) sustained and inclusive growth for economic resilience and sustainable development; (ii) governance based on democratic principles and the safeguarding of national sovereignty; and (iii) the effectiveness of resource mobilization mechanisms and strengthening of cooperation.

The UNDP 2019-2023 country programme is structured around three areas of intervention: (i) developing rural non-farm livelihoods for local economic growth; (ii) improving access to and quality of administrative, health and judicial services; and (iii) strengthening communities' resilience to climate change and disasters. More specifically, the CPD plans to contribute to the following three UNDAF 2019-2023 outcomes:

- 1. By 2023, women and youth and the most vulnerable groups are socio-economically and politically empowered and benefit from social protection (UNDAF outcome 2);
- 2. By 2023, women and men of all ages, and in particular vulnerable groups, have equitable access to institutions that ensure accountability, peace, gender equality, justice and respect for human rights in an effective, independent and transparent manner (UNDAF outcome 1); and
- **3.** By 2023, national and decentralized authorities adopt and implement mechanisms for disaster risk management and reduction, sustainable management of natural resources (water, land, forests), climate change mitigation and adaptation, and ecosystem protection to ensure greater resilience of communities (UNDAF outcome 4).

The UNDP CPD has an estimated budget of US\$203 million, or approximately 25 percent of the overall estimated UNDAF budget for the same period. As of February 2023, Country Office programme expenditures reached US\$181.2 million since the start of the programme in 2019. Expenses are concentrated under outcome 2 (82.5 percent of expenses) and the remainder are distributed almost equally between outcome 1 (approximately 9 percent) and outcome 3 (8.5 percent).

Ninety eight percent of programme expenditure between 2019 and 2022 depended mainly on funding from vertical funds (66 percent of programme expenditure) and core resources from UNDP (32 percent of programme expenditure), and bilateral/multilateral donors (3 percent of programme expenditure). UNDP has been supporting national authorities acting as the main recipient of the Global Fund grants since 2018. The grant initially covered three components of the grant (HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria), and later was extended to include support for COVID-19 response. The Global Fund grant accounted for 60 percent of total expenditures between 2019 and 2022. The implementation of the programme benefited from funding from other thematic vertical funds such as the Global Environment Facility (3.5 percent), and the

<sup>40</sup> UNDP Burundi 2017, Mid-term evaluation of the country programme (CPD) and its alignment with the Strategic Plan 2014-2017 – See conclusions

The UNDAF was designed with an estimated budget of US\$784.4 million to support the implementation of the NDP namely, a) the establishment of inclusive and equitable governance, b) the improvement of the determinants of health, c) the improvement of access, retention and quality of education, d) the empowerment of women, prevention and resilience to man-made shocks and natural disasters, and (e) strengthening the strategic and operational management capacity of the environment sector. Durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and assistance to refugees and returnees will also be considered. Currently, the United Nations system in Burundi is composed of 14 resident and non-resident agencies, funds and programmes.

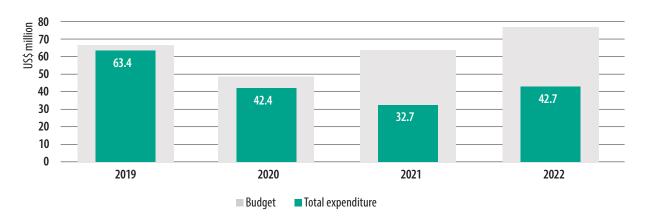
United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (2.3 percent). Excluding Global Fund funding, UNDP core resource was the main source of programmatic funding, representing approximately 83 percent of programmatic spending through the three outcomes of the country programme.

**FIGURE 1.** Programme expenditure and execution rate by outcome, 2019-2022



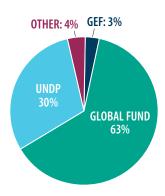
Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

**FIGURE 2.** Evolution of programme budget and expenditure (2019-2022)



Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

**FIGURE 3.** Funding source of programmatic expenditures (2019-2022)



Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

This chapter presents an analysis of the evaluation results, as well as an assessment of the cross-cutting issues discovered. The main factors that influenced UNDP's performance and its contributions to results are described in this section. The evaluation is based on an analysis of the correlation between the project results, their contribution to the outputs expected under each outcome and, therefore, to the overall objectives of the outcome.

## 2.1 Inclusive growth and local development

**CPD OUTCOME 1:** By 2023, women, youth and the most vulnerable groups are socio-economically and politically empowered and will benefit from social protection

## **Related outputs**

**Output 1.1:** Women, youth, internally displaced persons, returnees, Twa and persons with disabilities are empowered to acquire financial and non-financial assets for productive and processing and trading capacities and sustainable livelihoods

**Output 1.2:** Central and local governments improve their technical and operational capacities to mainstream gender issues and promote inclusive local development

Interventions aimed to: (i) strengthen access to financial and non-financial assets with the prospect of providing sustainable livelihoods to vulnerable target populations (women, youth, IDPs, returnees, Batwas, and persons with disabilities); and (ii) build capacity for central and local government in promoting inclusive local development and gender mainstreaming. The total budget and expenditures for the period 2019-2022 was US\$19.4 million and \$16.4 million, respectively, representing an implementation rate of nearly 85 percent as of February 2023.

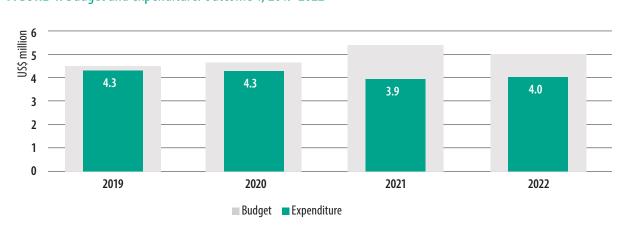


FIGURE 4. Budget and expenditure: Outcome 1, 2019-2022

Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

The operationalization of these objectives has been achieved through the implementation of three projects, including: the Decentralization and Local Development Support Program (PADDEL) project (60 percent of expenditure recorded under outcome 1), youth empowerment projects (8 percent of expenditure under outcome 1), and women's empowerment projects (19 percent of expenditure under outcome 1). Two additional projects funded by the PBF, initiated during the previous country programme cycle, were also implemented during this period to support the sustainable reintegration of returnees and displaced persons. Annual UNDP programme data between the previous and current cycles show an upward trend, with the current programme accounting for almost double the budget and expenditure of the previous cycle. The main source of funding for outcome 1 in the current cycle was UNDP equity (US\$12.2 million), followed by bilateral and multilateral funding (\$1.0 million).

**Finding 1:** The various interventions in support of livelihoods have had positive effects on the dynamism and structuring of the local economy and for vulnerable households. The combination of support for local economic activities articulated around access to individual and collective financial and non-financial assets of beneficiaries generates obvious benefits, though it lacked emphasis on supporting beneficiaries and implementing partners to strengthen sustainability and ownership of results.

In line with the priorities set out in the country programme document, UNDP has developed several interventions aimed at strengthening the livelihoods of vulnerable populations through improved access to financial and non-financial assets. This objective has been the subject of various projects covering various layers of rural populations, including the PADDEL project, a women's empowerment project, a youth empowerment project, and interventions aimed at the recovery and stabilization of disasters and returnees.

In the local development component of the Decentralization and Local Development Support Programme (PADDEL), UNDP supported the Rural Micro-Credit Fund (FMCR) in the implementation of the micro-credit approach for the economically active poor (MCPEA) in 25 communes of the 5 provinces targeted by the project intervention (Rumonge, Makamba, Rutana, Ruyigi, Kirundo). Already part of the FMCR's strategies to improve access to finance for the rural population, the MCPEA approach allows access to credit to economically active poor people through access to progressive solidarity credit.<sup>42</sup> This programme is implemented in strategic partnership with the Ministry of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security and operationally with the National Fund for Municipal Investment (FONIC), the Rural Microcredit Fund (FMCR), and civil society organizations.<sup>43</sup>

From 2019 to 2022, the project provided access to financial assets to 35,753 people, 72 percent of them women.<sup>44</sup> Of the beneficiaries, 2 percent were Persons Living with Disabilities (PLD), 5 percent were indigenous peoples (Batwa), 4 percent were returnees and 8 percent were victims of gender-based violence.<sup>45</sup> Access to these financial assets also has integrated the municipalities into the management and supervision of the repayment systems, with an allocation of 1 percent for every 9 percent of credit interest repaid. The project also allowed a transfer of non-financial assets consisting of equipment for agri-food processing units (three mills, three machines for grinding palm oil nuts and soap manufacturing, eight storage sheds for agricultural outputs, equipment for the Ruyigi agri-food processing complex). The beneficiaries of these non-financial assets are generally people with special needs (Batwa, and PLD), young people, women and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>42</sup> Access to financial services via the MCPEA approach consisted of access to progressive solidarity credit allocated in four tranches of 50,000 Burundian francs every six months conditioned to reimbursement of previous installments.

As part of leaving no one behind, this project developed interventions specific to Indigenous peoples (Batwa) in partnership with the representative organization of Batwa (Let's unite for the promotion of BATWA (UNIPROBA), persons with disabilities in partnership with the Union of Persons with Disabilities of Burundi (UPHB), and women repatriated in partnership with the Association of Women Repatriated from Burundi (AFRABU) to target these groups in particular.

<sup>44</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the PADDEL programme

<sup>45</sup> Ibid

the municipality involved. Youth groups benefited from the support in equipment for the processing of oil palm nuts in the province of Makamba, while women's groups benefited from the support in four mills, and four storage sheds in four communes of three provinces (Rutana, Makamba, Kirundo).

As part of the women's empowerment project implemented in four provinces (Rutana, Cankuzo, Mwaro, Karuzi), UNDP carried out a cash transfer consisting of six transfers equivalent to US\$7 to 5,371 vulnerable women before receiving mentoring and support for the development of individual and collective economic activities. These interventions also have strengthened the financial management, savings and credit capacities of those women by grouping them in 220 village savings and credit associations (VSLAs)<sup>46</sup> and strengthening the entrepreneurial capacities for more than 67 percent<sup>47</sup> of the members of these associations, or 3,599 women. The project interventions have improved the individual and collective economic activity of the VSLAs or subgroups in the VSLA. Forty one percent of the beneficiaries supported have developed income generating activities.<sup>48</sup> According to qualitative information from the field, members of VSLAs have developed collective income generating activities enabling to boost the local economy and improve community resilience. Women supported by the intervention identified various qualitative benefits in terms of empowerment and improvement of self-esteem through improved economic and social participation in household life, and the emergence of an entrepreneurial spirit.

As part of the youth empowerment project, UNDP also facilitated access to credit funds for 627 youth groups (with an average of 25 members each) in all hills of Ruyigi province<sup>49</sup> and the initiation of a community mobilization model for local development. Those youth groups have come together in a provincial federation to contribute to a project to create an agri-food processing system. This mobilization allowed the establishment of infrastructures for the processing unit endogenously. UNDP supported provision of equipment for an agri-food processing complex on five hectares of land granted to the federation by the Ministry of Agriculture. The complex is in premises worth approximately US\$100,000, self-financed by the members of the federations. This initiative, although still in the preparatory phase, serves as an example of an agri-food development model, and is attracting the attention of other actors such as the country's Youth Bank.

In general, interviews and field visits highlighted the relevance of the interventions to the needs of the beneficiaries, focusing on rural populations who are without guarantees and therefore are excluded from access to finance. These interventions take place in a difficult context of deterioration of households' livelihoods following the COVID-19 pandemic, the reduction of livestock trade due to sanitary issues, <sup>50</sup> and the deterioration of access to agricultural fertilizers, <sup>51</sup> further strengthening the relevance of economic diversification and agricultural processing activities supported by different projects. The combination of support for access to finance supplemented with cash transfers and/or non-financial assets such as processing units and storage sheds can strengthen the project achievements and contribute to the resilience of communities. The VSLA approach implemented by the women's empowerment project is an approach that has already demonstrated its effectiveness and return on investment beyond the lives of the savings groups established. It was also found to improve the resilience of participants in the aftermath of the pandemic. <sup>52</sup> The projects

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>46</sup> The Village Savings and Credit Associations (VSLA) approach has been developed by the international NGO CARE and is one of its flagship programmatic approaches since 1991.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>47</sup> Annual Project Report: project support for women's socio-economic empowerment (00118697) and output: Socio-Economic Empowerment (00115393); 2019-2023

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>48</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the women's empowerment project

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>49</sup> Burundi administrative subdivision includes provinces, municipalities, and hills as a geographic and administrative unit.

<sup>50</sup> Between May and September 2022, Burundi was hit by a bovine epidemic known as Rift Valley fever. During this period, the livestock trade, a key subsistence activity for rural populations, was banned.

<sup>51</sup> Since 2019, Burundi has banned the import of chemical fertilizers to promote domestic production, but this has failed to meet the country's high demand.

<sup>52</sup> Care International 2022, VSLA By the Numbers: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Impact and ROI of VSLAs

took into account the Leave No One Behind principles, taking into consideration the need for differentiated approaches to support the most vulnerable segments of the targeted communities through transfers of non-financial assets for the identified categories, which included displaced populations, returnees, people living with disabilities, and Batwa. In particular, the intersectionality of vulnerabilities was taken into account in the targeting of female beneficiaries, at midterm, 45 percent of whom were also part of the project's targeted vulnerable groups.<sup>53</sup>

Some limitations observed in the implementation of the various interventions deserve particular attention. PADDEL interventions demonstrate variable performance depending on the implementing partners and beneficiaries targeted by the programme. Despite a positive intention to respond to the differentiated needs of different population groups, the evaluation noted a more limited implementation for activities targeting the most vulnerable segments in the programme results. A survey conducted as part of the mid-term evaluation of the programme highlighted the performance of the MPCEA approach in increasing the revenues of targets compared to beneficiaries of non-financial assets, and noted that on average the increase in income of beneficiaries of the MPCEAs supported by the FMCR was three times greater than those of the income generated by the support provided by the FONIC, AFRABU, UNIPROBA, and UPHB.<sup>54</sup> The same report also makes it possible to establish a relationship between the level of performance and the implementing partner, highlighting on the one hand the experience acquired by government structures such as the FMCR and FONIC but also the needs in terms of organizational capacity building and management of umbrella organizations (UNIPROBA, UPHB, AFRABU).

Although the strategy adopted by the project in working with the organizations mentioned above allowed for better targeting and ownership by vulnerable groups, more support and follow-up to the capacity building of these structures was necessary to enable them to better carry out activities. At the level of the MPCEA approach, it was not possible for the evaluation to measure the lasting effects of the credits granted for the populations. However, the reports available highlight various challenges likely to affect the sustainability of the results, such as: the interest rate of 9 percent considered too high by some beneficiaries; the failure to take into account the seasonal nature of economic activities in relation to the repayment schedules of credits; and the need to continue efforts to train, coach and support beneficiaries. <sup>55</sup> Although they do not provide further details, the Country Office's monitoring reports noted that the number of beneficiaries who were able to continue obtaining the various credits was decreasing due to the difficulty of repayment.

Field observations and interviews highlighted shortcomings in the operational implementation of interventions, particularly relating to the transfer of non-financial assets requiring small-scale infrastructure construction activities and the transfer of productive assets. In particular, the interviews frequently highlighted a lack of upstream participation of municipal administrations in infrastructure planning, and communication with the various service providers involved. This has in some cases affected the monitoring of outputs and the quality of deliverables and latent conflicts exist between beneficiaries and service providers.

**Finding 2:** UNDP makes various contributions for the implementation of the national decentralization policy and to support the important role that municipalities must play in the national development strategy. However, progress remains limited due to a difficult implementation environment and resource mobilization challenges.

UNDP Burundi, 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the women's empowerment project.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>55</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the PADDEL programme

Burundi has adopted a policy of decentralization that provides 119 communes with financial, economic and administrative autonomy. Laws and regulatory texts for the effectiveness of decentralization are based, among other things, on the transfer of competencies from the State to the municipalities, whose law was promulgated in 2015. Some progress also has been made to promote local economic development, such as increasing transfers from the State to municipalities. However, the institutional and operational capacities of the municipalities to better exercise the transferred competencies are weak. To this end, and in addition to support for local development, the PADDEL project gave priority to capacity building support targeting local administration, strengthening citizen participation, and improving the sharing of good practices on decentralization and local economic development.

The interventions enabled 44 municipalities to be equipped with an inclusive programmatic and participatory framework for participatory local development.<sup>59</sup> The process of developing communal community development plans (PCDC) of the 44 municipalities made it possible to make a participatory analysis of the strengths and weaknesses, as well as the threats and opportunities in the field of inclusive and participatory local development with specific projects for five years. These programmatic framework documents of the municipalities, accompanied by an investment plan, serve as benchmarks for both the identification of interventions adapted to the needs of populations and communities for both municipalities and other actors active in municipalities.

These communal community development plans also served as benchmarks for the local operationalization of the 2018-2027 National Development Plan, as well as the monitoring of the operationalization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly with the SDG localization exercises that were supported by UNDP. As pointed out in the mid-term evaluation of the programme, these third generation PCDCs were to replace the previous ones that expired in 2017 and 2018 for these municipalities and which are necessary to obtain financial transfers from the State. In addition, the development of the PCDC has allowed the establishment of consultative structures at the communal level, including the Communal Planning Team (ECP), the Collinary Development Committees (CDC), and the Communal Community Development Committee (CCDC). These consultative structures have played an important role in mobilizing and supporting community participation in the development of PCDCs and supporting the participatory implementation and monitoring of the plans. To this end, UNDP support has made it possible to highlight community participation in the PCDC with the participation of representatives of different vulnerable groups, including women, youth, Batwa, returnees, and people with disabilities, exceeding for certain categories the targets set by the project in terms of participation of community associations (especially women and youth).

However, the availability and anchoring of PCDCs in local development activities are hampered by the weak capacity of municipalities to mobilize resources and a difficult context of partial implementation of national decentralization reform efforts. The interviews conducted for this evaluation highlighted those weaknesses. For instance, the implementation rate of second-generation PCDCs that have been upgraded to third generation PCDCs thanks to PADDEL support in its area of intervention remains low, hovering around 24 to 40 percent.<sup>60</sup> Despite positive initiatives undertaken by the project to compensate for this deficiency, including the development of intercommunal projects aimed at allowing economies of scale

The law of 25 May 2015 gave important powers to the municipality, in terms of urban planning, social housing, education, health, infrastructure, environment, sanitation, security, land management, roads, economic, social, cultural, sports and tourism development. The municipality is also responsible for issuing administrative acts, civil status certificates, identification acts and land certificates.

<sup>57</sup> The 2018-2027 NDP recalls that the transfer of the development budget to municipalities has increased from BIF 50 million to BIF 500 million per municipality, now increased to BIF 570 million.

http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/309361468016838134/pdf/929140FRENCH0W0n0CompleteFrench0web.pdf

<sup>2021</sup> Annual Report of the Decentralization and Local Development Support Project

<sup>60</sup> Report of the mid-term decentralized evaluation of the support programme for decentralization and local development, UNDP, 2021

in terms of investment, and the ongoing work to improve tax collection and management, interviews conducted during this evaluation echoed the challenges already identified in the mid-term evaluation of the programme regarding the level of funding and support needed for the mobilization of resources from municipalities.

The weak capacity to mobilize resources for the implementation of PCDC is accentuated by delays in the transfer of funds from the State to the municipalities, which was reported to also include and discount the financing of investments planned at the central level, and therefore greatly reduced the impact and potential ownership of the PCDC at the communal level. As a result, the support envisaged to strengthen gender-sensitive budgeting at communal level, specifically identified among the outputs of the CPD, was developed only later and at the time of this evaluation had been implemented in only one province (Ruyigi). The recent announcement of a restructuring of the administrative map of provinces and municipalities that would lead to a significant reduction in the number of municipalities and provinces may also have a demobilizing effect. The recent restructuring of the government has removed the Ministry of Decentralization and the National Training Centre for Local Actors (CNFAL) from the government institutions. Their prerogatives are now exercised by a general directorate of the Ministry of the Interior. One of the effects of the reshuffling has been to increase the confusion between decentralization and deconcentration, while the insufficient training of local administrators does not allow them to be fully aware of the possibilities offered by decentralization. The roadmap for organizing the transfer of resources and competences to municipalities was still not published at the time of the evaluation.

These developments affected the initial strategy of the project and efforts were largely concentrated around local development activities (Finding 1) at the expense of the capacity building activities initially envisaged. In this respect, the mid-term evaluation of the programme reports a significant increase in budgetary expenditure for activities related to local development and poverty reduction, which accounted for more than 96 percent of mid-term expenditure. These activities benefited from the good participation of municipal authorities and community groups, and the development of the local economy contributes to potential future tax revenues.

**Finding 3:** Through the launch of innovation weeks, UNDP contributes to the visibility of innovative social entrepreneurship among young Burundians, encourages the development of the spirit of entrepreneurship, and promotes the dissemination of new ways of promoting participation in the development of endogenous solutions.

UNDP's livelihood support interventions have included initiatives aimed at promoting social entrepreneurship and innovation. The economic transformation activities promoted by the various livelihood projects, including the PADDEL, youth and women's economic empowerment projects, are enabling the emergence of a spirit of entrepreneurship and innovation in the local economy. Although the initiatives remain small-scale, they respond to the lack of diversification and competitiveness of the national and local economy.

To capitalize on this momentum, in partnership with the Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Trade and Youth, since 2021 the Country Office has organized an annual innovation week. The innovation week consists of an innovation competition inviting young entrepreneurs to submit their project ideas and compete for a grant to support the development of their innovative projects. The calls to compete were launched at the national level and in the province of Ruyigi in 2021, and nearly 3,000 applications were received, demonstrating the keen interest for the initiative. Forty projects were selected

<sup>61</sup> Ministry of the Interior, Community Development and Public Security

to receive support from a local incubator to structure and prepare their projects for their participation in the competition. Twenty projects were selected by the competition jury to win a US\$1,600 grant and participate in an incubation programme for a period of three months. Innovation Week also includes debates on the challenges of entrepreneurship and innovation and an innovation fair that allows entrepreneurs to exhibit their projects, network, and promote their visibility. The solutions carried out by the participating entrepreneurs involved sectors such as agri-food, agriculture and livestock, information and communication technologies, health, environment and climate change.

The interviews and focus group organized with the incubators and beneficiaries of the competition and the following incubation programme highlighted the importance and positive effects generated by participation in the competition. Although the intervention does not involve significant funding, the participants interviewed recognized UNDP's contribution through this event to promoting entrepreneurship and innovation in an environment where employment in the public sector remains a career trajectory preferred by young people. The competition and the initiative benefited from great visibility. The President of the Republic participated during the first edition. The initiative was the first of its kind in Burundi, and based on the interviews conducted with participants, it generated a positive and encouraging enthusiasm for the local ecosystem of social entrepreneurs and innovators. The evaluation interviews also noted the emergence of similar initiatives by other development partners, which are adopting a similar model of innovation competition to identify local solutions to development challenges. Participants interviewed for the evaluation noted that the innovation competition has strengthened not only the visibility but also the credibility of the projects they carry out and allowed new opportunities for the development of their activities. For example, the start-up LEAPA, the bearer of a digital solution facilitating online payments, participated in the first edition and was then able to expand its activity, particularly through the implementation of the country's online platform for COVID-19 test payments for travelers arriving in Burundi, in partnership with the Public Health Emergency Operations Center (COUSP).

It should be noted that the visibility of entrepreneurs and their projects has also been a cause of concern raised by some beneficiaries whose projects were at the incubation stage and who feared the uptake and copying of their ideas through the increased public visibility brought by the initiative. The evaluation observed that the incubation programme implemented mixed projects at various levels of maturity, which therefore provided varying benefits through the extensive communication and networking opportunities. A challenge remains for the involvement of beneficiaries who are not in Bujumbura, such as the beneficiaries of Ruyigi, because the incubators remain mainly concentrated in the capital and do not have presence in the regions.

## 2.2 Improving access to quality administrative, health and judicial services

**CPD OUTCOME 2:** By 2023, women and men of all ages, in particular those from vulnerable groups, have equal access to services provided by institutions that ensure accountability, peace, gender equality, justice and respect for human rights in an efficient manner, independent and transparent

## **Related Outputs**

**Output 2.1:** Public institutions have increased technical and operational capacity to provide judicial and administrative services, and commitments to women's rights are met

**Output 2.2:** Health facilities have increased technical and operational capacity to deliver quality services to the population and reduce gender inequalities in service delivery

**Output 2.3:** National tertiary institutions are strengthened to improve the technical skills of government officials and local stakeholders to mainstream a gender perspective

**Output 2.4:** Local stakeholders, particularly women, have sufficient knowledge of gender equality and leadership to promote the use of community platforms in reconciliation, conflict prevention and peaceful resolution

**Output 2.5:** Local governments have improved their technical and operational capacity to carry out gender-sensitive planning, implementation, monitoring and resource mobilization

**Output 2.6:** National statistical institutions are strengthened to monitor and evaluate the national development plan (2018–2027) and produce data disaggregated by sex and marginalized group

Interventions under Outcome 2 consisted of strengthening access to and provision of services to populations through strengthening (i) judicial services (output 2.1), (ii) health services (output 2.2), (iii) participation in local conflict resolution mechanisms (output 2.4), (iv) capacities of administrative staff (outputs 2.3), and development planning and steering capacities (outputs 2.5 and 2.6). The total budget and expenditures for the 2019-2022 period were US\$218.2 million and \$113.1 million, respectively, representing an implementation rate of 52 percent as of February 2022.

The operationalization of these objectives was achieved through the implementation of six projects, including management of Global Fund grants, which accounted for the majority of financial expenditures, with 75 percent of expenditures under Outcome 2. The Access to Rights and Services Program (PASD) accounted for 19 percent of expenditures under the outcome. Three percent of the expenditure concerned the implementation of initiatives to strengthen mechanisms for local conflict resolution and the fight against gender-based violence; and 1.3 percent of expenditures under this outcome covered support for the strengthening of national planning capacities.

80 80 60 60 40 52.6 31.9 27.1 37.7 20

2021

2020

■ Budget

0

2022

**FIGURE 5.** Budget and expenditure: Outcome 2, 2019-2022

Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

2019

0

**Finding 4:** UNDP plays an important role in facilitating the continuity of Global Fund funding for the fight against diseases with epidemic potential in Burundi, including scaling up efforts to combat malaria, the leading cause of morbidity and mortality. Despite a challenging operating environment, support through the management of two consecutives grants has contributed to improving access to prevention and treatment services and strengthening the national response to these three high-impact diseases in Burundi.

■ Expenditure

Since 2018, following performance challenges, both financial and programmatic, in grant management, the Global Fund Secretariat has decided to transfer grant management from the Ministry of Public Health and AIDS Control (MSPLS) to UNDP. In this context, the two successive Global Fund grants (2018-2020 and 2021-2023) to Burundi were managed by UNDP, as the interim principal recipient. Aligned with the respective national strategic plans of the three national programmes, UNDP contributed to the implementation of interventions targeted and prioritized by the country and financed by the Global Fund (two grants for each of the two cycles, 2018-2020 and 2021-2023) and covering the three diseases (Malaria, HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis).<sup>62</sup> Thus, UNDP is responsible for the financial management and activities of the three programmes, under the leadership of the Country Coordinating Mechanism. The level of resources allocated under Global Fund grants over both cycles amounts to US\$118,944,175 complemented by a COVID-19 grant, bringing the total amount to \$148,955,593.

Geographically, activities funded by the Global Fund cover all 18 provinces and 47 health districts (HSDs). Global Fund funding covers all malaria strategies, including the purchase of 85 percent of the country's annual malaria outputs, logistical support for mass distribution campaigns of insecticide-treated nets, and residual spraying support in four districts (for which USAID provides technical assistance). The programme is implemented in support of the three national programmes as sub-recipients of the grant, and CARITAS, Red Cross of Burundi, and CAMEBU as sub-sub recipients.

Global Fund operations represent a significant workload since the management of Global Fund envelopes contains an important operational component consisting of large medical input procurement operations, and which mobilized the largest Country Office program team (37 percent of the total Country Office programme workforce). To this end, programmatic expenditure levels represent 60 percent of total UNDP country programme expenditure between 2019-2021, and the largest single source of funding for

<sup>62</sup> Report on the Audit of UNDP Burundi No. 2290. Grant from the Global Fund. 11 August 2021. UNDP Burundi, Global Fund

UNDP programmes in Burundi since 2014. Through this facilitation provided by UNDP, Burundi has made significant progress with regard to the indicators reported by the various programmes, although many challenges remain in achieving the global goals' targets, particularly with regard to the fight against malaria.

There has been significant progress in the fight against tuberculosis (TB),<sup>63</sup> notably by increasing the success rate of treatments (from 88 percent in 2010 to 94 percent in 2020). In addition, 96.6 percent of TB patients know their HIV status. The rate of administration of antiretroviral drugs and Cotrimoxazone increased from 40 percent in 2010 to 96.6 percent in 2020. At the same time, the rate of treatment failure declined from 1 percent in 2015 to 0.6 percent in 2020, while the dropout rate has remained stable at 1 percent. However, the notification rate is declining for all forms of TB (FTT) and bacilliferous, decreasing from 91 percent in 2010 to 59 percent in 2020. The bacilliferous pulmonary tuberculosis notification rate increased from 54 percent in 2010 to 37 percent in 2020. The number of bacteriologically confirmed drug-resistant cases as a proportion of all estimated cases increased from 16 percent in 2019 to 44 percent in 2021.

Burundi has made significant progress in achieving the 90-90-90 objectives<sup>64</sup> and is ranked first among West and Central African countries, in terms of performance in the fight against HIV/AIDS and STIs.<sup>65</sup> The number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) who know their HIV status increased from 81.7 percent in 2019 to 96 percent in 2021. The number of PLHIV on antiretroviral therapy with an undetectable viral load increased from 39 percent in 2019 to 64 percent in 2021. The number of children newly infected with HIV through mother-to-child transmission among HIV-positive women who gave birth in the past 12 months decreased from 17.7 percent in 2019 to 7.2 percent in 2021.

Between 2018 and 2021, the reported average annual number of children treated with at least one dose of seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) improved.<sup>66</sup> In 2021, more than 51 percent of the 480,000 pregnant women received at least three doses of intermittent preventive treatment (IPT), in line with WHO recommendations, with at least one antenatal consultation. However, late antenatal consultations do not allow for the completion of all 3 doses of IPT, in addition to some unattended appointments.<sup>67</sup> The programme also allowed mass campaigns for the distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Nets (LLINs) to be resumed, including the distribution of more than 6 million LLINs in 2020, and the launch of continuous distribution of LLINs to women and children in health centers, which allowed the distribution of 800,000 LLINs in 2021. The availability of inputs has also made it possible, in partnership with other key players in the sector, to continue indoor residual spraying schemes, resulting in an increase in the number of people who slept under insecticide-treated nets the night before, from 38.6 percent in 2016-2017 to 56.4 percent.<sup>68</sup> The number of children under 5 who slept under an insecticide-treated mosquito net the night before also increased, from 46.3 percent to 59 percent, and for pregnant women it increased from 52 percent to 65 percent.

The positive trends noted above will have to be confirmed by surveys that were not available at the time of this evaluation. Some data reported in 2022 seem to indicate that the proportion of people using an insecticide-treated net among people with an insecticide-treated net decreased from 72 percent (EDSBIII 2017) to 56 percent.<sup>69</sup> The DHS IV and Evaluation of Health Service Preparedness and Availability

WHO https://www.afro.who.int/sites/default/files/2022-04/LA%20SENTINELLE%204.pdf

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>64</sup> HIV/AIDS Sustainability Index and Dashboard (SID) <a href="https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Burundi.pdf">https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/Burundi.pdf</a>

<sup>65</sup> PEPFAR Burundi Country Operational Plan (COP) 2021 - Strategic Direction Summary March 22; and (PNLS Review Report, March 2022

Malaria-UNDP\_Reporting period\_31-Dec-21\_performance-rating-tool / Malaria Operational Plan FY 2022 & PEPFAR - USAID Malaria Division - <a href="https://www.pmi.gov/fy-2022-burundi-mop">https://www.pmi.gov/fy-2022-burundi-mop</a>

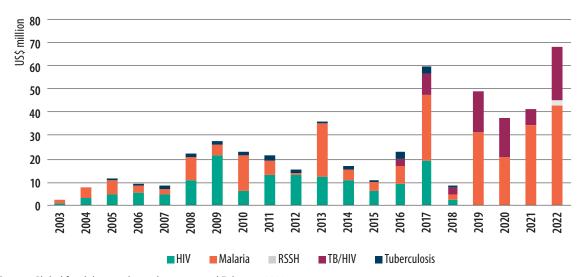
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>67</sup> BDI-Malaria-UNDP Performance Letter 2021

<sup>68</sup> Based on the third inquiry Demographic and Health 2017(EDSB) and Reports of the Global Fund's programmatic performance, March 2022

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>69</sup> National Strategic Plan for Malaria Control (2021-2027) – version revised in 2022.

(SARA) surveys will demonstrate the effectiveness of mass campaigns for the continuous distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLINs). The significant increase in the distribution of LLINs, is expected to have an impact on malaria incidence. Preparatory actions for the continuous distribution of LLINs and community campaigns scheduled for September 2022 should enable progress in their use and effective retention. Data in the World Malaria report 2022 places the median level of retention of LLINs in Burundi among the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa (32<sup>nd</sup> out of 40 countries) <sup>70</sup> suggesting the need to continue community mobilization to sustainably consolidate efforts to fight the disease.

Overall, the continuity of Global Fund funding facilitated by UNDP has made it possible to continue and to pursue increases in allocations for the national malaria control programme initiated in 2017 but interrupted in 2018. Since 2018 the level of allocations for the three diseases has reached annual expenditure levels higher than levels previously recorded since the beginning of Global Fund operation in Burundi in 2003. The transfer of responsibilities to UNDP since 2018 seems to have created a working environment conducive to the increase in financial transfers and has allowed the disbursement of more than US\$200 million between 2018 and 2022, or nearly 41 percent of the total expenditures recorded by the Global Fund in Burundi since 2003.<sup>71</sup> Notably, 2022 was the year with the highest level of annual programmatic spending of Global Fund allocations, with a total expenditure of more than US\$68 million, of which 62 percent was allocated to the national malaria programme. The increase and scaling up of the country's response to malaria between 2018 and 2022 is significant since the level of expenditure recorded during this period represents 52 percent of the total expenditure recorded for malaria by the Global Fund since 2003.



**FIGURE 6.** Expenditure of Global fund grants to Burundi 2003-2022

Source: Global fund data explorer, data extracted February 2023

Although UNDP's participation in the management of Global Fund allocations comes after a circumstantial event, it is important to appreciate this contribution in the context of malaria development in Burundi. The WHO World Malaria Report 2022 reports the significant increase in malaria incidence, noting that Burundi experienced the highest incidence (46 percent increase) of cases between 2015 and 2021 in the sub-region,<sup>72</sup> and thus demonstrates the importance of continuity and scaling up of disease control efforts.

WHO World Malaria Report 2022, Fig 9.7 Median Retention time by Country, ordered from highest to lowest

Based on Global Fund Data Explorer

WHO, World Malaria Report 2022

**Finding 5:** Various bottlenecks related to structural challenges in the health system, the overall operating environment and internal issues have limited the effectiveness and efficiency of Global Fund grants. Operational difficulties related to administrative workload and gaps in communication between actors have generated delays in the implementation of jointly validated action plans and have not permitted maximum programmatic and financial performance.

UNDP's taking charge of the management of Global Fund grants, on behalf of the Ministry of Public Health and the fight against AIDS (MSPLS), has made it possible to establish an improved working climate and to guarantee the services devoted to national programmes to fight the three diseases (Malaria, HIV and Tuberculosis) in communities and especially among the most vulnerable. However, this support has generated various difficulties relating to the socio-political and economic context of the country, including the complexity of administrative and financial and accounting procedures, bureaucratic burdens, uncontrolled communication, poor data quality and inadequacies in the supply chain.

While the contextual challenges posed by the 2020 elections and the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be underestimated, those challenges have been reflected in the Global Fund's semi-annual programmatic and financial performance ratings, moving from B1 (60-89 percent completion rate) for the period 2018-2020 to B2 (30-59 percent completion rate) for 2021, the first year of allowances for the period 2021-2023.<sup>73</sup> Various reports noted delays for the actual launch time of the Global Fund's grants, which for example, for the period of 2021, could not be officially launched before the end of the first quarter. Although available documentary evidence did not allow a complete quantification of reported delays, interviews and reports highlighted that some bottlenecks in operational management have delayed distribution, with for instance, consequences for the effectiveness of prevention and treatment measures promoted by malaria interventions.

Interviewees at different levels highlighted some delays in the provision and distribution of medical inputs to health centers and communities, which have faced recurring stock-outs. To ensure that preventive care can be delivered to beneficiaries based on seasonality and peaks in transmission, the timely availability of inputs in health centers is essential in the context of mass distribution campaigns of LLINs. Several interviewees confirmed that these delays had an impact on the capacity to distribute and administer preventive care before the start of the peak transmission season (rainy season), potentially limiting the effectiveness of the support provided by various entities, including UNDP.<sup>74,75,76,77</sup> Several interviewees also noted challenges in complying with administrative and operational requirements for the timely processing of purchases and distribution of inputs for different diseases.

Interviews with the various actors involved in the implementation of the action plans revealed that recurrent delays in the transmission of reports have affected the provision of the necessary resources for the implementation of activities. In accordance with the management procedures put in place and formalized in the relevant manual, the disbursements of subsequent tranches are conditional on the justification of at least 80 percent of the resources previously allocated. In practice, most of the structures for implementing activities have experienced difficulties in meeting administrative requirements. Sub-recipients and sub-sub recipients have often been unable to produce compliant supporting documents within the required time frames in line with work plans and the pace of implementation of activities.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>73</sup> Global Fund data explorer

BDI-Malaria-UNDP Performance Letter 2021

Malaria-UNDP\_Reporting period\_31-Dec-21\_performance-rating-tool

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> Malaria Operational Plan FY 2022 & PEPFAR - USAID Malaria Division - https://www.pmi.gov/fy-2022-burundi-mop

Malaria Progress Report 2021. https://alma2030.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/malaria-progress-report-2021

For example, the ability of health centers to comply with the reporting framework on their stock levels and the use of inputs to support the inventory distribution planning process was a major bottleneck. These operational difficulties have sometimes generated additional transaction costs. For example, distribution during the rainy season poses significant transport and access issues to some rural health districts. This situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020,78 with additional delays in the purchase of pharmaceutical inputs, resulting in an increase in stock-outs in health centers from 40 percent in 2019 to 70 percent<sup>79</sup> in 2021.

Bureaucratic burdens were reported by most of the implementing entities and were constantly documented in the various performance letters and audit reports. In accordance with the procedure manual, the sub-recipients, in consultation with UNDP, jointly developed work plans for the implementation of activities on a biannual basis. In addition to challenges to meeting the administrative requirements, bottlenecks also were noted in the transmission of documents between the various partners, exacerbated by the fact that the transmission of documents is physical and because of heavy bureaucracy among partners that created more delays.

To some extent, the lack of fluidity in reporting can be explained by the institutional set-up resulting from UNDP's involvement in the decision-making and implementation chain, and the overlapping of UNDP and Global Fund procedures, which makes communication and implementation less fluid. Beyond these elements, which remain outside the control of UNDP, some interlocutors highlighted a lack of proactivity and flexibility on the part of UNDP to adapt to these circumstances. A lack of capacity building was often reported by most of the actors interviewed. The sub-beneficiaries feel that they have not received the specific support necessary for their respective missions, accentuated by the turnover of trained staff reported by UNDP. In addition to the training provided, UNDP/PB has taken various initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of grant management by improving the compliance of the documents submitted. These have resulted in improved last-mile distribution, i.e. health centers and communities in the delivery of inputs to fight diseases, including malaria. Despite these positive initiatives, interviewees noted that significant structural weaknesses remain, particularly at the level of sub recipients and sub-sub recipients where capacity development efforts have been limited.

On the basis of the interviews conducted during this evaluation, the consequences of the various constraints and circumstances mentioned would have contributed to a form of erosion of confidence among local partners and contributed to a climate of mistrust of the various actors involved in the implementation of the Global Fund grant. Some programmes, associative structures, and/or NGOs (e.g. PNILP, Burundian Red Cross, CARITAS) had assumed the management of grants as main recipient during previous cycles, but these were interrupted due to weaknesses in financial management. These entities therefore claim a certain expertise and experience, and this could contribute to feeding a feeling of frustration following the transfer of the management of the grant experienced as a divestment and contributing to certain difficulties with a less peaceful collaboration. In this regard, several national authorities and partners involved have clearly expressed the desire for a reappropriation of the management of grants from UNDP to national entities.

Manual of harmonized procedures of Burundi National Programmes (PNLS/IST, PNILT, PNILP)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>79</sup> COVID-19 and Pandemic - <a href="https://www.afro.who.int/fr/news/la-pandemie-de-covid-19-ralentit-les-progres-de-la-lutte-contre-la-tuberculose">https://www.afro.who.int/fr/news/la-pandemie-de-covid-19-ralentit-les-progres-de-la-lutte-contre-la-tuberculose</a>

Different types of training were conducted, covering the following areas: Global Fund procedures and guidelines; development and monitoring of action plans; financial training, including financial best practices for operations staff and grant managers in implementing entities; training of accountants of secondary beneficiaries in accounting and procurement rules and procedures, including the use of the financial dashboard; Manual of administrative and accounting management procedures and follow-up of payments on the basis of payment requests for advances granted to partners in the context of project implementation and verify the financial statements and in particular the supporting documents submitted.

Another notable factor that may have contributed to this situation may also be reflected in the lack of priority that seems to have been given to the implementation of capacity-building activities. A capacity building plan for sub recipients and sub-sub recipients was developed in 2019 but has not seen significant progress in its implementation.<sup>81</sup> An audit of the Global Fund's operations conducted in 2019 by UNDP's Office of Audit and Investigation also noted the failure to take into account weaknesses identified in diagnostics, audits and monitoring missions in partners' capacity building plans.<sup>82</sup> The same audit also noted delays in the transmission of UNDP management letters containing recommendations to be implemented by sub-recipients nearly four months after the submission of their report, creating a gap in the alignment of recommendations and the time allotted for their implementation. Although a new capacity building plan was planned for the end of May 2022 and finally developed and transmitted for adoption in October 2022, the availability of this plan and its implementation early in the calendar year could perhaps have helped mitigate the complaints of national actors.

As the country relies heavily on external aid to finance its health sector, the suspension of aid from major donors led to an 87 percent decline in overall external resources, resulting in a 54 percent decrease in the 2016 health budget, although the health budget has been able to count on donor support to a significant extent in recent years.<sup>83</sup> In this context, the transfer of primary responsibility for managing Global Fund allocations, though outside of UNDP control, has the effect of reducing funding directly available to national counterparts and presents a risk of exacerbating the weakening of national structures, in a context of profound scarcity of financing and skilled and experimented human resources.

**Finding 6:** UNDP has remained committed to the strengthening of the rule of law despite an unfavourable and difficult context marked by the 2015 political crisis and its implications. UNDP continued to support both the demand for and supply of access to justice by supporting legal aid and awareness-raising and by helping judicial authorities to reach out to litigants. However, the limited resources available have been dispersed by the number of actors and the scale of the needs, so that UNDP support, while relevant, has been largely directed towards supporting recurrent operational needs.

Prior to the implementation of the CPD, UNDP support in the area of governance was positioned in the framework of peacekeeping operation mandates. In this regard, the governance and rule of law programme (2014-2018), launched at the beginning of the previous country programme, in the wake of the transition following the end of peacekeeping mandates, included comprehensive and integrated support for strengthening rule of law and good governance efforts initiated since the adoption of the Arusha peace accord. However, the continuation of this work was affected by the eruption of the political crisis in 2015 and the change in the position of the national government. This change in context led to a reduction in the scope of intervention under this programme as well as a reduction in the perspective of financing, with the withdrawal of the country's main development partners.<sup>84,85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Capacity Building Plan 2022-2024

<sup>82</sup> UNDP, OAI, 2019- Audit report of UNDP Burundi Grants from the Global Fund, Report No. 2091

European Union - Action doc - Health System Support Programme III (PASS III)

https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/7799 - As indicated in its 2017 mid-term evaluation, the reform of the CSM that was supposed to consolidate the independence of the judiciary vis-à-vis the Ministry of Justice has been suspended. Similarly, the expected support for the National Police Academy was interrupted due to the freezing of funds by the main donor (Belgium). In the area of human rights, UNDP and OHCHR worked closely to support the national human rights commission, including by establishing a network of human rights observers in the provinces based on national NGOs that could not be maintained given the context and the suspension of most of the participating NGOs, and the interruption of collaboration between governments and OHCHR in 2016, whose offices were finally closed in 2018.

https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/9437 A review of unimplemented activities shows that many of the institutional capacity-building efforts aimed at strengthening the human and organizational capacities of key bodies (training of anti-corruption and court magistrates, digitization of their work processes, etc.) and staff have been abandoned in favour of operational support to these (mission support) focused on implementation; partly because of the lack of progress on the regulatory framework and the enforcement that is supposed to enable it. For example, the High Court of Justice established in the 2013 constitution with the power to try cases related to high-level political figures was never established. The legal obligation for public officials to declare their personal assets has never been enforced.

Under the Access to Services and Rights Programme (PASD) launched in 2019, UNDP built on the design of the previous programme and commitment to support judicial and administrative authorities to improve service delivery at the local level, focusing on five targeted provinces (compared to 11 provinces under the previous programme), reflecting the challenging funding environment. The PASD programme, which is the main governance programme of the current CPD (excluding ad hoc PBF projects), represented on average an annual allocation of 20 percent of total annual UNDP core resources. Although modest in relation to the needs of the sector, this must be seen in the general context of sanctions, in which UNDP has been the main source of external support for the judicial and, more generally, for the public administration services.

The project continued to support judicial authorities and help their services to get closer to the litigant by financing the operational capacity of judicial actors in the conduct of mobile courts, inspection visits, and capacity building through training. Based on the results compiled from the mid-term evaluation and the 2021 annual reports, the support for the conduct of mobile courts enabled more than 18,000 people to have their cases tried in the five targeted provinces between 2019 and 2021. This support has been highly appreciated by local courts and court of first instance to reduce the backlog and help the efficient delivery of litigable services while reducing the cost of transportation for beneficiaries to access justice. However, interviews revealed that their frequency was not sufficient and that more systematic planning of mobile court activities would be necessary. The project also assisted the prosecutor's office in carrying out inspection missions to local courts, which made it possible to deal with cases of pre-trial detention and assisted the prosecutor in exercising his mandate of control over local courts. The mid-term evaluation highlights that in 2021, 2,778 of the 13,787 inmates who made their cases heard were able to obtain conditional release through these missions, thus supporting the decongestion of prisons as reported by the main stakeholders interviewed.

Similar support was provided to the Special Court on Lands and Other Property (CSTB) and the Office of the Ombudsman. The CSTB was established in 2014 with a mandate to review appeals cases by the National Court of Land and Property (CNTB) related to land issues by affected populations, including returnees from the various conflicts the country has faced. UNDP supported the special court 's field missions to enable it to fulfil its mandate. Reports and interviews indicate that this operational support enabled the commission to reduce processing times and to process 160 pending files involving 1,600 people. As a result, 160 returnee families were able to have their land assets recognized and returned. The assistance provided to the Special Court is considered essential, as it is based only in Bujumbura and each case requires on-the-ground investigations for which operational and financial means are not available.<sup>86</sup>

UNDP also supported the Office of the Ombudsman, which continued under a specific project from 2020. UNDP support to the Office of the Ombudsman focused on supporting its three regional offices in its engagement with local government and the population. This mainly consisted of providing funding that enabled the Office of the Ombudsman to carry out awareness-raising activities and establish regular consultation frameworks with local stakeholders, including judicial staff and local administrations in 2019, to gradually include community-level mediation mechanisms in 2020, 2021 and 2022. The activity reports of the Ombudsman's Office and interviews indicate this consisted of raising awareness of the role of the Ombudsman, on the ethical conduct expected of court officials/staff, and on the existing complaints mechanism. Although not within the core mandate of the Ombudsman, field visits have been part of the

The CNTB was established by the Arusha Agreement in 2000 to support the resolution of land conflicts related to the massive movements of returnees and their reintegration resulting from the peace process. The commission was established in 2006 and its operationalization was supported by UNDP until 2008 through capacity-building of its staff, provision of office equipment and transportation to begin its work. The mandate of the CNTB was not extended and ended in 2022. It recorded 65,912 cases, and closed about 70% of them.

Ombudsman's Office's strategy to extend its reach to regions where it does not have regional chapters and play a useful role in bringing together local actors (ombudsmen, judicial authorities, local police, magistrates, local administrators) while contributing to the visibility of the Office of the Ombudsman.

With the exception of training for judicial and local officials, UNDP support has been mainly operational through the financing of transport (mainly by paying for fuel and the provision of cars) and the payment of daily subsistence allowances for judicial staff by the prosecutor's office and the courts of first instances in the five targeted provinces. This support is obviously not sustainable as the programme has been heavily dependent on UNDP support. Many interviewees noted that if UNDP cannot fund them, these initiatives stop. While such support cannot be expected to produce transformational and/or limited incremental outcomes, it remains important. Judicial actors stressed during interviews that it is not possible to absorb these costs into their budgets, which mainly cover salaries but do not provide sufficient budgets to cover operational costs such as transportation. The limited scope of the work in support of the justice sector under the PASD still faces structural problems, as the project is not able to work with the entire justice chain in the targeted areas. Interviews highlighted the challenge posed by the absence of the security sector from the project, as various interviewees noted limitations in the quality of files that depend on police judicial officers who have affected their ability to handle cases. The support provided to the Public Prosecutor's Office by the project is not able to ensure the inspection and monitoring of the work of judicial police officers because they depend on the Ministry of the Interior. Overall, UNDP has adapted to the policy space available and has provided essential support to the various institutions mentioned above in the implementation of their mandates, but the support is not designed to bring about significant changes in the area of access to justice.

**Finding 7:** UNDP has expanded its support in the area of legal aid by supporting community-level mediation through community paralegals. While the changing political context affected this initial strategy, support for community-based mediation initiatives has been effective in supporting the diversion of minor issues to the courts and in contributing to social cohesion.

UNDP assisted the judiciary in providing legal aid through various modalities and continued to do so during the programming period. Under the previous programme, UNDP supported legal aid mechanisms through the establishment of 12 legal clinics operated by CSOs, but these did not survive the 2015 crisis during which they were suspended, and clinics were closed by the authorities.<sup>87</sup> UNDP resumed working with the country's two bar associations to establish legal aid offices operated by lawyers between 2017 and 2018, but this support was not maintained in the PASD. The final evaluation of the Rule of Law programme (2014-2018) indicates that while the programme was implemented for a short period (nine months) the interviews conducted revealed a high degree of appreciation and satisfaction for the support and pointed out that some offices had been maintained and continued to be used by bar associations to provide legal aid.<sup>88</sup>

Under the PASD launched in 2019, UNDP intended to provide legal aid through paralegals and legal aid through lawyers, continuing its support to the country's two bar associations. The original design of the PASD envisaged that community paralegals would be trained to assist them in providing primary legal aid and mediation services in their communities. However, this was not pursued as the Government changed its

Many local human rights NGOs were suspended and targeted during the 2015 crisis. In 2017, the Government took the controversial decision to ask for ethnic quotas in the staff of international NGOs, and that 30% of their annual budget be transferred to the Government. Many INGOs left the country in 2019, including Lawyers without Borders, which was a key player in the field of legal aid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>88</sup> The final evaluation found that the national legal aid strategy provided that legal aid offices would continue to be under the supervision and institutional hosting of the Ministry of Justice, which did not happen.

strategy for legal aid and mediation services. Although not pursued with the PASD, the work of paralegals and participation in mediation at the community level was effective in the PBF project jointly implemented with IOM and UNWomen (2019-2021).

The available reports do not allow for a breakdown of the services provided by the paralegals supported by UNDP and the mediators supported by UNWomen, but they do show a total of 21,960 people consulted their services, including 9,022 women. Paralegals and mediators were able to mediate 36 percent of those cases, referring others to relevant services, enabling peaceful resolution of community conflicts. Cases handled included domestic level disputes (41 percent), social disputes (36 percent), land issues (15 percent) and cases of GBV (6 percent). Of the minor cases dealt with at the community level, 73 percent were reported by women and 71 percent were successfully mediated. Support for community-level mediation was also reported to have helped reduce land conflict cases in court by 10 percent and overall support reduced court workload by 30 percent.<sup>89</sup>

Community-level dispute resolution mechanisms have proven useful in assisting local authorities (administrative and judicial) in managing conflicts and disputes through case diversion. However, key informants and reports indicate there has been a proliferation of initiatives on community mediation, causing confusion at the community level between the different mediators supported by various entities, as well as other mechanisms and groups that traditionally contribute to the resolution of disputes such as the hill councils, Bashingantahe and notables, local administrators, and Imbonerakure (youth of the ruling party).

While paralegals can indeed provide useful support and introduce greater fairness and legal considerations into dispute resolution, the concept of 'paralegal' was relatively new in the Burundian context. Some concerns were expressed in interviews and reports from the Office of the Ombudsman regarding the actual capacity and availability of community mediators. Similar comments also were shared by bar associations and lawyers, who are less supportive of this modality.

As indicated in the mid-term evaluation of the PASD, the Government decided to re-establish 'the council of notables'. The law restoring the councils was enacted in early 2021 and in September 2022, local elections were held to elect notables. This new development was a setback to the implementation of the original strategy, as it suspended work with trained paralegals. The final evaluation of this project notes the likelihood that trained community paralegals would be among elected members of the councils but information on whether paralegals at the community level were in fact elected was not yet available at the time of this evaluation. Nevertheless, the new law and the creation of the council of notables will be an important area of potential future support given their leading role in resolving civil matters. 91

**Finding 8:** The expansion of UNDP support beyond traditional access to justice to support access to administrative documents has been highly relevant in supporting social protection and citizens' access to rights. Assistance in particular for access to land certificates has helped to reduce both conflicts and the backlog of cases in local courts and administrative authorities.

While the scope of support for judicial, security and human rights reforms was limited following the 2015 political crisis, PASD consolidated some of UNDP's past commitment to supporting public administration reforms. Between 2013 and 2019, under its previous Governance and Rule of Law programme, which

<sup>89</sup> IOM, UNDP, UNWOMEN 2021 Final evaluation of Project Strengthening Local Mechanisms for Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Burundi

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>90</sup> The Council of Notables is a mediation structure that was effective since 1987 until its suspension by the Government in 2005. They have been recognized as an important mechanism for mediation and conflict resolution at the hill level.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>91</sup> The law brings significant changes, including that elected notables will be (i) formalized and will have a salary, (ii) their decision will be enforceable and communicated to the local courts, (iii) any civil case will have to go through this mechanism before it can go to court.

included a component on public administration reform, UNDP worked with the Ministry of Public Service to implement national public administration reforms adopted by the Government in 2012, with a view to strengthening the capacity of public administrations and improving its delivery of services to citizens. Although the implementation of the programme was affected by the onset of the crisis, UNDP supported the launch and testing of one stop shops for administrative service (GUP) 92 in five provinces of the country. GUP has made it possible to bring the issuance of civil status documents (passports, driver's licenses, criminal records) closer to populations outside Bujumbura and thus reduce the need for citizens to travel to the capital to obtain such services.

This area of work has been continued within the framework of the PASD through continued support to the previously established GUP and the extension of the GUP to five other provinces and has been complemented by support for other administrative municipal functions (Civil Registry Office, Land Bank), which are respectively responsible for issuing identity documents (identity card, birth registration/day, etc.) and land certificates. In the area of access to civil and administrative documents, in 2021, approximately 1,929,542 people, (50 percent of them women, 2 percent Batwa, 0.5 percent persons with disabilities and 1 percent returnees/displaced persons), would have obtained their civil status documents, which would have enabled them to recover their civil and political rights.<sup>94</sup> The decentralization of administrative services at the provincial level initiated since 2018 through the GUP in 10 provinces has been continued, and has allowed more than 150,000 people to access administrative documents through the GUP. According to stakeholders, this has reduced backlogs in Bujumbura's central services by 70 percent and has reduced the distance and costs for citizens to request and obtain their documents.

Communal civil registry offices have been helpful in providing access to social protection for vulnerable populations given that obtaining an identity document, birth certificate, or marriage certificate can help beneficiaries access social protection and available services. For example, the availability of identity documents and birth certificates has ensured access to free education for children under five and health services for vulnerable households. Country Office results reports highlight anecdotal evidence that it has helped in cases of domestic or family problems. For example, marriage certificates have helped women in domestic conflicts establish their rights with regard to their households.

Through PASD, UNDP supported the establishment of communal land offices in 20 municipalities. <sup>95,96</sup> The mid-term evaluation of the PASD conducted in 2021 noted that the supported communal land offices were able to issue 76,543 land certificates. Based on interviews conducted in three local administrative governments visited for this evaluation, including with judicial staff, access to the land certificate and the guarantee it offers to its holder has reduced land disputes by more than 80 percent. Improved access to land certificates brings other benefits, such as access to credit, as they serve as physical guarantees, and contributes to securing livelihoods as agricultural activity remains the main source of income and livelihoods in rural areas. The importance of securing land rights cannot be underestimated in the context of Burundi, where registration has been very low due to the fact that land ownership derives mainly from customary rights and has been the subject of considerable disputes between populations and with the State and is said to constitute a significant cause for backlog of cases before the courts.

<sup>92</sup> UNDP 2017, Mid-term Evaluation of the project 'Support to the public administrative reform programme' (NARP), 2017

gup are provincially established offices that allow registration to obtain ID cards, driver's licenses, criminal records

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>94</sup> UNDP 2021, Mid-term Evaluation of the PASD project

<sup>95</sup> UNDP support took the form of logistical support (motorcycles for transport and other equipment) and staff training communal land services.

In 2016, the Government of Burundi revised its land code, establishing the possibility of accessing land certificates (different from land titles) at the municipal level and established communal land service offices. However, the Government has not been able to create them across the country.

One aspect that the project does not appear to have taken into account is that increased support for access to services is not offset by corresponding support to ensure that supply can meet demands. This is well illustrated by the GUP. While these structures have been commended for reducing distance from the population and the cost of searching for records, much work remains to be done to ensure the effective and efficient service delivery of these structures, as their means of implementation remain weak and their funding capacity to help them operate is low. GUP reduces the distance to submit an application but feeds into the same service delivery mechanism at the central level, which is not supported by the project. In this case, the system transposed the issue of transporting documents between the capital and the provinces from citizens to the state, which, despite significant improvements, remains a bottleneck in document delivery and has been partly based on an informal process (a staff member travelling to the capital) and/or has relied on UNDP funding. Another challenge of the GUP system is the fact that the initiative was developed with the Ministry of Civil Service but the production of most of the administrative documents issued by the GUP depends on the Ministry of the Interior. Although all national stakeholders gathered during the evaluation provided positive feedback and presented it as flagship support to UNDP programmes and expressed the need to extend the initiative to other provinces, the need for inter-ministerial coordination is an additional challenge to be addressed.

In the context of public administration reform, the PASD provided complementary support to the Ministry of Public Services to facilitate awareness of laws and administrative procedures through the creation of two web portals to support demand and effective access to services. Although the relevance and importance of this support was confirmed through interviews, notably ensuring existence of a comprehensive repository of laws and procedures, the evaluation noted that its use by citizens, particularly in the provinces targeted by the PASD and in relation to the services supported by the programme, would have required diversifying means of dissemination due to the limited access of targeted vulnerable populations.

**Finding 9:** UNDP provides significant support to the various structures mandated for strategic planning and aid coordination, which has made it possible to internalize the SDGs at different levels of the planning process, and to support the implementation and evaluation of the National Development Plan. Although fragmented, the support nevertheless contributes to the overall improvement of the cooperation framework and the gradual revitalization of development cooperation in the country.

Building on its support in previous programming periods, UNDP continued to play a central role in the development of reference tools for strategic planning, including monitoring and mainstreaming international commitments. Despite the 2015 crisis, UNDP has accompanied the participation of national authorities in international processes of reflection on the end of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by supporting the production of national reports on the achievements of the MDGs, and the conduct of national consultations to support the country's participation in the development of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, allowing the production of two national consultation reports, and a national SDG contextualization report.<sup>97</sup>

During the current programming period, UNDP interventions have continued to support national efforts in development planning, particularly through the integration of the national development plan into sectoral and local development policies, making it possible to link national development objectives at the local level and to provide statistical data and studies to inform decision-making for the prioritization of development action.

<sup>97</sup> UNDP Burundi, 2017, Final external assessment of national capacities for strategic planning and aid coordination for the achievement of the MDGs and the objectives of Vision 2025

Since 2019, UNDP interventions under the implementation of the national statistical institute (ISTEBU) have enabled a mapping of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicators and supported the establishment of a methodological framework for data collection to improve the availability and coverage of SDG indicators as well as an update of SDG indicators and of the national development plan. This work was complemented by an exercise to develop and update the socio-economic profiles of the country's 18 provinces in order to promote the targeting of priority development activities in addition to support updating of the statistical institute's recurrent survey modules. ISTEBU was also supported in the integration of the methodology for calculating multidimensional poverty indexes developed by UNDP and OPHI, through the provision of a technical expert to accompany the institute in this field.

This support has contributed to the updating of analyses of the socio-economic situation at the provincial and communal levels and has enabled the contextualization of the SDGs in 94 municipalities, covering almost all municipalities in the country, to bridge the gap between the articulation of national objectives and local development plans, such as the update of the PCDCs that UNDP has supported in 44 communes (Finding 2).98 According to UNDP reports, the conduct of these activities provided an opportunity for capacity building for nearly 1,475 planning staff at the communal level and 65 managers of sectoral ministries.99 This support also served as a reference basis for the production of Burundi's first voluntary national report, which was presented at the ECOSOC High Level Political Forum in 2020. A national human development report was also produced, focusing on national inequalities that are the source of cyclical conflicts in Burundi and how the country can reap the demographic dividend.100

At the national level, UNDP has provided technical expertise to enable the design and adoption of 12 sectoral strategies aligned with the national development plan for all sectoral ministries of the Government. Although not all of those strategies were adopted at the time of this evaluation, the interlocutors interviewed for the evaluation noted the usefulness of these framework documents in their engagement, although UNDP support did not include complementary actions to promote the operationalization of the strategies and priorities they identify. UNDP support for the updating and development of planning frameworks is part of broader reforms of the functioning of the administration and in particular the introduction of the programme budget and results-based management in preparation of national budget by ministries. In line with this previous support to advance performance management within the administration, UNDP provided a technical expert to support the Ministry of Public Service in ensuring this transition.

Support in the area of strategic planning and aid coordination is hampered by overlapping mandates between different ministries, which, according to interviews conducted during this evaluation, reinforce the dilution of support and add to the confusion of development partners. The architecture of cooperation is represented by various ministries such as the Ministry of Economy and Finance, with a Directorate of Technical and Financial Cooperation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in charge of diplomatic relations, the Ministry of the Interior, which integrates community development into its functions, and the Bureau of Strategic Studies and Development (BESD)<sup>101</sup> under the Presidency of the Republic.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>98</sup> The evaluation found that some municipalities were able to endorse their PCDCs such as municipalities (e.g. Cendajuru, Kigamba in the province Cankuzo) a localization of sustainable development goal indicators in municipalities.

<sup>99</sup> UNDP ROAR 2021

https://www.undp.org/fr/burundi/publications/rapport-national-sur-le-d%C3%A9veloppement-humain-edition-2019#:~:text=8%20 d%C3%A9cembre%202020,d%C3%A9veloppement%20humain%20durable%20du%20pays.

The BESD is an advisory board located under the presidency, and whose role since 2020 has been reinforced to advance the strategic priorities of development by the President's office.

UNDP adapted to these circumstances and provided support to all these structures through the Strategic Planning project. Beyond the support provided for the integration of the SDGs, which in its local dimension works with the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Finance at the national level, UNDP, in collaboration with the Swiss cooperation, supported the establishment of a technical secretariat to support the work of the BESD, providing equipment and supporting the recruitment of five technical experts for the unit, adding to two experts made available by UNICEF. This support helps the BESD to articulate its technical and operational development policy management capacities within the framework of the priority development programmes of the presidency as defined in the NDP and the National Program for Capitalizing on Peace, Social Stability and Promotion of Economic Growth 2021-2027 (PNCP-SS-PCE), which articulates the priorities of the presidential programme against the new vision for an emergent Burundi in 2040 and developed country by 2060.

UNDP provided necessary technical expertise to support the reflections and definitions of this priority plan and supported the BESD in defining the Vision 2040 planning document, the mid-term evaluation and the update of the NDP launched in the second half of 2022. UNDP also is supporting the BESD in revitalizing the consultation frameworks for aid coordination with the establishment of a national aid coordination strategy, and the preparatory work for the establishment of a digital platform to monitor government action and support from development partners against national development priorities. This coordination was effective until 2015 following termination of the National Committee for the Coordination of Aid (CNCA) which, according to meetings with stakeholders, offered an effective framework for aid coordination. Through BESD, UNDP also supported the organization of the Burundi National Development Forum in 2021 and 2023. This forum provides a framework for the various development actors to engage in high-level strategic dialogue on the main challenges of the country's economic and social development.

The project also continued to support other partners previously involved in UNDP programmes as part of the planning and steering of development action, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation and the University of Burundi (UNIBU). Although the fragmentation of the cooperation architecture presents challenges for the consolidation of the support provided, UNDP generally provides useful and appreciated support to these structures, all of which have played a role in effectively steering the country's development and in reviving cooperation following the lifting of international sanctions. This support, in line with the country's economic situation, has favorably consolidated UNDP's strategic positioning at the political level, recognized by all national and development partners. This is illustrated by the leadership attributed to UNDP through the co-presidency of the PAG and the PCP.

### 2.3 Building resilience to crises and shocks to safeguard development gains

**CPD OUTCOME 3:** By 2023, national and decentralized authorities have adopted mechanisms for disaster risk prevention and management, sustainable management of natural resources (water, land, forests), climate change mitigation and adaptation, and ecosystem protection to strengthen the resilience of local communities

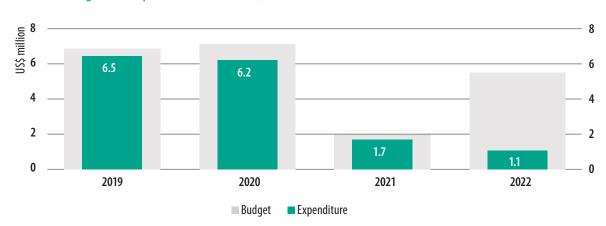
### **Related Outputs**

**Output 3.1:** Evidence-based planning and assessment tools and mechanisms are used to implement risk-based and gender-sensitive adaptation, prevention and preparedness to mitigate the impact of natural disasters on communities

**Output 3.2:** Solutions are adopted to improve access to clean, affordable and sustainable sources of energy, in particular for women and internally displaced persons

**Output 3.3:** Solutions are developed to facilitate gender-sensitive sustainable management of natural resources

Interventions under Outcome 3 consisted of strengthening national capacities in the preparation and implementation of adaptation measures to prevent risks of natural disasters (Output 3.1), access to sources clean energy for vulnerable populations (Output 3.2), and the development of solutions for sustainable natural resource management (Output 3.3). The total budget and expenditures for the period 2019-2022 were US\$21.5 million and \$15.4 million, respectively, representing an implementation rate of 72 percent.



**FIGURE 7.** Budget and expenditure: Outcome 3, 2019-2022

Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

The operationalization of these objectives has been achieved through the implementation of eight projects, including two projects in the management of risks and disasters related to climate change (62 percent of the outcome's expenditure), one project on the sustainable reintegration of natural disaster claims

(20 percent of the outcome's expenditure), two projects in the field of renewable energies (14 percent of outcome expenditure), and two projects to support planning and resource mobilization (4 percent of outcome expenditure). Annual UNDP programme data between the previous and current cycles showed a significant downward trend, with the budget and expenditure in the current cycle almost half of those in the previous cycle. 2021 had the lowest budget (US\$2.0 million) and expenditure (\$1.7 million) of both cycles.

**Finding 10:** UNDP has supported national and decentralized disaster risk management and prevention systems, including through community mobilization; however, the effects in terms of prevention remain limited due to limited progress in the establishment of early warning systems and a lack of capitalization of past support.

In line with the output of the country programme results framework, UNDP implemented various projects aimed at contributing to the strengthening of institutional and community capacities for adaptation, prevention and preparedness in order to limit the impact of natural disasters, including climate change, on communities. Through these various interventions, UNDP has supported both disaster risk prevention and response capacities and direct responses to the recovery needs of communities affected by climate crises (See Finding 11).

UNDP contributed to capacity-building in national, provincial and communal planning in the context of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). At the national level, in 2020 UNDP facilitated the updating of the 2015 Nationally Determined Contribution, providing technical expertise to the Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, enabling the country to renew its commitment to reducing emissions by 2030. UNDP supported the development and validation of the National Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction for the period 2018-2025 and its 2018-2021 action plan. At the strategic level, UNDP continued this support with the update of the third generation of harmonized national contingency plan in 2020, the previous plan having not been updated since 2015. Adopted in 2021 by the Government, the update of the national contingency plan has integrated new risks reflecting the socio-economic evolution of the country since the political crisis of 2015 and allowed for a more comprehensive consideration of national risks, integrating climate risks, health risks, risks related to population movements, technological accidents, and the impact of climate risks on food and nutrition security.

As part of the operationalization of the national DRR strategy, UNDP is supporting the national system, namely the national risk and disaster management platform (PFN-PRGC) <sup>102</sup> of the Directorate of Civil Protection within the Ministry of the Interior, Public Security and Community Development. Support provided to the PFN-PRGC included the training of members and the provision of equipment. UNDP, through the DRR project, supported the PFN-PRGC in the development of contingency plans for 5 provinces and 15 communes, and the establishment of an early warning system in 4 of those communes. Project reports indicate that nearly 3 million people benefited from awareness-raising activities on natural disaster risks and more than 400 people were trained in the management of the early warning system.<sup>103</sup> Support also included providing prevention and rescue equipment to civil protection services, including two fire-fighting trucks, 60 stretchers and other equipment to facilitate emergency response and first aid.

<sup>103</sup> UNDP Burundi, ROAR 2021

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>102</sup> The platform is an interdepartmental mechanism to ensure coordination, answers and prevention of disaster risks. The mechanism is under the leadership of the Directorate of Emergency Preparedness, and consists of representative various departments, partners from development, and civil society.

According to the various interlocutors in the area of disaster risk management, the functioning of the national disaster risk management platform is a useful mechanism to galvanize coordination and joint actions in emergency response but remains less effective in the field of prevention. The evaluation noted that institutional capacities for the implementation of contingency plans, which depend in part on the effective establishment of early warning mechanisms, remain limited. The implementation of the early warning system is affected by the lack of resources, particularly the lack of dedicated expertise for its installation and operation despite the support provided to the national platform (as noted in the mid-term evaluation of the project). That evaluation noted that halfway through the project, the equipment provided (servers, computers) at the request of the national side was not effective due to a lack of expertise and personnel at the level of the national platform and within the civil protection division.

UNDP, with GEF funding,<sup>105</sup> supported the national geography institute (IGEBU) capacities in the establishment of a community-based early warning system in the provinces of Kirundo, Makamba, Rumonge, Bujumbura Rural and Bujumbura Mairie through training and provision of 40 automatic hydro stations, 10 automatic agrometeorological stations, 10 automatic hydrological stations and 19 automatic rainfall stations and a synoptic station for Bujumbura airport. This support was intended to respond to the significant deterioration of the weather station network in 2015.<sup>106</sup> The final evaluation of this project noted that beyond IGEBU's capacity building, community involvement had not been achieved as planned and noted the need to continue this effort to ensure ownership and participation in the early warning system.

Although the DRR project focused on community awareness, particularly through the development of municipal and provincial contingency plans and the community participation, the opportunity to associate IGEBU more closely to capitalize and continue the capacity building and equipment support previously delivered appears to be a somewhat missed opportunity. UNDP's internal reports highlighted the fact that the early warning mechanism was not yet functional in 2020.<sup>107</sup> The mid-term evaluation of the DRR project notes that the actions of the platform and the support are more oriented towards emergency actions and civil protection rather than prevention, in particular accentuated by the institutional anchoring of the platform within the Ministry with public security in its attributions. The same report suggests the need to strengthen the participation of the Ministry of the Environment in the work of the national platform in order to emphasize the prevention dimension.<sup>108</sup> The effective involvement of technical services specialized in the analysis of climate change-related information on sectoral areas (effects of changes on the health of the agricultural economy, food security, etc.) did not seem to have been privileged to operationalize the early warning system. Various interlocutors referred to the limitations of the institutional anchoring of the platform at the level of a directorate as a limiting factor to allow the coordination of various services housed under different ministries and to provide a multisectoral response in line with the national contingency plan. Financing and technical capacity remain a challenge for the implementation of the various contingency plans and for moving from an emergency response to a preventive response.<sup>109</sup>

**Finding 11:** UNDP provided various support to the recurrent challenges posed by the effects of climate change and natural disasters and to enable stabilization and recovery of people affected and displaced by natural disasters. Support for adaptive and resilient capacities has remained more limited in relation to the immediate stabilization needs of affected populations due to the limited funding available.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>104</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term Evaluation of the Disaster Risk Reduction project

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>105</sup> Through the Community Climate Change Disaster Risk Management project in Burundi (2015-2020)

UNDP Burundi 2020, Final Evaluation of the Community-Based Climate Change Disaster Risk Management project in Burundi (2015-2020)

<sup>107</sup> UNDP Burundi, ROAR 2020

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>108</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the Disaster Risk Reduction project

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>109</sup> NOSE Landscape restoration for increase resilience in urban and peri-urban areas of Bujumbura

In addition to strengthening institutional capacities for risk management and prevention, UNDP implemented interventions aimed at stabilizing affected populations and supported the development of preventive measures aimed at reducing pressure on natural resources through the implementation of climate change adaptation practices and land use planning activities. These dimensions of UNDP support have been integrated into the various UNDP interventions, complementing institutional capacity-building in risk management and prevention (See Finding 10). However, although the objectives set by the country programme emphasized the priority of natural resource management, with an emphasis on the participation of women, the pursuit of this objective was limited in the implementation of interventions, including more effort on the establishment of the early warning system and institutional capacity, and on responding to the stabilization needs of populations affected by natural disasters.

UNDP provided support for the stabilization of disaster populations through the Integrated Rural Village Project and, more recently, through the Disaster Risk Reduction Project. As part of the Integrated Rural Village Project, UNDP, in collaboration with UNICEF and UNFPA, supported the stabilization of the displacement of the Muhuta commune in Rumonge province by the 2015 floods and landslides. Since 2018, the joint project with the three agencies enabled the stabilization of displaced populations in a new village, the integrated rural village of Mayengo. In addition to emergency support and access to social services, UNDP supported economic and social reintegration through the construction of and access to sustainable and decent accommodation for 174 households of 1,760 people. Stabilization and economic recovery activities reached both host and displaced populations through a combination of social safety net approaches (cash for work, distribution of improved stoves, support for IGAs and training) and self-development (creation of solidarity groups and economic interest grouping). These interventions have strengthened the capacities of beneficiaries to generate income and improved levels of vulnerability. A similar approach was adopted for the Disaster Risk Reduction project, which allowed for the construction of 250 houses for 1,500 displaced people affected by landslides in the commune of Mugina in Cibitoke province, the distribution of 12,000 metal sheets for the roofing of 666 households composed of 3,996 people, and initiating the rehabilitation and securing of local infrastructure such as a bridge, school and church. UNDP also supported activities to protect the Ntahangwa watersheds, as well as the planting of trees in the Nyanza Lac and Kirundo sites, protection of the buffer zones of Lakes Tanganyika and Northern Lakes, allowing the reforestation of 1,095 hectares in the provinces of Bujumbura, Kirundo, Rumonge, and Makamba<sup>110</sup> and the stabilization of 764 km of land by tracing contours and planting 758,570 strains of fixing grasses. These interventions have reduced the risk of landslides and have protected hills.

The actions provided to the stabilization and risk reduction needs of communities constitute important support that has enabled the targeted communities to reduce their vulnerability and, in the case of displaced persons, to help them transition from their state of humanitarian emergency needs. Various sources confirm that access to decent housing remains a priority for displaced populations and for returnees. Although such support for the stabilization of IDPs can be seen as is akin to humanitarian support, the interviews conducted for this evaluation highlighted UNDP's comparative advantage in this area, through its role in operationalizing the humanitarian-development nexus, and through its ability to adapt and respond to changes in the context facilitated by the availability of core funding, which are often not available to most other humanitarian agencies and NGOs that operate more on a project logic for which funding is less flexible. Natural disasters and the effects of climate change such as floods or landslides make it sometimes impossible for households to return to their plot of land, and therefore pose the challenge of facilitating

<sup>110</sup> UNDP ROAR 2021

 $<sup>^{111}\,\,</sup>$  UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the Disaster Risk Reduction project

a consensual relocation of populations in a context where land ownership remains the main access to livelihoods and is already the subject of dispute and communal conflicts. This enhances the relevance of UNDP support in this area.

Although relevant, the observations of these interventions in the field are mixed as to their effectiveness and sustainability. The immediate effects of the intervention remain visible and access to decent housing makes it possible to take an undeniable first step in stabilizing affected households, as observed in the village of Mayengo. The combination of support to IDPs and host communities has facilitated the social integration of IDPs, but economic integration remains difficult. Despite the project's achievements, which, as noted in the final evaluation, made it possible to reduce the dependence of populations on humanitarian food aid, the project has not been able to tackle the economic, social and cultural barriers that limit the effective participation of beneficiaries in economic life similar to other members of the community. The activities that carry the local economy are subject to monopolies and control of resources, which has limited the economic integration of the IDPs, in Mayengo for example, to income-generating activities that are not fully integrated into the fabric of the local economy and that have not all been continued after the end of the project. The issue of reintegration of IDPs, although at an initial stage under the DRR project, also highlights the challenges related to land ownership in the relocation of affected populations in the absence and or agreements for settling on state owned land.

Based on available assessments and reports, it is noted that due to lack of available resources, objectives to strengthen climate change adaptation practices have not received the same level of attention as disaster stabilization activities and capacity-building around the early warning system. Projects developed by UNDP to strengthen community resilience included the establishment of livelihoods and green entrepreneurship to reduce pressure on natural resources and ensure the protection of rehabilitated watersheds, but due to lack of resources, these activities received less attention. For example, the final evaluation of the Community Climate Change Disaster Risk Management project in Burundi (2015-2020) notes that the rehabilitation of the Nthangwa River watershed had not been accompanied by sufficient protection measures upstream and downstream of the watershed, particularly through the development of smart adaptation activities in agricultural practices, therefore presenting a risk to the sustainability of the rehabilitation.<sup>112</sup> The mid-term evaluation of the DRR project also indicates that the activities initially planned for the establishment and strengthening of micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises and support for women's associative groups for the development of harm reduction initiatives had been abandoned for lack of resources.<sup>113</sup>

Although women and youth remained priority targets of project activities, based on the country programme document (Output 3.3), this did not translate into large-scale implementation and was instead reflected in the targeting of women in livelihood development activities. UNDP action in this area, which aimed to highlight the gender perspective in the sustainable management of resources, seemed to lack concrete anchoring, as highlighted in the Country Office's annual progress reports, which point to an absence of the presupposed framework for dialogue in which their participation should be strengthened. The funds mobilized for programming under this outcome remain limited to meet the needs of capacity building and preparedness, disaster recovery response, land use planning, and promotion of environmental protection.<sup>114</sup>

UNDP Burundi 2020, Final Evaluation of the Community-Based Climate Change Disaster Risk Management project in Burundi (2015-2020)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>113</sup> UNDP Burundi 2021, Mid-term evaluation of the Disaster Risk Reduction project

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>114</sup> UNDP Burundi, ROAR 2020

**Finding 12:** UNDP is developing a programmatic offer that aims to promote the sustainable integration of off-grid solar energy solutions in the Burundian context. While the support committed is relevant to needs, implementation has been slow and has not yet produced tangible results in terms of physical assets, though the important preparatory work launched provides a promising perspective for the sustainability of the intervention.

During the previous programming period (2014-2018), UNDP provided support to the authorities in the development of the regulatory framework and development strategy for the energy and mining sector. Although very quickly interrupted by the 2015 crisis, the project nevertheless managed to contribute to the finalization and adoption of the National Strategy on New and Renewable Energies and the development and adoption of the Mining Regulations and its dissemination. The change of context since 2015 had not made it possible to continue the initiatives planned by the project and the development of programmatic activity initially envisaged following the developments of the national strategy. In line with the organization's global positioning on energy access issues identified as a key programmatic axis since the UNDP strategic plan 2018-2021, UNDP has launched various initiatives during this programming period to improve access to solar energy for vulnerable populations in rural areas.

UNDP continued to support the Ministry of Energy and Mines through the 'Solar for women's empowerment' project. Implemented between 2018 and 2019, the project aimed to strengthen women's empowerment by promoting their access, management, and marketing of lighting solutions and improved cookstoves within their community. The project supported the distribution of 50 'fountains of light', 116 and the training and production of improved stoves for 50 women's groups in 10 communes in the provinces of Kirundo, Ruyigi, Rutana, Makamba and Rumonge. Project reports and field interviews indicate this intervention, although ad-hoc, improved the well-being of the populations of the targeted households, which led to direct benefits related to access to lighting, such as improving the school performance of children in beneficiary households and generating additional income from phone charging activities enabled by the equipment. However, there is no information available on the results in terms of the development of commercial activities promoted by the project, or the willingness of the groups to continue income-generating activities beyond the duration of the project. The project gave the target group the choice to sell or rent the lamps, which did not necessarily guarantee the sustainability of the activity. The Country Office's monitoring missions and observations and interviews in a village targeted by the project identified malfunctions of solar lamps in terms of their operating time and obsolescence. The proposed solutions to improve access to energy have attempted to import a positive market structure but without a local base, thus limiting the prospects of sustainability. Nevertheless, the implementation of this intervention has promoted public awareness of the possibilities of access to solar energy and UNDP's partnership with the Ministry of Energy.

In 2019, UNDP and FAO jointly obtained funding from the European Union as part of the implementation of the energy access component of its programme to support the resilience of rural populations in Burundi. The project, which was scheduled to be implemented for a period of three years, aimed to strengthen institutional capacities on regulation and investment in rural electrification, including technical support for the establishment of 11 mini-grids in villages in provinces furthest from the national grid (Kirundo, Cankunzo, Karuzi, Makamba, Rutana) and the development of activities promoting income diversification solutions (agricultural processing through the implementation of multifunctional platform, provision/sale of solar kits, income-generating activity, access to finance) to offset costs of management and maintenance of the new installations through private sector operators.

Final Project Report Project Preparatory Technical Assistance for the strengthening of the legal, regulatory and institutional framework of the Energy and Mining sectors (2013-2016)

On the basis of the project's PRODOC, the 'fountain of light' is a kit consisting of a solar panel and 48 rechargeable LED lamps.

Although initiated in 2020, the project did not yet include physical achievements in the targeted provinces, which remained at a preparatory stage at the time of this evaluation. In general, the project was launched late and was affected by the administrative delays of the various partners and the combined effects of the pandemic and the electoral context of 2020. The various documentary sources available note that the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between the various implementing partners took almost a year. The combined effects of these factors meant that the project had not achieved any of the physical outputs in 2022, initially anticipated to be its last year of implementation.

Despite this, the implementation of the project initiated in 2020 shows important achievements of preparatory nature, as noted in the mid-term evaluation of the project,<sup>117</sup> including the conduct of various feasibility studies, institutional capacity building, and the establishment of consultation frameworks at national, provincial and hill levels. In particular, the study on the legal framework of mini-isolated grids and their pricing, underway at the time of this evaluation, will provide significant support for reaching a consensus between the various services with mandates on the theme, with a view to enabling the country to develop a framework that is both accessible to beneficiaries and that incentivizes private sector engagement.

In this sense, although the project has not yet completed physical achievements, consultation and support for decision-making for the advancement of the regulatory framework is a positive contribution that will support the future achievements of the project and also will provide an implementation framework conducive to contributions and scaling up by other actors. Given the interruption of support to government institutions by the main development partners, the support provided by UNDP constituted a contribution that only UNDP could have made because of its relationship of trust and privileged positioning with the national authorities. As such, UNDP is positioned as co-lead, with the World Bank, of the thematic working group on energy issues and on the development of isolated mini grids.

In its design, the project takes into account a wide range of initiatives that reflect a more in-depth and holistic analysis of the introduction of solar energy, with interventions that address both the regulatory framework, the provision of physical assets, and a number of provisions aimed at promoting the economical sustainability<sup>118</sup> of the structures on which the desired sustainable effects on deforestation and conservation practices will depend. As such, the delays encountered, which have made it possible to strengthen the analyses prior to the implementation of physical achievements and their sustainability, such as the training of a pool of local technicians, bode well for strengthening the prospects of sustainability, which had not been taken into account during the one-off project 'Solar for Women's Empowerment' and which frequently present challenges in projects to introduce access to solar energy in general. In view of this situation, it can be noted that the project had very ambitious objectives and more time and resources will be needed if efforts are to continue.

The development of isolated rural mini grids is highly relevant given the level of access to the network in Burundi and pending the anticipated network extension of major hydraulic infrastructure projects under development in the country and in the region. However, much depends on the economic viability of the models developed, which have not yet been fully elucidated at this stage. The project provides for the deployment of a multifunctional platform to facilitate the productive use of energy on agricultural processing activities and guarantee the economic profitability of investment and community participation in maintaining infrastructure. There are various sources of evaluative evidence concerning

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>117</sup> Mid-term evaluation of the project 'Rural energy services for the resilience of the Burundi'

<sup>118</sup> This includes access to finance, provision of spare parts for installations, involvement of private operators in the management of mini grids, training of maintenance technicians, and provisions for battery recycling.

the implementation of multifunctional platforms in various UNDP programs in other countries, particularly in the Sahel region, which demonstrate the challenges encountered in terms of sustainability, and the need therefore to consider their implementation and ensure long-term support. The mid-term evaluation of the programme also raises the challenges linked to the cost of solar equipment, which remains dissuasive, and accentuates the need to guarantee the economic balance of the assembly. As such, although UNDP's intervention works in an area highly relevant to the needs of communities, dependence on solar energy presents a challenge to be taken into account and calls for a diversification in the development of renewable energy sources as envisaged in the previous country programme. In particular, biogas presents interesting opportunities in the context of Burundi given the importance of agricultural and livestock activities. The support of the context of Burundi given the importance of agricultural and livestock activities.

### 2.4 Cross-cutting issues

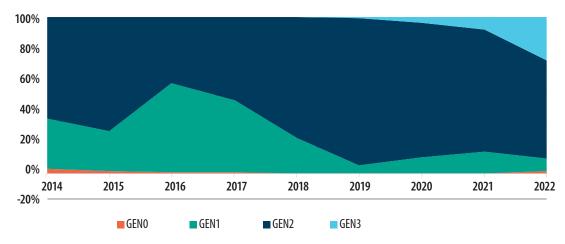
**Finding 13:** The country programme has set a particular ambition to take gender issues into account in its various areas of work, which has not been concretely reflected in the implementation of programme interventions, particularly with regard to the integration of gender issues into the work practices of national and local authorities. Nevertheless, community-based interventions generate positive results that address the differentiated needs of women.

FIGURE 8. Expenditures by gender marker 2019-2022 (excl. Global fund)



Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

FIGURE 9. Gender markers programmatic expenditure 2014-2022



Source: UNDP Atlas data, extracted February 2023

<sup>119</sup> See, for example, UNDP IEO 2022, Synthesis of UNDP Evaluations in the Sahel 2014-2021

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, the experience of Guinea in the development of Biogaz in rural areas, UNDP IEO 2022, ICPE Guinea and UNDP Guinea (2021) Final Evaluation of Project for the creation of a market for the development and use of biogas resources in Guinea

The country programme implemented for the period 2019-2023 is marked by a sustained commitment to gender mainstreaming and gender equality. The results framework contained in the country programme document shows increased consideration of this dimension, reflected in particular in the formulation of its outputs. There is an explicit inclusion of the gender dimension directly in the formulation of all 11 CPD outputs. This consideration in the formulation of outputs translates into outputs that directly address gender issues or integrates them into implementation as a related objective. The indicators systematically include a breakdown by vulnerable populations, including female beneficiaries. Although the format of the previous country programme is different and did not include the specific outputs targeted by UNDP, the evaluation notes an increased attention and intention of UNDP in the formulation of this country programme to respond to women's and gender equality challenges.

Excluding funding from the Global Fund, the Country Office's report highlights that 68 percent of programmatic spending (US\$36.8 million) corresponded to non-gender-specific interventions but aimed at contributing significantly to gender issues (GEN2), 9 percent of programmatic spending went to projects specifically targeting women's equality and women's empowerment (GEN3).<sup>121</sup> By observing the evolution of programmatic expenditure against the Gender Marker, the evaluation notes that over the last two country programme periods (2014 to 2021), the share of expenditure considered as having no or limited contribution to gender issues has been reduced in the total share of UNDP programmatic expenditure, in favor of a greater integration of gender issues as a cross-cutting result dimension, and also the introduction of four projects<sup>122</sup> focusing on gender equality and women's empowerment as a main objective in access to energy, combating sexual violence, and women's economic empowerment.

The results of UNDP interventions related to gender mainstreaming seem to be more distinct at the level of community-based interventions and in the intervention relating to inclusive growth, and to a lesser extent in interventions relating to governance and gender mainstreaming at the institutional level. Interventions at the community level have mainly been based on promoting access to financial and non-financial assets within the framework of the women's empowerment project, and through the PADDEL project, of which two-thirds of the beneficiaries are women, including from vulnerable categories (people living with a disability, Batwa, returnees and victims of SGBV). The focus groups conducted as part of this evaluation with the women beneficiaries and observations in the field confirm the effective and positive contribution of the interventions to women's economic empowerment and the family economy. It is also important to note that the participation of the beneficiaries' spouses was included in project's training activities, which, as highlighted in the mid-term evaluation of the women's empowerment project, shows a good consideration of gender relations dynamics. The mid-term evaluation's survey highlights positive results, with an average of three-fourths of the beneficiaries reporting increased autonomy in household level decision making and revenue management.<sup>123</sup>

These interventions respond to a structural need related to women's exclusion from the formal financing system via banks and micro-finance institutions in rural areas, including women who do not hold material guarantees for the mortgage, and those without financial knowledge and information for access to formal credit. The approach adopted by the interventions, which combines the provision of financial assets, non-financial (transformation tool but also storage infrastructure), and the development of individual and

Projects reported as GEN1, i.e. as having a limited contribution to the reduction of inequalities, correspond to projects where the contribution to gender objectives could be demonstrated and have a catalytic effect on these issues, in particular with regard to strategic planning, preparation of preparatory documents for the GCF; but also areas or contribution to these effects and may be underestimated by the Country Office (Community Resilience, and Rural Energy Services).

The four GEN 3 projects are: Women's Socio-Economic Empowerment Support Project 2019-2023; Gender Equality and the fight against GBV 2020-2021; Solar Energy for Women's Empowerment 2018-2021; and the Youth and Women's Empowerment Component of the PADDEL 2019-2023 Programme

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>123</sup> UNDP Burundi (2021), mid-term evaluation of the women's empowerment project.

group IGAs, and the promotion of community participatory savings contributes to the resilience of beneficiaries. At the local level, the distribution of solar lamps had positive effects in terms of safety and children's school performance, although the sustainability of this intervention has not been proven due to malfunctions of the devices distributed. UNDP, in partnership with the World Bank, the African Development Bank, and UNICEF, participated in conducting a study of the socio-economic effects of the pandemic affecting the situation of women's businesses during the COVID-19 crisis.

In the access to justice and rights project, a significant gender aspect was taken into account, particularly through free access to civil registration services supported by the project, which allows women to obtain their identity card as a basis for accessing rights such as free health care and school fees for children in the household. The fight against gender based violence (GBV) also received special attention in the PASD project in terms of GBV victims' access to justice services and community justice. However, efforts to improve those services have so far failed to meet targets for the number of GBV cases reported to judicial authorities and the number of reported cases adjudicated in the formal justice system.<sup>124</sup>

Since 2020, UNDP has implemented a specific project to combat SGBV that provides support to the Ministry of National Solidarity, Social Affairs, Human Rights and Gender. Between 2020 and 2021, the project implemented several activities aimed at supporting the consideration of and response to SGBV. At the time of this evaluation, its flagship activity, the Integrated Center of Rumonge, which aims to provide a holistic service package to victims of SGBV (medical, psychosocial, legal, reintegration), was not operational. Personnel of the various services represented were not deployed in the building infrastructure made available. Inaugurated in 2020 with high visibility, in the presence of the President of the Republic, the Center has never been opened. Interviews suggested that staff from the Provincial Division on Gender ensured some presence on the site. As designed, the project is based on the intervention of the state, with the technical ministries concerned providing the Center's staff. This had not taken place at the time of this evaluation. As designed, the Center responds to a real need, and it 125 takes up a formula for integrating services for women victims of violence that is already successfully in place in Gitega. UNDP also provided support for the early warning system for the referral of SGBV cases. For this system, 1,000 community leaders in 36 communes benefited from support, including training and the provision of equipment (mobile phones). The impact of the project is diminished by contextual difficulties (social resistance, corruption) and by limitations inherent in the project itself (broken equipment, interruption of the provision of telephone credit).

At the institutional level, support and achievements are less convincing in view of the objectives set out in the country programme document, and in particular outputs 1.2 and 2.3, which aimed, respectively, at taking gender issues into account in central and local administrations and strengthening the training capacities of institutions for civil servants. Within the framework of PADDEL, UNDP has tried to develop gender-sensitive budgeting to be endorsed by the budgets of the communal community development plans supported by the programme. But the information collected in the field shows that those interventions were ultimately piloted at the level of a single commune. In general, based on the Gender Results Effectiveness Scale (GRES), we can denote an approach and results supported by UNDP that corresponds to 'gender sensitive'. 126

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>124</sup> See results monitoring framework, indicators 2.2.2 and 2.2.3.

<sup>125 1)</sup> the development of harmonized data collection and reporting tools for the establishment of a gender database, 2) the sensitization of provincial and communal officials to the challenges of the fight against GBV, 3) the development of specifications for local committees to combat GBV, 4) the realization of annual campaigns, at the national level, against violence against women and girls, 5) the establishment of an early warning system.

 $<sup>\</sup>underline{\text{http://web.undp.org/evaluation/documents/guidance/gender/GRES\_English.pdf}}$ 

**Finding 14:** UNDP support for digitalization is underway in all areas of intervention of the country programme. UNDP's initiatives to promote access to information, while useful, have not taken into account the principles of 'leaving no one behind' at the heart of UNDP's overall digitalization strategy. The demand and needs in terms of digitalization of public administrations are considerable and present risks of fragmentation of support at sectoral level in the absence of a guiding framework and effective overall coordination of the digitalization effort.

UNDP, through various initiatives to introduce the digitalization of economic and administrative governance systems, has attracted interest in the modernization of central and decentralized state structures. In a way, UNDP's support in the delivery of services to citizens calls for a continuity of support that pushes towards the digitalization of administrative services which, based on the interviews conducted during this evaluation, is an increasingly important priority of the national counterparts and perceived as a highly relevant response to the many challenges of effectiveness and efficiency of public administrations.

At the time of this evaluation, UNDP had launched various initiatives throughout all its areas of intervention through the initiation of feasibility studies and through the provision of equipment. At the level of judicial services, UNDP is supporting a study for the digitization of the criminal records system and has facilitated the development of the Ministry of Justice's digitization master plan. In the health sector, similar support was provided for the development of norms and standards for computer applications and equipment in the field of health and the updating of health maps. Feasibility studies also were underway for the implementation of a solution for the modernization of municipal tax collection, for the development of e-commerce for Burundian agricultural cooperatives, and for the digitization of civil registration.

Other initiatives to promote access to information aimed at increasing the demand for services have been carried out, such as through the online publication of laws and regulations (Legislative Portal) and information on certain administrative and legal procedures (ISOKO Portal) that allow easy and free access to information. In the field of women's empowerment, a website has been developed to increase the visibility of successful women entrepreneurs and leaders and present their skills and backgrounds with a view to inspiring and informing more women's leadership in Burundi. Unlike the other intervention axes of the country programme, these solutions did not integrate a strong 'leave no one behind' dimension and did not propose an approach to strengthen access for vulnerable populations, whose access to information is more restricted. In this sense, the digitization of information to promote its accessibility, although useful, is likely to promote better accessibility to administrative information for people likely to already have easier access to information.

Although this support is appreciated by national partners and responds directly to their demands, the evaluation notes that UNDP intervention in this area is increasing on the basis of UNDP's sectoral commitment and presents considerable risks of fragmentation, given the multitude of actors with which UNDP works, and the level of resources available, in contrast to the resources needed to sustainably support the digitalization effort.

In 2022, the Country Office took steps to address this risk of fragmentation posed by what has been mainly sectoral level support for the development of digital solutions by consolidating the supervision and monitoring of these various initiatives within the Country Office. Initial steps also are underway to provide technical support to the Executive Secretariat of Technology and Information for the establishment of a data center that will aim to enable the secure hosting of all governmental applications and data. However, in the absence of an overall technical master plan, initiatives emerge and develop in a sectoral way, which can represent a risk for the scaling and maintenance of systems in the medium and long term. Given the

low level of digitalization of administrations, there are important considerations to consider with regard to the national technical and financial capacities to ensure the maintenance and management of the various platforms and digital solutions developed. Normalization of relations with development partners also has the potential to increase fragmentation and requires national coordination and participation and strong actors to maximize impact and the sustainability of efforts.

**Finding 15:** UNDP has a strong partnership with the national authorities consolidated by the continuity of support to institutions after the 2015 crisis. However, the dynamics of the context and in particular the dormancy of coordination frameworks have not created a favourable environment for programmatic partnerships and the integration of programmatic interventions, which have remained conditioned by funding opportunities. At the internal level, synergies between UNDP portfolios of interventions remain limited in their implementation and miss the opportunity to demonstrate UNDP's comparative advantage in the development of integrated solutions.

As previously mentioned, from 2015, Burundi's main partners – the European Union, European countries, the United States – suspended their State aid in all other sectors, while maintaining support through non-state structures where possible. Direct aid to the State from those partners is resuming, with significant planning and programming activity underway. In this context, UNDP is considered a loyal partner that, during the crisis period, has continued to support the Burundian State. UNDP, by virtue of its positioning and continuity in its support, enjoys a strong position with the national authorities, in general, giving it a status of privileged interlocutor among development partners in Burundi. UNDP, like other development partners, is operating in a context that is also marked by weak aid coordination mechanisms. The National Committee for the Coordination of Aid (CNCA), which was the main joint body bringing together national parties and donors, has not met since 2015, although efforts are underway to revive the consultation frameworks. Although UNDP's positioning during this period has provoked some criticism from partners, UNDP plays an important role in facilitating dialogue and resuming cooperation frameworks, through its support to the BESD in particular, but also reflected in particular in UNDP's co-chairmanship of consultation frameworks limited to development partners.

These different contextual elements have had an impact on UNDP's ability to mobilize strategic and programmatic partnerships and ensure the integration of development interventions that can enhance the impact, complementarities and scopes of interventions to promote multidimensional support to the country's development challenges. To this end, even if a significant evolution is notable with the resumption of cooperation frameworks, partnerships and joint programming seem to have been mainly instigated by funding opportunities, notably through the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund and the SDG Fund. This has had the effect of placing greater emphasis on inter-agency cooperation in conflict resolution and prevention and, to a lesser extent, in support of development planning. In the other sectors, joint work appears to be more limited, although there are notable exceptions in the area of DRR and sustainable reintegration of returnees, where UNDP has collaborated with IOM and UNOCHA in the analysis of vulnerability risks and with UNHCR, with which UNDP is co-leading the search for durable solutions for returnees. The support provided in stabilizing IDPs in Mayengo village is another exception and is a model for integrating agency efforts to provide a multidimensional response that could be replicated in other areas.

There is currently a consultation platform limited to donors, of which UNDP is co-chair. On the national side, in autumn 2021 the Government organized two forums bringing it together with donors; the Presidency of the Republic has established a Bureau of Strategic Studies and Development (BESD); the Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning nevertheless remains the main interlocutor of donors.

<sup>128</sup> UNDP Burundi 2017, Mid-Term Evaluation of the Country Programme (CPD) and its alignment with the Strategic Plan 2014-2017

While inter-agency coordination within the United Nations system exists through the various thematic working groups, their capacity to promote the integration of interventions appeared limited at this stage. Burundi's geographic topology, because of its small size, seems to provide a favorable environment for the integration of interventions, but inter-agency coordination does not have an approach for geographic convergence at the territorial level that could have been an anchor for the integration of interventions. For example, it was noted that UNDP approaches to empowerment, such as access to finance, were hampered by the existence of other support programmes based on unconditional grants in the same area of intervention. The predominance of support to humanitarian responses through non-governmental organizations, driven by the context since 2015, is another factor limiting the pursuit of partnership for UNDP sustainable development action.

At the internal level, the Country Office has taken steps to consolidate and integrate its programmatic interventions. The evaluation noted internal coherence at the thematic level through the alignment of the office organizational chart and its human resources within thematic areas of work, which ensures internal coherence within the various work portfolios. However, the preparation and implementation of individual portfolio projects by UNDP is done in isolation and programmatic synergies between portfolios appeared limited, with the exception of some synergies between local development and DRR activities (inclusion in PCDCs) and the reproduction of the intervention model used to promote local development with DRR activities.

**Finding 16:** The Country Office is developing positive measures to ensure monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the country programme and its interventions. However, the quantitative characterization of results linked to the definition of indicators in the country programme's results framework and focus on projects does not necessarily provide strategic information on the quality of the results achieved and on the synergies between interventions, which would help validate certain results assumptions.

The Country Office has laid the foundations for a robust monitoring and evaluation system for the country programme. From an internal perspective, the execution of the Country Office evaluation plan is up to date, all planned evaluations have been conducted and range from moderately satisfactory to satisfactory in terms of their quality against IEO quality assessment criteria. Available project evaluations frequently included the conduct of primary data collection, including through conducting quantitative surveys of project beneficiaries, including in the case of mid-term evaluations systematically conducted for major UNDP programmes. The Country Office stands out for its positive initiative in conducting a thematic evaluation of gender mainstreaming in the country programme, which is not common in UNDP country office evaluation practices.

In terms of monitoring the country programme's performance indicators, the Country Office organizes monitoring missions and annual reviews of results involving national stakeholders. Although participation varies, this practice provides a useful platform for dialogue within the Country Office and with authorities at the central level. The evaluation team had the opportunity to attend an annual review of the results internal to the Country Office and was able to see the usefulness of the approach. Beyond the joint missions, the Country Office is gradually implementing a practice of iterative monitoring of beneficiaries (also being implemented in some other UNDP country offices), which consists of monitoring beneficiaries' satisfaction at regular intervals to ascertain satisfaction with the support provided and the results generated.

The Country Office also has set up a digital platform to facilitate the compilation of data collected, the provision of CPD indicators, project documentation and geolocation. Although system maintenance and systematic use by all staff did not yet seem to be achieved, the implementation of these tools provides a useful basis to support knowledge management efforts. The Country Office also has taken initiatives for

the participation of national partners in the monitoring and evaluation of interventions. To capitalize on its support and capacity building of the National Institute of Statistics, the Country Office has involved the Institute in the conduct of evaluation missions of UNDP interventions. At the time of this evaluation, the Country Office was initiating the training and participation of planning officers at the provincial level in the conduct and management of quantitative surveys that will feed into the monitoring of the country programme.

Those measures, although in the process of being formalized, constitute the basis of a credible and useful monitoring and evaluation system. However, UNDP demonstrated a focus on projects as the main unit of analysis of its evaluation activities, including those financed from its core resources. Although a systematic approach to conducting mid-term and final evaluations of projects is in place, the plan did not include outcome and/or portfolio evaluations that are likely to bring efficiencies in the conduct of evaluations and support strategic and overall decision-making of the country programme. In the same way, monitoring activities appear to be fixed at the project level, which limits the opportunity to analyse the synergies achieved and/or lack between the various country programme interventions. Another aspect that deserves the attention of the Country Office is the concentration of the performance indicators monitored on quantitative performance targets. Although the country programme's orientation on the delivery of services at the local level favors such performance measurement, additional performance indicators to provide information on the quality of the results achieved are needed. For example, indicators such as the number of people with access to justice and/or access to financial assets do not make it possible to assess the quality of the results, and in particular their sustainability, which would allow prospects for scale-up.

**Finding 17:** The implementation of interventions is constrained by management challenges and delays that have had the effect of limiting the time available for implementation and opportunities for the participation of stakeholders in the orientation and execution of activities, which may pose a reputational risk to UNDP.

As mentioned above, UNDP, through its positioning and continuity in its support, enjoys a strong position with the national authorities, in general, giving it the status of privileged interlocutor among the country's development partners. In general, UNDP support is recognized and highly appreciated by the various national and institutional partners interviewed in the context of this evaluation. Despite this very positive feedback, the interviews conducted as part of this evaluation also revealed a strong consensus among UNDP national partners related to recurrent operational challenges related to delays in the launch of activities and disbursements.

With regard to the start-up times for activities, it was noted by most partners that the formalization of work plans frequently took place in the second quarter of the year and had the effect of shortening the implementation period of the activities planned for the year. This was particularly raised as a constraint by civil society actors and non-governmental organizations responsible for the implementation of certain activities, who referred to the challenge posed by the delays between calls for project submissions, the award of projects, and the disbursement of the first payment tranches for activities, which reduced the time for the implementation of activities initially planned. These challenges were reported by UNDP partners through interviews for all areas of intervention of the country programme. The effects of this situation should be seen in the context of scarce funding of civil society organizations and institutions, which are most often highly dependent on UNDP funding for the implementation of interventions, including their operational funding. For example, partners consulted in the field of justice recognized that without UNDP funding, the day-to-day activities supported (legal aid, inspection raids, mobile courts) cannot be implemented due to lack of financial and material resources. In this regard, several partners deplored the fact that UNDP did not seem willing to reimburse advances in the funding of planned activities, which could have made it possible to compensate for the disbursement delay.

Many actors confirmed that activities could generally only be launched in April or May of the year, which poses another challenge for institutions since Burundi has aligned the timing of its budget year with that of the East African Community countries (from 1 July to 30 June). This implies that the finalization of work plans, signing of letters of agreement, and launching of activities comes at a time when ministries and public administration are turning their attention to closing budgets and preparing new state budgets. Although the views expressed were mixed, this raises questions about the annual programming process, through the annual letters of agreement, while projects and programmes are spread over several years, and about opportunities to better integrate the planning and financing of UNDP interventions with the plans of the ministries concerned. The challenge posed by conditionality provided for in the funding agreements to disburse at least 80 percent of a tranche of funding before being able to access the next tranche of payment was raised as a problem by various ministerial focal points met. The combination of these bottlenecks poses a challenge for some UNDP partners and their partners involved in interventions. However, it should be noted that the lines of approval and participation in project activities are not always direct with implementing partners, which does not facilitate the decision-making and communication circuit. This is particularly the case for legal aid, which is the responsibility of the bar associations (Bujumbura and Gitega) but whose funds are channeled through the Ministry of Justice, resulting in delays in payments to lawyers who have fulfilled a legal aid mission. This ultimately has been reported to affect the quality of legal aid. Similarly, support for the national school of public administration passes through the Ministry of the Civil Service, resulting in delays in the execution of interventions.

These operational dynamics may be linked to certain shortcomings observed during this evaluation concerning the effective participation of local actors in the implementation of downstream interventions, particularly in the realization of physical assets.<sup>129</sup> For example, it was found that key provincial and communal actors were not always involved in the monitoring of construction work related to the delivery of physical assets and stakeholders met at local level were often not knowledgeable or did not have access to the technical specifications of physical assets being built. The limited time available for the implementation of workplans was also reported as a hindering factor to leverage the expertise of implementing partners and obtain their participation in guiding activities; giving a focus on the delivery of activities with the time left rather than enabling strategic engagement.

### 2.5 Country programme performance rating

The following table provides an overview of the performance of the country programme, using the five internationally agreed evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability, as well as a set of parameters for each of the criteria. A four-point rating scale is used, with 4 being the highest score and 1 the lowest.<sup>130</sup> This evaluation table should be read with the results presented in the previous sections in mind, which provide a more detailed rationale.

Such as the constructions of schools (CEM of Ruyigi), the establishment of the hill irrigation system, or the equipment of the Ruyigi agro-food processing complex

<sup>4 =</sup> Fully Achieved/ Exceeds Expectations. A rating of this level means that programme outputs and outcomes have been fully achieved (or are likely to be achieved), or even exceed expectations. This score indicates high performance 3 = Mostly Achieved. A rating of this level is used when the overall assessment is substantially positive, and problems are small relative to the positive findings. There are some limitations in the contribution of UNDP programmes that have prevented the achievement of stated outputs and outcomes, but no major shortfalls. Many of the planned programme outputs/outcomes have been delivered. This score indicates moderate, but good, performance. 2 = Partially Achieved. A rating of this level is used when significant shortfalls are identified. The intended outputs and outcomes have only been partially achieved. Overall, the assessment is moderate, but less positive. 1 = Not Achieved. A rating of this level means that the contribution of the UNDP programme faced severe constraints and the negative assessment outweighs any positive achievements. There has been limited or no achievement of planned programme outputs/outcomes. This score indicates poor performance.

**TABLE 1.** Country programme performance ratings

Criteria and parameters	Overall score (scale 1-4)	Remarks/Rationale				
1. Relevance	4	In its design, the country programme is relevant				
1.A. Adherence to national development priorities	4	to national development priorities, the objectives of the United Nations cooperation framework, and to the UNDP strategic plan, with adequate				
1.B. Alignment with UN/UNDP objectives	4	coverage of the various UNDP areas of work.  Despite the changing context during this period				
1.C. Relevance of the programme priorities	3	and the resulting reduced scope of interventions, UNDP has been able to articulate and implement a programme that has ensured some continuity with its post-crisis programmatic commitments by directing its support towards the delivery of services to citizens and that aims to respond to the complexity of the country's contemporary challenges and contributes to the objectives of social cohesion, consistent with the post-conflict situation in the country.				
2. Coherence	2	Internally, synergies between different				
2.A. Internal programme coherence	2	programme areas between results have been limited. In terms of external coherence, despite				
2.B. External programme coherence	2	a good partnership with the Government and development partners, efforts to integrate interventions with those of other actors have been limited, with the exception of PBF joint programmes and in a few emerging areas (DRR, reintegration). In general, the opportunities to strengthen the external coherence of the programme and the integration of interventions with that of other actors is affected by the absence of effective aid coordination frameworks in Burundi and the context of sanctions prevailing during the programme implementation period. The coherence of interventions at local level remains a challenge.				
3. Efficiency	2	The implementation of interventions has been				
3.A. Timeliness	2	affected by management challenges, including delays in the annual planning and disbursement				
3.B. Management and operational efficiency	2	process, which are attributable to the context but also to administrative burdens at the UNDP and country levels. This has had an impact on planned interventions and financial execution notably by limiting the time available for their implementation.				

Criteria and parameters	Overall score (scale 1-4)	Remarks/Rationale
4. Effectiveness	3	The results achieved in the various projects and
4.A. Achievement/eventual achievement of stated outputs and outcome	3	programmes are satisfactory in quantitative terms but lower in terms of quality and sustainability. In the projects and programmes reviewed, the quantitative results reported against baselines
4.B. Programme inclusiveness (especially those at risk of being left behind)	3	and targets are most often met, and in some cases exceeded. However, from a qualitative and sustainability perspective, the results achieved
4.C. Prioritization of gender equality and women's empowerment	3	are negatively affected by the difficult context in which activities are implemented and the limited financial resources available to UNDP. However,
4.D. Prioritization of Development innovation	2	the country programme paid positive attention to the inclusion of those at risk of being left behind and took steps to address the differentiated needs of those groups.
5. Sustainability	2	Although interventions are well anchored
5.A. Sustainability Capacity	2	in national policies and have a good level of ownership by the various ministries involved, the
5.B. Financing for development	2	context of development financing and of national institutions limits the prospects for sustainability and scaling up of interventions. In response to the needs and demands of partners, UNDP support to national institutions has largely focused on facilitating operational activities that are necessary but not sustainable and depend almost entirely on the availability of UNDP funding. At the local level, the involvement of local partners has not always been effective and has in some cases limited ownership. Direct support to beneficiaries presents more sustainable prospects, but more emphasis on post-activity support is needed.

# CHAPTER 3 CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

This chapter presents the findings of the evaluation on UNDP performance and contributions to development results in Burundi, recommendations and management response. The recommendations proposed by the evaluation have been formulated in such a way as to allow flexibility in their implementation.

### 3.1 Conclusions

Conclusion 1: UNDP is recognized as an important partner of the Burundian authorities both through the relevance of its support to national priorities and their continuity before, during, and after the 2015 political crisis, and in a difficult context for development financing. The implementation of the country programme continued to be marked by the stigma of the deep crisis experienced by Burundi since 2015. During this period, UNDP, although under a reduced scope driven by the country context, continued its support to national development objectives with national institutions and provided critical support to targeted institutions with a view to improving service delivery to citizens through the various areas of the country programme, including access to justice, administrative services, and local development. This has consolidated UNDP's positioning, leadership, and relationship of trust with national authorities, recognized by all partners, which has played an important role in maintaining a dialogue with development partners in a context of gradual revitalization of development cooperation.

Conclusion 2: UNDP has made tangible contributions by directing its support towards the provision of service delivery to vulnerable populations at the local level, particularly in the areas of access to rights, community livelihoods, and health services through the management of Global Fund allocations. Efforts to build resilience to the effects of climate change have received less attention due to a lack of funding and the urgency to address the immediate stabilization needs of displaced populations. The COVID-19 pandemic opened the prospect of digitalization, which is emerging as a cross-cutting area of work on the agenda. The political and socio-economic context that the country has experienced since 2015 has limited UNDP's field of action, which was previously more oriented towards institutional support. However, the reorientation of activities towards the provision of services to populations at the local level, in partnership with national authorities, has made it possible to provide answers to the lack of access of vulnerable populations to basic services (justice, administrative, health) and productive capacities through access to finance and agricultural processing assets. In particular, and despite tensions, UNDP is making an important contribution to the fight against the three diseases with high epidemic potential, including malaria, which remains the main cause of death in Burundi. Climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction took less prominence in the implementation of the programme due to the scale of competing needs in a context of limited resources.

Conclusion 3: Despite the difficulties of the context and although in a limited field of action, the interventions found opportunities to capitalize on past positioning and to develop interventions at the intersection of different key themes contributing to social cohesion and the principles of the humanitarian development peace nexus. Dictated by the changing context in Burundi, UNDP found entry points that, to some extent, were able to capitalize on the commitments that had been launched pre-2015 in the context of the implementation of the Arusha agreements. The projects and programmes aimed to respond to the complexity of Burundi's contemporary situation and included interventions of different nature but whose common objective converges towards strengthening social cohesion. This includes access to justice, administrative services, and gradual reintegration of returnees and displaced populations. With the exception of certain areas, the external integration of these efforts is hampered by the general lack of coordination of

development assistance, although support in this area, including from UNDP, is ongoing. At the internal level, the operationalization of synergies between the different UNDP portfolios, which could potentially demonstrate the added value of a multidimensional to local challenges, remains in progress.

Conclusion 4: The nature and sustainability of the results achieved by UNDP in Burundi are affected by the difficult context and the limited financial resources available to UNDP and the targeted national institutions for their operation. This situation has often guided UNDP support towards the operational needs of institutions, which, while essential, does not lead to sustainable change and presents risks of fragmentation of support. The implementation of the programme has repeatedly shown that lack of resources and a difficult context are obstacles to the achievement of expected results; the same causes have an impact on the sustainability of projects. While the UNDAF hypothesized that the Burundian State can provide the necessary resources to carry out activities, this hypothesis has not materialized and many UNDP supports are characterized by the achievement of certain public service missions, particularly in the field of governance, which depend entirely on UNDP support. Although projects generally enjoy a good level of ownership, the absorption and scaling capacity of national counterparts remains limited, and the institutions supported face difficulties in financing day-to-day activities relevant to their mandates. The diversity of areas of work and actors has the effect of fragmenting UNDP support to meet the needs of all actors, and results in ad-hoc support in a context marked by shortcomings in overall coordination of development interventions.

Conclusion 5: UNDP core resources have played a key role in ensuring the continuity of the Country Office's programmatic engagement. Nevertheless, the overall dependence of country programme funding on funding from the Global Fund and core resources presents financial sustainability risks for the Country Office and its ability to implement its core mandate. In a context of limited funding due to the interruption of institutional funding by development assistance, UNDP's core resources have played a crucial role in financing interventions and the continuity of programmatic commitments with the Burundian authorities in a context of international sanctions. Nevertheless, this situation constrains the Country Office to a lack of diversification of the sources of funding for the country programme and leaves UNDP's core mandate areas such as governance, inclusive growth, and environment underfunded and at risk.

Conclusion 6: Although the ambitions set out in the results framework of the country programme on gender issues and women's empowerment are only partially met, the implementation of the country programme demonstrates a good consideration of the targeting and differentiated needs of vulnerable population categories reflecting the 'Leave no one behind' approach. The country programme had a particular ambition to integrate gender issues into all country programme outputs, not all of which have concretely materialized in the implementation of interventions. On the other hand, the programme demonstrates particular attention to addressing vulnerabilities by targeting internally displaced persons, returnees, Batwa and persons with disabilities, and to some extent intersectionality, in the targeting of beneficiaries and in the disaggregation of programme performance indicators. While efforts remain to be consolidated to sustainably change the situation, interventions have demonstrated attention to the differentiated needs of the most vulnerable communities and put into practice the goal of leaving no one behind.

### 3.2 Recommendations and Management Response

### **RECOMMENDATION 1.**



Within the broader context of the return of programming by the country's main development partners, UNDP should seek to gradually assert its catalytic role by directing its support towards strengthening institutional capacities and reposition its downstream support towards the piloting of replicable solutions. The difficult implementation context since 2015 has positioned UNDP more towards being an implementing actor, rather than a strategic partner focused on building institutional capacity. While relations with development partners move towards normalization, it will be important for UNDP to capitalize on its recognized leadership to support resuming structural reforms. Downstream interventions should be anchored in a logic of demonstration with clear exit strategies and with a view of promoting policy changes or the scaling up of promising interventions.

### Management response: Accepted



The Country Office has made capacity-building an important focus of its programmes and, in addition, UNDP already has in place a mechanism to strengthen institutional capacities with the following evidence:

- 1. Support to BESD to support the long-term development vision
- 2. Support to the Ministry of Finance to implement programme budget processes, strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation of the NDP/SDGs
- 3. The signing of letters of agreement with 14 technical ministries to strengthen their capacities in the development and implementation of sectoral strategies and coordination mechanisms within the framework of thematic groups with development partners.

Replicable solutions tested in the 2019-2023 program have included:

The Provincial Single Windows in 12 provinces, the digitization of civil registration in 11 Communes and communal land services in 6 communal offices, the establishment of an integrated GBV response centre. The portfolio approach for the benefit of cross-border communities in Nyanza Lac will be scaled up as part of the new 2024-2027 programme. Finally, the upcoming CPD 2024-2027 to be approved shortly puts capacity building at the centre of all its priorities.

Key action(s)	Completion	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
	date		Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1 Replicable solutions such as the digitalization of civil registration and communal land services will be amplified with other partners.	December 2025	Governance team		Initiated

### Recommendation 1 (cont'd)

Key action(s)	Completion Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
	date		Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.2 The Office strengthens the institutional and technical capacities of the BESD on the coordination of development partnership by establishing a monitoring and evaluation system for projects and programmes financed by Development Partners.	December 2023	Policy and strategy unit (UPS)		Initiated
1.3 Support for the development of the new emerging vision of Burundi 2040 and Burundi developed in 2060.	April 2023	Policy and strategy unit (UPS)		Completed
1.4 The Country Office supports the implementation of the Programme Budget process.	December 2023	Policy and strategy unit (UPS)		Initiated
1.5 Capacity building for strategic planning (Finance, BESD, Interior)	December 2023	Policy and strategy unit (UPS)		Initiated

### RECOMMENDATION 2.



UNDP should seek to anchor its downstream interventions across its country programme into an area-based approach with a view to strengthen synergies across its different programmes and maximize its contribution to rural development given the limited resources available. UNDP has provided useful direct support for the livelihoods of vulnerable populations, access to rights, justice, mediation and service delivery at provincial and municipal level. Given limited resources, the scale of needs, and the multidimensional development challenges faced at local level, UNDP should seek to further integrate its different areas of support. This would limit transaction costs and maximize its contribution to local development challenges, facilitate partnerships, and favour the emergence of integrated intervention models that could be scaled up or replicated by other development partners.

### **Management response: Accepted**



In the 2024-2027 CPD, the Bureau addressed this recommendation under paragraph 20 on geographic targeting. In addition, the portfolio approach on Border Communities currently being implemented contributes to strengthening the area-based approach with a view to strengthening synergies.

Key action(s)	Completion	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
	date		Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
2.1 Operationalize the new CPD 2024-2027 according to the Portfolio approach to interconnect interventions.	December 2024	Deputy Resident Representative		Initiated
2.2 Apply geographic targeting in the implementation of different projects in line with the provisions of the new CPD 2024-2027.	December 2024	Deputy Resident Representative		Initiated

### **RECOMMENDATION 3.**



UNDP should continue its data collection and monitoring and evaluation efforts with national partners and strengthen the qualitative dimension of its results framework to better inform on the experience of service users and beneficiaries with a view of promoting adaptation of its interventions. The Country Office has taken positive steps to strengthen its programme monitoring and evaluation and laid the foundations for a credible and participatory system, which need to be pursued and formalized. There also is a need to further diversify the unit of analysis of evaluations and monitoring activities so as not to be limited to projects and to promote the production of evidence and knowledge on the different interventions and their synergies, with a view to demonstrating the added value of the UNDP integrative role. Further balance between the monitoring and reporting of quantitative performance results with qualitative information about the experience of users would be required to strengthen the contribution of the system to learning about what works, where, and under what circumstance, and feed further reflections on sustainability pathways.

### Management response: Accepted



On a semi-annual basis, the Office will continue to carry out joint monitoring missions with partners to collect data from beneficiaries and will increase iterative monitoring activities of beneficiaries. In addition, the 2024-2027 Evaluation Plan will include qualitative evaluations.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
3.1 The Country Office has planned an impact evaluation of the CPD 2019-2023.	December 2023	M&E Analyst		Initiated
3.2 Continue to organize joint monitoring missions with partners.	July and December 2023	M&E Analyst		Initiated

### **RECOMMENDATION 4.**



UNDP should actively mobilize relevant national stakeholders and the Global Fund to develop and establish a roadmap for the gradual transition of grant management. This roadmap should clarify criteria and conditions, against pre-determined performance milestones, and involve all national entities concerned and development partners of the health sector. The ambiguity about the conditions for the return of the management of Global Fund allocations by the national side appeared to be a source of tension that has affected the recent performance of Global Fund allocations. The update of capacity building plans, implementation of which should be prioritized in the next country programme, is a positive measure. It also appears necessary to formalize and bring clarity over the conditions for the gradual transfer of Global Fund allocations and to anchor capacity building on the achievement of consensual and realistic performance targets/milestones that can help projects tied to the upgraded capacities of the Ministry of Health and other national parties involved.

### Management response: Partially agreed



UNDP will continue to mobilize stakeholders and support advocacy and actions to ensure that the following elements are in place for the transition to effective national execution:

- 1. Developing and supporting the implementation of a grant transition roadmap in collaboration with the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM)
- 2. Burundi is classified as a country under the Additional Safeguards Policy (ASP). As such, the country is one of the countries that are subject to exceptional controls and restrictive measures. UNDP will support the implementation of the capacity-building plan for national partners that has just been developed with UNDP support, in order to redress this situation.
- 3. In addition, following a risk assessment conducted by the Global Fund (see February 2023 report), the country has a high risk rating, in addition to the capacity building plan, UNDP will strengthen quality assurance and support for implementing partners in the implementation of sustainable risk management mechanisms.

Key action(s)	Completion date Responsible unit(s)	Tracking		
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
4.1 Develop a capacity development plan.	Sept 2022	Global Fund-Programme management Unit		Completed
4.2 UNDP has supported the consolidated capacity development plans of UNDP and UGADS (the other PR for the Global Fund) and submitted them to the CCM Secretariat.	Nov 2022	Global Fund-Programme management Unit		Completed
4.3 Validation of the Capacity Building Plan.	Dec 2022	Global Fund-Programme management Unit		Initiated
4.3 Development of the roadmap in collaboration with CCM with benchmark to ensure the transition.	Dec 2023	Global Fund-Programme management Unit		Initiated

## RECOMMENDATION 5. (

UNDP should continue its efforts to support digitalization by giving priority to the functioning of public administration, administrative services and national coordination capacities of the digitalization effort. The development of digital initiatives to promote access to information and services to citizens should take into account the access challenges of vulnerable populations. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought the issue of digitalization to the forefront. Even if reluctance remains, there is a strong demand for the development of digital solutions to meet the operational challenges of the administration, and various initiatives are being prepared. To promote a coherent and sustainable expansion of digitalization, UNDP should, in parallel with its pilot initiatives, support the global coordination effort at the national level with a view to creating favourable conditions (operational and human), including the development of technical regulatory framework, to ensure the ownership and sustainability of the digital support and solutions developed. UNDP should give priority to the internal digitalization of the administration likely to improve the performance of services to citizens, given the challenges of access for vulnerable populations for initiatives seeking to promote better access to information.

### Management response: Accepted



The Country Office is currently supporting the digitalization of the following services within the framework of public administration and administrative services at the municipal level: The Central Criminal Records Service, and 11 pilot communal offices of the Civil Registry. In addition, UNDP is supporting the Government in finalizing the digitization master plan.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking	
			Comments	Status (initiated, completed or no due date)
5.1 11 pilot communal civil registry offices are being tested.	December 2022	Governance team		Completed
5.2 The Office will support the Government in setting up a coordination framework on digitalization issues within the framework of the new CPD.	December 2024	Deputy Resident Representative		Initiated
5.3 Digitalization of criminal records services.	March 2023	Governance team		Completed
5.4 Digitalization of the collection and management of municipal revenues.	December 2023	Governance team		Initiated

•	ecommendation 5 (cont'd)				
	5.5 Installation of an online court hearing system for provinces without prison.	December 2023	Governance team		Initiated
	5.6 Digitalization of 6 communal land offices.	December 2023	Governance team		Initiated

# **ANNEXES**

The annexes to the report (listed below) are available on the Independent Evaluation Office website at: https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/documents/download/22471

- **Annex 1.** Evaluation Terms of Reference
- Annex 2. The country at a glance
- **Annex 3.** Evaluation Framework
- Annex 4. People consulted
- Annex 5. Documents consulted
- Annex 6. List of projects reviewed
- **Annex 7.** Status of country programme output and output indicator.



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